

Access to HE Manual 2015-16

A reference, information and guidance tool
for those involved in the provision and
quality assurance of Access to HE
with AIM Awards AVA.

Version 1 - September 2015

Aspiration Inspiration Motivation

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Welcome

AIM Awards **A**spire to **I**nspire providers to **M**otivate learners to achieve.

As an awarding organisation we have a portfolio of qualifications ranging from Entry 1 to Level 5 including the L3, QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education) recognised Access to HE Diploma courses.

Via this reference tool we provide guidance on working with us as an Access Validating Agency (AVA), from becoming a centre through to certificating learners. The purpose of this manual is to help those working with and in the AVA to know and understand its policies, procedures and systems and to clarify areas of responsibility.

At the end of each section of this handbook are references to the documents needed by centres and moderators, the documents we, the AVA will use and the Licensing Criteria of our regulator (QAA) that apply. All related documents are available on our website.

Please see the glossary of acronyms on the next page.

Customer Service Statement

AIM Awards provides a high quality, effective and efficient service. Centres are supported in the strategic development of their AIM Awards provision, including on-going delivery, administration and quality assurance. Our staff members are committed to providing these services in a responsive, accessible and prompt manner in accordance with our published Service Standard timescales outlined in this document.

We endeavour to provide you with the best possible service to enable you to cater for the needs of all students. We will do this by ensuring our service is:

Prompt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will work to our published timelines for registration and certification
Efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will ensure our published information is up to date, accurate and accessible• We will use plain English in all our correspondence and documentation• We will ensure all our systems and procedures meet or exceed external audit requirements
Responsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will give a courteous, prompt and well informed response to any enquiry you make• We will maintain a flexible approach in working with you to meet your needs• We will work with you in responding to the needs of your learners
Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will publish a programme of training and information sessions• We will publish up to date guidelines on all aspects of our service• We will provide online access to appropriate documentation, news and information• We will appoint an External Moderation team with its Centre Lead Moderator to each centre on receipt of course running form.
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will work to high professional standards and we are committed to continuous improvement• We will use our resources to best effect and conduct our work with integrity

We will regularly ask you about the types of services you require and your level of satisfaction with our existing services. The services we provide rely on your feedback, so please let us know how we can improve, so we can respond accordingly.

Glossary of acronyms

Acronym	Phrase
AEG	Access Executive Group
AHEC	Access to Higher Education Committee
AHED	Access to Higher Education Diploma
ALM	AVA Lead Moderator
AOG	Access Operations Group
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning
ARV	Annual Review visit
AVA	Access Validation Agency
CLM	Centre Lead Moderator
DS	Data Service
EM	External Moderation
IM	Internal Moderation
PMF	Programme Manager Forum
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QR	Quality Review
RAC	Recommendation for the Award of Credit
SM	Subject Moderator
SUB	Subject Unit Bank
UCAS	The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

AVA Team contact details

Deputy CEO

Has overall responsibility for AVA operations, finance and corporate services.

Deborah Marsh

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Business development

Director of Business (DoB)

Has responsibility for Access to HE business development

Andy Coxon

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Product Development Manager (PDM)

The first point of contact in the AVA for all enquiries regarding Access to HE events and development.

Ian Hartley

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Quality Assurance

Director of Quality (DoQ)

Has responsibility for moderation and quality matters.

Debbie Jump

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Access Quality Manager (AQM)

The first point of contact in the AVA for all enquiries regarding Access to HE, moderation and quality matters.

Michelle Stevenson

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Becoming an approved centre

Getting Centre Recognition

If you wish to offer an Access to HE Diploma with AIM Awards you need to become a recognised centre.

To apply to become a recognised centre you need to complete the **Centre Application Form** available on our website (<http://www.aimawards.org.uk>) and return it along with your **Centre Policies** to blissing.masiye@aimawards.org.uk. We'll then set your Head of Centre up with a login for the AIM Awards website so that they can sign our centre agreement online.

Our simple centre recognition process involves a review of your completed form and centre policies along with a telephone or face to face meeting.

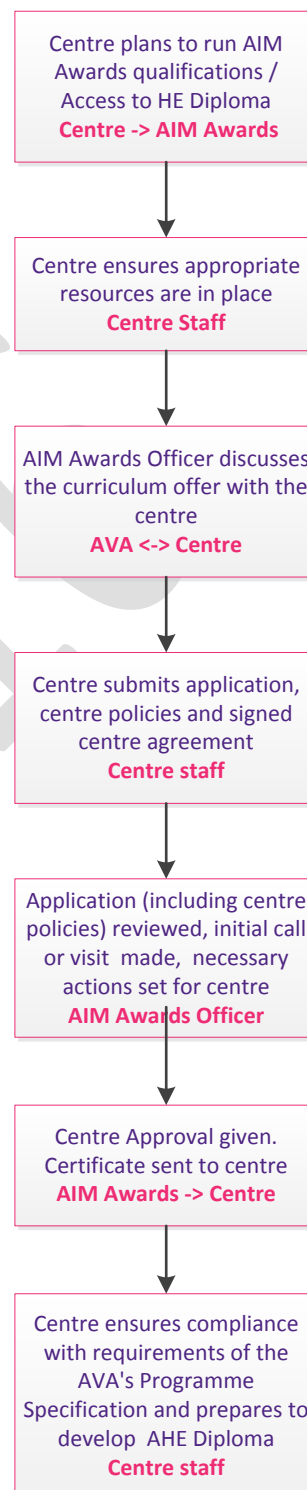
Approval to deliver Access to HE

In order to gain approval to be an Access to HE provider, an AIM Awards recognised centre must comply with all the requirements of the AIM Awards AVA (Access Validating Agency) as detailed in the AVA's Access to HE document: **Diploma Programme Specification**. To demonstrate compliance and signify ownership of the content this document must be signed by the centre's head / principal. Its detail should subsequently underpin a centre's practice in provision of its Access to HE Diploma(s).

Once recognised and approved a centre may develop its discrete Diploma(s).

AIM Awards AVA's approval of Access to HE provision is subject to a continuous process of risk assessment and on the condition of continued compliance with the AIM Awards Centre Agreement.

The AVA may withdraw approval if a provider fails to continue to meet the terms of its approval.



The Access to HE Diploma

is:

- a level 3 qualification, regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- a graded qualification, as determined by the (QAA) Access to HE Grading Scheme
- a unitised qualification, based on units of assessment which are structured in accordance with the (QAA) Access to HE unit specification
- a credit-based qualification, operated in accordance with the terms of the (QAA) Access to HE credit specification

The QAA Access to HE Diploma Specification

The generic requirements for the Access to HE Diploma are:

- the total credit achievement is 60 credits
- of these 60 credits, 45 credits must be achieved at level 3 from graded units which are concerned with academic subject content as defined by QAA in *The Access to Higher Education Diploma specification 2013*, B5 page 8
- the remaining 15 credits must be achieved at level 2 or level 3 from units which are ungraded

Students undertaking any Access to HE Diploma, whatever their mode of study, must be registered and certificated for units to **a maximum value of 60 credits**.

Graded Units: “The content of the unit (as expressed in its learning outcomes) must be drawn from the knowledge and skills of subjects that are directly related to the subject of the named Diploma(s) in which the unit will be used, as indicated by the Diploma title.” This applies to the full range of Diploma subjects, including technically orientated subjects such as multi-media, as well as subjects such as history or sociology. The unit may include skills that relate to specific forms and fields of knowledge needed for a particular named Diploma (such as maths for engineers or laboratory skills for science students).

Ungraded Units: - will not meet the academic subject content requirement if they are principally concerned with personal development, generic English or mathematics, or study skills. These units may be part of the ungraded element (15 credits at Level Two or Three). Ungraded Level Three units may also be concerned with academic subject content.

Under QAA regulations, credit may be accumulated towards the Access to HE Diploma over 5 years. Each learner will follow a learning programme in accordance with the requirements of their named Diploma.

The AIM Awards AVA Access to HE Diploma Programme

- complies with the requirements of the *QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education and the requirements and regulations of The Access to Higher Education Diploma Specification 2013*.
- was validated by external panel: December 2013
- was approved by Access to HE Committee (AHEC): March 2014
- has a recognition period for delivery of 5 years: August 2014 to July 2019

The programme is then subject to full review before revalidation. Earlier review and revalidation may be necessary where the need for significant amendment is caused by national or regional changes. In exceptional circumstances the period of recognition may be extended by the Access to HE Committee.

Any amendments to the generic programme will be applied to all provider discrete Diplomas.

The AIM Awards AVA Generic Specification

This document presents the AVA's technical specification of the Diploma and the minimum requirements for student achievement.

Graded element: 45 at Level Three	
Main Subject(s) Subject unit banks (SUBs) containing units with academic and vocational subject content at Level Three	Minimum of one SUB, maximum of five
Ungraded element: 15 at Level Three or Two	
Study Skills at Level Three	Minimum of 6 credits, maximum of 9 credits
Introductory Unit(s) Units with academic and vocational subject content at Level Three	Minimum of 3 credits, maximum of 9 credits
Unit: <i>English for Academic Study</i> (3 credits at Level Three)	Optional
Vocational Maths at Level Two e.g. <i>Maths in a Health and Care Context</i> (3 credits)	Optional The unit: <i>Maths in a Health and Care Context</i> is mandatory to discrete Diplomas with intended progression to Health Professions.
Total: 60 credits at Level Three, or 60 credits with 57 at Level Three and 3 at Level Two	

A specification for an Access to HE Diploma (Health Professions) was agreed with admissions tutors from the universities of Derby, Nottingham and De Montfort (Leicester), was validated at panel and is available to approved providers. Rules of combination for this Diploma are pre-agreed but allow for unit choice within the named SUBs (subject unit banks).

Graded Academic SUBs	Rules of combination	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Biology Psychology Sociology and Social Policy Health Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 credits of Human Biology At least 9 credits of Psychology and or Sociology and Social Policy <p><i>At least one time-constrained assessment under test conditions is required in Human Biology. This should be at least 1 hour duration and may be multiple-choice</i></p>	
UNGRADED Element: Total required: 15 credits with at least 12 at Level Three		
AVA (Generic) Discrete Diploma Specification		Health Professions Rules of combination
Study Skills: Level Three	Minimum of 6, maximum of 9 credits	Mandatory 3 credits <i>Research and Referencing</i> + another Study Skill 3 credits
Introductory Academic SUB: Level Three	Minimum of 3, maximum of 9 credits	3 credits
<i>English for Academic Study</i> : Level Three	Optional 3 credits	Mandatory 3 credits
<i>Maths in a Health and Care Context</i> : Level Two	Optional 3 credits	Mandatory 3 credits
Diploma Total	60 Credits	60 Credits (57 @ L3)

How to develop an AHE Diploma

Discrete Diploma Specification documents are available as templates for recording the requirements for achievement of a specific Diploma. The template is pre-populated with the generic rules of combination within which the discrete Diploma requirements must fit. For each Diploma the centre completes a template indicating the specific title, units available, rules of combination and possible progression opportunities.

Templates may be found in the **Centre handbook and forms** section of our website <http://www.aimawards.org.uk/working-with-us/centre-handbook-and-forms/> or by contacting a member of the Access to HE team.

Titles must conform to a (QAA-prescribed) format: Access to HE Diploma (name of subject/area of study/progression route) e.g. Access to Higher Education Diploma (Business); Access to Higher Education Diploma (Art and Design).

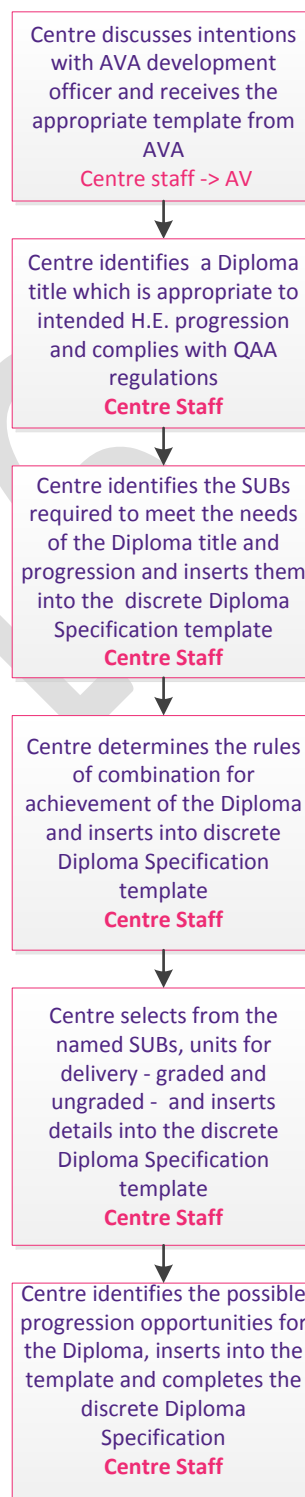
Rules of combination are the ways in which units must or may be combined for the achievement of a discrete Diploma. Centres are strongly advised to seek advice on expectations and requirements for entry to the progression routes and the appropriateness of the Diploma proposals in meeting them.

Subject Unit Banks (SUBs): All units available to an Access to HE Diploma are organised and contained in the AVA's Access to HE SUBs in the following curriculum areas:

Art and Design	English	Mathematics
Business	Geog/Envir. Science	Media
Biology	Health Studies	Physics
Chemistry	History	Psychology
Computing	Human Biology	Sociology/Social Policy
Counselling	ITT / Education	Sport
Engineering	Law	Travel and Tourism

Units: All units are (currently) either 3 or 6 credits in value. N.B. inclusion of a unit in a named Diploma may be subject to stated rules of combination with other units.

All units are available through our website using the Qualification Search <http://www.aimawards.org.uk/advanced-qualification-search/access-to-he/>.



Approval of a Diploma

Completed discrete Diploma Specifications must be submitted electronically to the Product Development Manager. The submission will be scrutinised by a **Pre-Approval Panel** to ensure compliance with QAA and AVA specifications and regulations. If the conditions are met the Diploma Specification is approved in principle to be confirmed at the next AHEC.

Approval will be confirmed by a letter to the head of centre along with a pdf version of the approved discrete Diploma Specification document carrying the watermark “approved”.

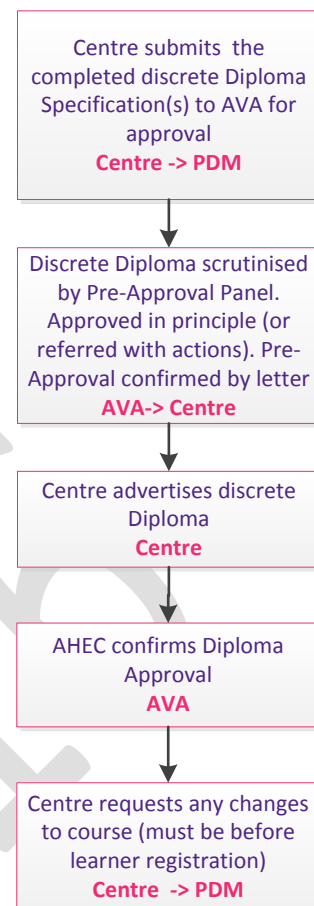
Non-compliant submissions will be discussed with the centre and referred for a second submission.

Approval in principle must be confirmed by the AVA before provision begins.

Once the approval process is complete:

- i. a centre will be able to register against the discrete Diploma on the portal.
- ii. the details will be uploaded by the AVA onto the QAA course database for generation of the learning aim code.

The AVA may withdraw approval of a discrete Diploma if the discrete Diploma is deemed not fit for purpose or if a provider fails to continue to meet the terms of its approval.



Making Changes to a discrete Diploma

Changes to the units for delivery may be made up to the point of learner registration which has a deadline of 12 weeks after the course start-date. Beyond this time courses will be locked. The requested change must be detailed on the AVA’s AD3 form.

Changes to discrete Diplomas are classified as either Minor or Major Changes depending on what is to be amended. The changes and processes the AVA follows are shown below:

Minor Changes

- Substitution of units within a SUB totalling not more than 15 credits
- Substitution of ungraded units
- Substitution of a SUB totalling not more than 9 credits
- Addition of an alternative SUB not more than 9 credits
- Amendment to RoC affecting not more than 9 credits

Considered by Product Development Manager who will consult with other AVA officers and/or subject specialists as appropriate. If the amendment is considered acceptable and continues to meet the requirements then the amendment is approved in principle to be confirmed by AHEC.

Major Changes

- Substitution of units within a SUB totalling more than 15 credits
- Substitution of a SUB totalling more than 9 credits
- Addition of an alternative SUB more than 9 credits
- Amendment to RoC affecting more than 9 credits
- Amendment to Title

Considered by Diploma Pre-Approval Panel which will include AVA officer(s), Deputy CEO, AHEC members from FE/HE and may also include subject specialists. If the amendment is considered acceptable and continues to meet the requirements then the amendment is approved in principle to be confirmed by AHEC.

Centres will review the unit content of a Diploma at the end of each year/course. Change to the unit list may then be requested by resubmitting the specification document for further approval. If approved a PDF version of the approved discrete Diploma Specification carrying the watermark “approved” will be forwarded to the centre

Centres will be contacted annually via their nominated Programme Manager contact, to request information on which approved discrete Diplomas they will be running in the coming academic year

Documents needed:	AIM Awards AVA Diploma Programme Specification Discrete Diploma Specification template (Health Professions Specification template) AD3 Form for change
Related QAA Licensing Criteria for AVAs:	4.1,4.2,4.3,4.5,4.6

How to assess students' work

Assessment strategy

The assessment strategy for each discrete Diploma will be designed by the provider to ensure that a student's confidence and skills are sufficiently developed in order that they are prepared for the rigorous assessment regimes that they will encounter when they progress onto programmes of study in higher education.

In order to achieve the Diploma students must meet all Learning Outcomes and associated Assessment Criteria in all the units specified in the rules of combination for the Diploma. These are described in the **discrete Diploma Specification**.

Setting assessments

Assessments will enable students to generate sufficient evidence to cover all criteria for assessment within the unit and to demonstrate differentiated achievement. Students will be provided with unit details at the onset of each unit, including details of the assessment and grading requirements for the unit. Where integrative assessments are used, these will clearly signpost the specific unit learning outcomes and grade descriptors/components that are being assessed via the specified task(s).

Formative assessments may be offered to establish how well each student is progressing and to provide developmental feedback to help them improve.

Summative assessments are the tasks by which evidence of achievement is gathered for each student for each unit.

All summative assessment tasks and methods should comply with the principles of assessment in that they should be:

- open, transparent, fair and inclusive
- continuous
- reliable, consistent and rigorous
- relevant and valid
- sufficient
- allowing students to produce work that is authentic

Assessment methods

The programme manager/discrete Diploma leader should ensure that a wide range of assessment methods will be used across the Diploma and that individual students will experience diverse opportunities for assessment. Assessment methods will include, where appropriate:

- Investigative/research projects and reports
- Extended essay writing
- Individual presentation to a group/audience
- Practical experiments
- Role-play
- Demonstration
- Maintenance of a structured portfolio
- Integrative assignments
- *Time-constrained assessment

***As part of their programme, all students will undergo a minimum of one level three time-constrained assessment of at least one hour length as part of a graded unit's assessment.**

The assessment process

The AVA has a set of sample forms for planning, setting and recording assessment activity of AHE graded and ungraded units

Approval of assessment tasks Each unit assessment plan and task brief must be approved by the Internal Verifier before being given to students. The Internal Verifier will ensure that the tasks meet the principles of assessment, and that they allow students to provide sufficient authentic evidence against all of the assessment criteria.

Assessing student achievement Graded units - this is a 2-stage process :

1. against the assessment criteria covered by the task – if met, then (in the case of a graded unit)
2. against grade descriptor components (GDCs) assigned to the task for a possible grade of pass, merit or distinction.

Ungraded units: if all assessment criteria covered by the assessment task are met, the task is achieved.

Feedback The unit tutor/assessor should provide clear and constructive feedback to students, which identifies areas of achievement and those where further work is required. This will be done via an assessment sheet where feedback on a student's work will be formally recorded in the 2 stages identified above.

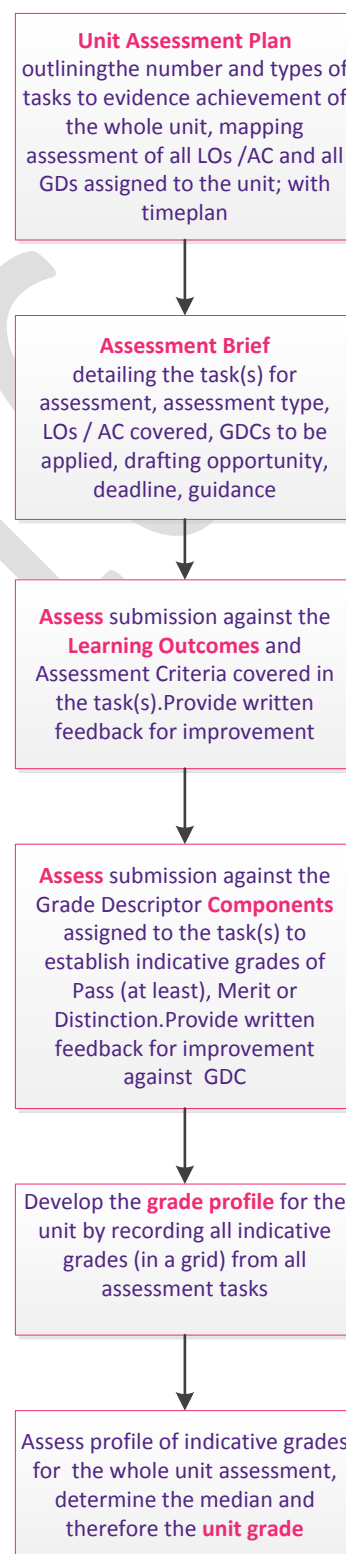
Tracking Achievement Unit tutors will maintain records of students' unit achievement and grades, and report this achievement data to the personal tutor and/or discrete Diploma leader.

The personal tutor/discrete Diploma leader will maintain an overview of the range of assessment methods undertaken by each individual student, to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the student's *discrete Diploma Specification*. In order to ensure that the student is coping with the demands of the programme the personal tutor/discrete Diploma leader will monitor for each student:

- Achievement and grades
- record of submitting work to deadlines
- extensions applied for and granted
- number of resubmissions of assessed work

If it is identified that a student is experiencing difficulties in coping with the assessment demands of their learning programme, they will be offered appropriate support and guidance, which may include referral to student support services available within the providing institution, or referral onto other programmes of study.

Achievement monitoring and assessment issues will be standard agenda items for team meetings.



Key points of assessment and grading: QAA regulations

Assessment

1. All units are subject to assessment via the assessment criteria.
2. All level three units within the graded element of the Diploma (i.e. 45 credits with academic content) are graded: Pass, Merit or Distinction.
3. "Pass" is the achievement of all the assessment criteria in a unit.

Grading (beyond the achievement of the assessment criteria i.e. a Pass)

4. Further grading may be considered only when all the Assessment Criteria are met.
5. Grade descriptors are generic – the same set of 7 is available to all subjects.
6. There are statements (components) for merit and distinction for each descriptor.
7. GDs have been assigned as appropriate to each unit by the AVA.
8. GD 7 (Quality) must be applied to all units and to all assignments.
9. Tutors, in assignment design, must identify and apply the appropriate GD components. (More complex assignments are likely to include more GDs and components.)
10. Tutors must record the development of a grade profile of GD grades for each assignment.
11. The grade indicators (provisional grades) of all assignments for a unit make up the unit grade profile.
12. There is NO overall assignment grade. The final grade for a unit is based on the grade indicators in the unit profile as a whole.
13. All GDs are of equal value although the Quality GD-7 grade may be a moderating influence.
14. The final grade is determined by the MEDIAN (not mean or mode) BUT ALSO -
15. The final grade for a unit is based on a holistic view – including professional judgment. (Tutors should not feel taken over by a mechanical process but be "in control". Professional judgment should work against a "perverse" outcome of a grade.)
16. GDs and components should structure tutor feed-back.
17. Tutors must keep careful records of grade profiles and unit grade decisions.
18. Grade profiles are subject to Internal Verification and External Moderation.
19. Final unit grades are subject to Internal Verification and External Moderation.
20. There is NO final/ single/ aggregated grade for the whole Access to HE Diploma award.
21. Recognised/accredited prior learning is not subject to grading within this model.

Resubmissions

22. If all AC are not met, a resubmission that is commensurate with the error/omission is allowed within a short turnaround time.
23. If all AC are met in the resubmission, it is eligible for further grading.
24. If all AC are not met the student may claim the opportunity for referral.

Referrals

25. A request for a referral is allowed at any point in the course.
26. The decision process to allow the request must involve the external moderator.
27. A student is limited to referrals for assessments to a maximum of 15 credits.
28. If the referral is for a graded unit, the grade for the resubmitted work is capped at Pass.

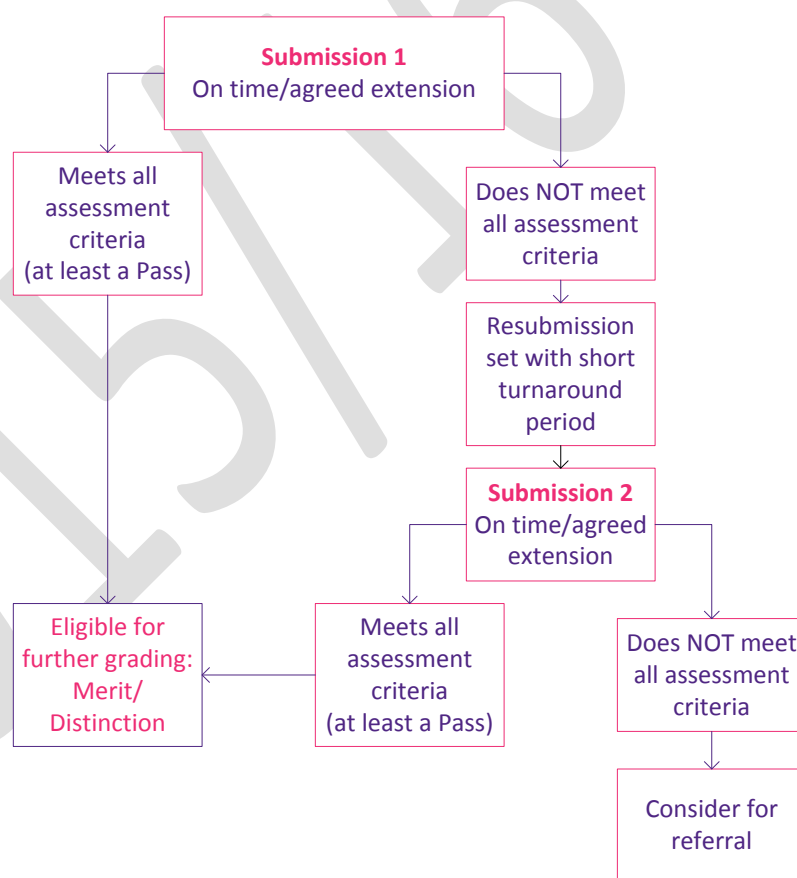
Submission regulations

Deadlines Students will be advised that the ability to submit work to deadlines is an essential requirement to progress onto higher-level programmes. The schedule of assessment deadlines is coordinated by the programme manager/discrete Diploma leader and agreed with unit tutors to ensure that it is manageable for students. It is anticipated that, once submitted, work will be assessed by unit tutors and feedback given to students within **two working weeks** of the submission date. A late submission is capped at a pass unless an extension was agreed as outlined below. All first submissions must be made before the Awards Board.

Extensions Unit tutors may agree an extension period of **up to two weeks** by negotiation and where genuine reasons can be evidenced. In exceptional circumstances the student may be granted longer than two weeks to submit however that would need to be supported by the personal tutor/discrete Diploma leader. The personal tutor will be notified of extensions and will monitor these in order to ensure that the student is coping with the demands of their discrete Diploma.

Resubmissions (ungraded units) A first submission that fails to meet the assessment criteria is returned to the student (with feedback) for resubmission within a short designated period. A timely resubmission that meets all the assessment criteria is “achieved”.

Resubmissions (graded units) A first submission that fails to meet the assessment criteria is returned to the student (with feedback) for resubmission. Feedback must relate to the assessment criteria but **may not** make reference to the grade descriptors and components. Resubmission should be within a few days (no longer than a week) and be proportionate to the degree of non-achievement. A timely resubmission that meets all the assessment criteria is considered for further grading.



Late submissions and late resubmissions: if/when all assessment criteria are met achievement is capped at a Pass.

Referrals

A student whose resubmission (Submission 2) fails to meet all the assessment criteria may request a referral i.e. the opportunity to make a second resubmission (Submission 3). The request is made of the assessor and Internal Verifier who collate evidence and subsequently convey the request to the Centre Lead Moderator (CLM). Even if the assessor and IV believe the situation doesn't warrant a referral, it should still be referred to the CLM for confirmation or challenge. The CLM informs the IV and the assessor of the decision. If approved, conditions of referral are set by the CLM and conveyed to the centre.

Decisions about referrals made by the CLM must include:

- whether or not a second resubmission opportunity should be offered
- the nature and extent of the requirements for second resubmission
- compliance with the relevant requirements for first resubmissions

Referrals undergo assessment by the tutor, internal verification and external moderation. If all assessment criteria are met, achievement is capped at a Pass. If all assessment criteria are not met the result is a fail.

A student is limited to referrals for assessments to a maximum of 15 credits.

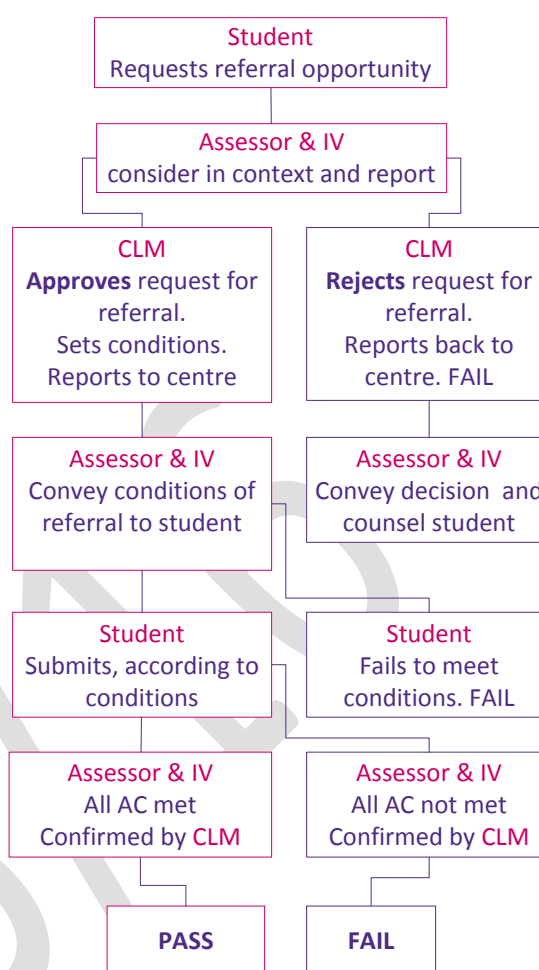
A complete record of all requests for referrals and their outcomes is provided for the Awards Board and thereby to the AVA for information and review.

Assessment method in resubmissions and referrals

Normally, the assessment method used for a resubmission is the same as that used for the original submission. However there may be exceptions such as:

- if it is not possible or practicable for resubmission requirements to replicate the original assignment or assessment task (e.g. with some types of group work, or practical research) then (unmet) learning outcome(s) should be assessed through an alternative task/assessment form which makes comparable demands to those of the original.
 - if undue advantage could be gained by resubmission of the same assessment task then an equivalent one should be devised to assess the learning outcome(s) not yet achieved.
- OR
- although delays in returning student work is inconsistent with AVA requirements for timely feedback, this might be considered if students can be informed of their grade and provided with feedback on their achievement in the task(s).

In the case of resubmission of a controlled assessment a new controlled assessment covering only the Assessment Criteria failed should be used.



Recognition of prior learning and credit transfer

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and transfer of credit exist to enable students to avoid duplication of learning and assessment.

A student may claim RPL or transfer of credit against a whole unit or several units. The potential for a student to undertake RPL or credit transfer relies on the Diploma Leader or Programme Manager carrying out effective interview and initial assessment of students to establish their previous qualifications and/or experience. Claims are made and considered on an individual basis.

A maximum of 50% (30 credits) of an Access to HE Diploma may normally be achieved through RPL and/or credit transfer.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the generic term for processes used to recognise learning achieved outside the formal course of learning designed to support student achievement of a discrete Diploma. It includes recognition of both experiential and certificated learning.

Accreditation of prior certificated learning is the process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is recognised as demonstrating achievement equivalent to that required to achieve one or more units of a named Diploma. As the previous learning has already been certificated, no credit is awarded, but students are exempted from the achievement of credit to a value judged by an AVA to be equivalent.

Accreditation of prior experiential learning is the process by which non-certificated learning achieved in a range of learning contexts is recognised as demonstrating learning equivalent to that of a named Diploma. In this process, a student presents evidence from previous experience, which is then assessed against the learning outcomes of the unit(s) being claimed. If the evidence satisfies the requirements of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit, the unit is achieved, and the student awarded the associated credit. **Units achieved in this way are not graded.**

Credit Transfer QAA permits AVAs to recognise credits awarded by other AVAs, provided these have been awarded in accordance with the terms of the Access to HE credit framework.

If a student transfers from one named Diploma to another (either within or between AVAs), credit already achieved may be transferred where this is derived from units that are acceptable within the rules of combination for the named Diploma to which the student is transferring.

Eligibility will be checked by the **Diploma Leader/Programme Manager**. Credit Transfer will be identified on the RAC and the certificate.

Currency APL/credit transfer is likely to be permitted if the qualification/credit achievement or experience has been gained **within 5 years** of starting the Access programme. If the qualification is older than 5 years, the students' claim must be supported by the centre and evidence provided to the Centre Lead Moderator, that the student is working to the level and range of the qualification for which APL is claimed. Such evidence may take the form of a diagnostic or other test. If satisfied that this is the case, the CLM may approve APL via the AF8.

Caution! It should be remembered that an Access to HE discrete Diploma offers a planned, coherent programme of study: therefore it is crucial when considering credit transfer, to ensure that the total credit record represents a coherent programme of study as well as meeting the achievement specification. Consequently, all the following points should be noted:

- Transferred credits must be in subject areas that correspond to or complement subject areas

in the new programme.

- Details in the discrete Diploma Specification must be met.
- The balance of assessment methodology reflected in the proposed total credit record must meet guidelines and proportions stated in the Programme Specification document.

[Please note that where RPL or Credit Transfer is used towards achievement of an Access to HE Diploma, the full fee will still be payable.]

1. The **Student** and **Assessor** agree what previous learning / experience/ qualification achievement can be evidenced towards an RPL claim and complete an **AF8 Form for RPL and Credit Transfer**

2. The **Student** will provide evidence of prior learning (for example *work experience records, statements from employers, essays, portfolios of evidence, certificates of achievement* and map it to the assessment criteria being claimed against

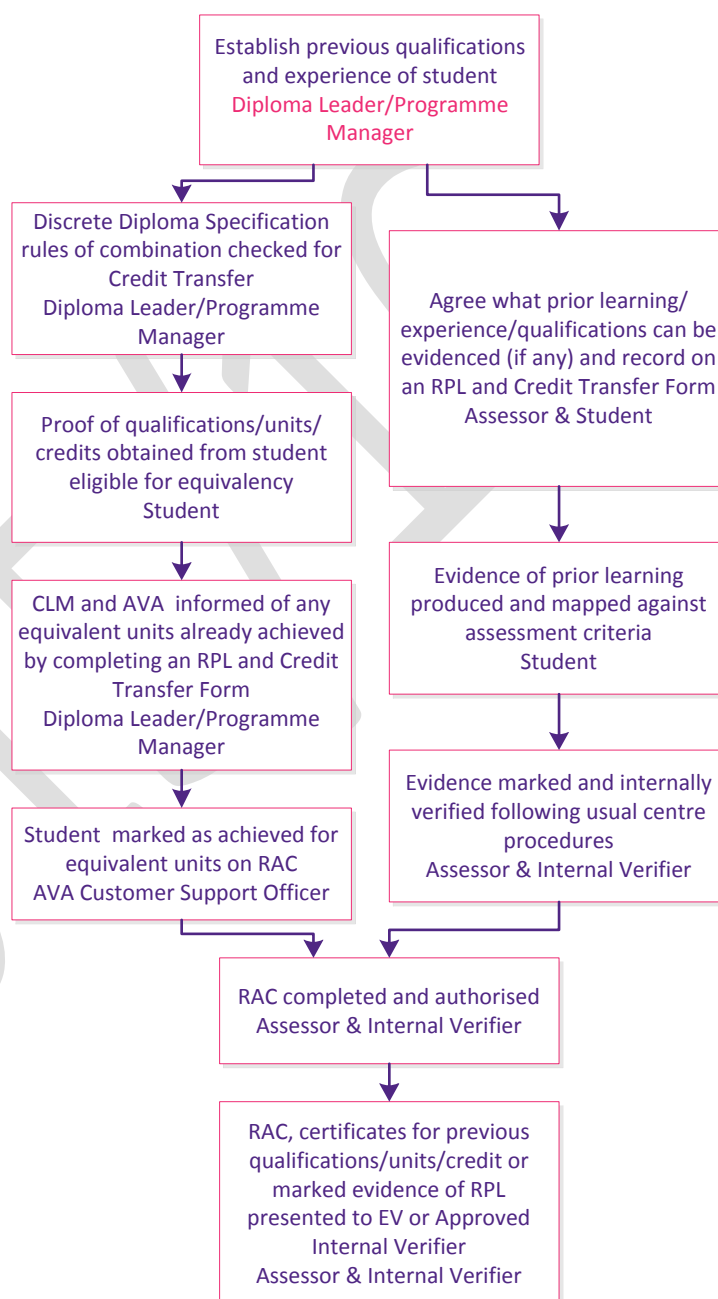
Evidence: Portfolio of evidence

3. The **Assessor** and **Internal Verifier** will follow their usual centre processes for marking, quality assuring and approving the submitted RPL evidence ensuring it meets the requirements of the unit(s)

Evidence: Assessment records, IV records

4. The RPL and Credit Transfer Form and RPL evidence must be presented alongside the RAC to the **CLM** at Final Moderation

Evidence: RPL and Credit Transfer Form, RAC



Appeals

Where assessment decisions are questioned by the student, providers must follow their institution's internal appeals procedure. If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached, then the programme manager should consult the AVA Centre Lead Moderator.

Authenticity and Plagiarism

The importance of demonstrating the authenticity of their work and understanding the issue of plagiarism will be explained to students during the induction process. Should accepted practice be breached, providers should follow their institution's malpractice procedure.

Conflict of interest

A provider and the AVA must take all reasonable steps to avoid any part of the assessment of a student's work (including internal verification and external moderation) being undertaken by an individual who has a personal interest in the result of the assessment.

Documents you will need:	Unit Assessment Plan and Record Summary (graded and ungraded) Task Brief (graded and ungraded) Task assessment record (graded and ungraded) Internal quality assurance documentation (AF8) RPL and Credit Transfer Form Recommendation for Award of Credit (RAC) Certification evidence from students
Documents we will use:	External Moderation Report
Related QAA Licensing Criteria for AVAs:	3.13, 4.5, 5.28

Handling disabilities and events that may affect a student's ability to be assessed

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a student to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The nature of any reasonable adjustment depends on the particular requirements as well as on the qualification and assessment methods. Reasonable adjustments are generally not appropriate where the student's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the actual features to be assessed.

Units within an Access to HE Diploma are assessed through internally set and internally assessed assessments. For this type of assessment the Internal Moderator may give permission for reasonable adjustments for a student without having to apply to the AVA for approval, provided that such arrangements do not confer an unfair advantage. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

Low vision aids, overlays

Brailing of non-secure assessment material

Amplification, taped questions and responses

Supervised rest breaks

Use of a Reader

Use of an Writer/Typist/Scribe

Use of a Practical Assistant

Use of a Communicator

Word processor

Use of a Prompter

Use of Sign Language

The Internal Moderator must approve and record the details of all reasonable adjustments made at the discretion of the centre and must make this available for External Moderation.

Special considerations

Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a student who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury, or
- some other event outside of their control

- which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.

You should note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration where an assessment requires the student to demonstrate practical competence. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer the student an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date rather than apply special considerations.

Documents you will need:

Internal documentation recording any reasonable adjustments and special considerations

How to quality assure in Access

Internal Verification/Moderation

Providers are required to ensure that there are processes in place to check and evaluate assessment practices and decisions. Internal Verification is a planned system of quality checks made by Internal Verifiers to ensure that assessment tasks have been written correctly and assessment decisions are valid, accurate and fair. Internal Moderation is the process of checking and confirming or adjusting decisions made about grading. For consistency we have used the role “Internal Verifier” to describe the persons involved in these processes.

An Internal Verification Plan should be developed before the assessment cycle begins to indicate what will happen, when, who is involved and how it will be recorded. When planning internal verification/moderation activity the provider should ensure that sampling includes all delivery sites, all units, all students, all assessors and a range of assessment methods across the course. Particular attention should be paid to assessment that is border-line between grades and any issues arising from previous internal and/or external moderation (EM).

Each Internal Verifier (IV) should specify the sample of assessed work from each assessor that they want to see and when. It is important that the sample is sufficient to form a view on the consistency and validity of the assessment decisions.

The samples must cover chosen units in their entirety (rather than focussing on assessment tasks) and should be increased for assessors new to Access to HE with a focus on the IV forming a judgment about each Assessor.

Minimum requirements:

1. Internal Verification of the assessment task should take place before tasks are distributed to students each year to ensure that they are fit for purpose
2. A sample of work in progress should be internally moderated in year to ensure that assessment is being carried out effectively and that that assessment and grading decisions are appropriate
3. A final sample of completed marked student work should be moderated/verified at the end of the course.

Standardisation

Providers must:

- plan and undertake standardisation of internally set tasks and the outcomes of internal assessment
- contribute assessed material to AIM Awards AVA standardisation activity

Standardisation ensures that the assessment criteria for a unit and/or grading components are applied consistently by assessors and verifiers. You must retain a minimum of two samples of assessed student work for each entire unit for one year which should represent every assessor (photocopies or scans are acceptable). These samples should be used for internal standardisation and retained for AIM Awards AVA standardisation.

Internal Standardisation is the standardisation of assessment practice where there is more than one tutor/assessor delivering the same or similar units and making assessment and grading decisions for students.

AIM Awards AVA standardisation is where we monitor the assessment and quality assurance of specific units across our centres. To do this we collect retained samples from centres, either by

asking for you to submit them (by post or email) or via an external moderator collecting samples when visiting the centre.

External Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to protect the integrity of systems by ensuring that the assessment of learning outcomes is fair, valid and reliable: that judgments are consistent and that the right things are correctly assessed. There will be a focus on professional dialogue between assessor and moderator.

External Moderation arrangements are agreed annually with each centre allowing for flexibility of approach, with a nominal **three visits per year** at specified times for particular purposes. Postal samples or subject specific visits may be requested if appropriate. A report is produced on standard templates following each visit that is sent to Programme Managers and the named quality contact **within four weeks**.

External Moderator Roles and Responsibilities

It is the duty and responsibility of all moderators to:

- check that all AVA and QAA procedures are adhered to
- offer support and advice to the delivery team, to ensure that its work is fit for the purpose of enabling students to progress to HE courses
- report on each visit within the stated timeframe, highlighting good practice, recommending improvements to enhance the quality of the programme and setting action points for compliance with QAA and AVA regulations

All external moderators for Access to HE are requested to:

- participate in training/updating events for moderators (a minimum of one event each year is required)
- participate in standardisation events, according to the subject expertise required for the events in the standardisation schedule
- assist the AVA in obtaining appropriate samples of work for standardisation events

Subject Moderator (SM)

Subject Moderators are subject specialists appointed to centres to consider assessment of student work at subject level. The SM will moderate a subject in all the discrete diplomas in which that subject is evidenced within a centre to ensure standardisation of delivery and assessment. SMs report to the CLM.

Centre Lead Moderator (CLM)

A Centre Lead Moderator is appointed to each centre. CLMs agree the moderation schedule and activities, monitor the organisation and management of programmes, discrete diplomas and systems across a centre and coordinate the moderation team. They complete a report for the centre incorporating information from the Subject Moderator record of visit, making reference to specific discrete diplomas or subjects where necessary.

CLMs are also responsible for approving referrals. The CLM receives a request supported by the assessor and IV and makes the final decision to allow the student to make a third submission of the task(s) for assessment and sets the conditions. The CLM then receives the assessed and Internal Moderated third submission and makes the final decision on whether or not the assessment is achieved.

AVA Lead Moderator (ALM)

The purpose of this role is to provide an external and independent view of the effectiveness of the AVA's Access to HE provision. Copies of all reports are received by the ALM who monitors and evaluates moderation practice across the AVA, analyses reports and produces an annual report for the AVA in October, which forms part of the AVA's self-evaluation report to QAA.

Thus it is the responsibility of the ALM to monitor and review student achievement across the AVA and (via sample visits and scrutiny of the external moderators' reports) to establish that all external moderators are effective in following AVA procedures. Analysis of a moderator peer review process also informs the ALM's judgment.

Moderation Visits

All moderation visits follow an agenda and centres are informed in advance of the required documentation and evidence that is to be provided. Samples may be pre-selected but centres are required to have all student work on site in case the sample needs to be expanded.

Initial visit : CLM

The CLM will visit the provider **around 10 weeks** from the start of the programme(s) at a mutually agreed date. The purpose of the visit is to:

- agree the schedule of external moderation activity – visit dates and any potential postal samples required
- check progress on action points from the previous year
- check the initial information, advice and guidance (IAG) given to students
- confirm enrolments, registrations and retention of students
- confirm staff profile – training and induction
- check adherence to Discrete Diploma specification
- confirm how study skills units are being delivered and assessed
- check systems for:
 - assessment and grading
 - record keeping
 - IV and record keeping
 - Plagiarism
 - check and approve any credit transfer and RPL (Recognition of prior learning) including certificated (APCL) and experiential (APEL) learning
 - confirm the UCAS application process
 - talk to students about experience and support offered/received
 - confirm areas of good practice

In addition, in order to ensure that assessment activities are effectively planned, the CLM will review:

- internal verification of assessment tasks
- assessment plans for all units
- assessment schedule for all units
- assignment/task briefs for all units
- application of grading descriptors

If, by this point, some units have been assessed and internally moderated the CLM may either moderate a sample themselves or take away a sample for subject moderators to consider

Interim Visit : Full moderation team

The team of Subject Moderators, led by the CLM, will visit **around 24 weeks** from the start of the programme at a mutually agreed date, according to the CLM’s schedule.

The CLM will check:	The Subject Moderators will check:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ progress on in-year action points ▪ record keeping/student tracking ▪ overall implementation of grade descriptors ▪ that evidence for AVA standardisation is retained ▪ student support ▪ the student experience ▪ any areas of good practice ▪ plagiarism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ that tasks are fit for purpose ▪ assessment against assessment criteria ▪ application of grade descriptors and components (where appropriate) ▪ quality of feedback to students ▪ IV practice and record keeping ▪ record keeping – AAR ▪ accurate award of credit and grades ▪ methods of assessment (variety of) ▪ the extent of the integration of study skills ▪ standardisation across discrete diplomas / tutors / sites ▪ plagiarism

Subject Moderators will want to engage in dialogue with the assessors about the work they have seen, give verbal feedback and complete a report on their findings.

Providers will need to provide documentation and evidence for the interim external moderation event as below:

Essential	Desirable
Assessed student work of whole units: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment task sheets • student work • feedback to students (by AC and grade descriptor) A sample may be pre-selected by the CLM but all student work must be on site	Assessment plans
Tracking of each student’s units and grades (if this is on computer then access must be provided)	Paper copy of RAC to accompany each portfolio
IV records: IV plan, IV of brief, IV of learner work	Full IV records in a separate file
Minutes of assessor standardisation meetings	Minutes of team meetings
Records of extensions given and confirmation of any expected referrals for awards board	Any statistical analysis of results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number of Pass, Merit, Distinctions • grade profile by subject
Notification of any changes to staffing	
	Student destinations and HE offers
	Good news stories, innovations, creativity, best practice

Final Visit : CLM

The CLM will visit **around 36 weeks** from the start of the programme(s) at a mutually agreed date once all units have been assessed and internally moderated. The purpose of this final visit is to check:

- progress on in-year action points
- standardisation
- areas of good practice

- plagiarism

In addition, in order to ensure that assessment and moderation have been effectively implemented, the CLM will:

- carry out an audit check on student work against registrations (all units must be available)
- check for preparation for Awards Boards including:
 - RACs accurately completed and summary signed by centre
 - RPL and exemption forms

Malpractice

If during the course of External Moderation we (the AVA) identify any potential malpractice (for example, false claims) we will instigate a malpractice investigation. Depending on the nature of the malpractice we may ask the provider quality contact to conduct an investigation and report the findings back to us, or in other cases we may carry out the full investigation ourselves. Once the investigation has been concluded we will inform you, the provider, of the outcome and any sanctions that will be applied. If the potential malpractice is deemed to have the potential to lead to an “adverse effect” (i.e. something that could prejudice certain students, affect the standards of or confidence in the AHE Diploma) then we must inform our regulators, QAA. As per the centre agreement providers have a duty to assist the AVA in carrying out any reasonable monitoring or investigations.

Annual Review Visit

As part of the Quality Assurance process, providers are obliged to review and evaluate their Diploma programme(s) and report your findings to us. The Annual Review Visit (ARV) offers the opportunity for 2-way review for the provider and the AVA. Providers complete AVA documentation beforehand and then discuss with the AVA officer at the meeting held at the centre (July to end September).

In turn, these reports contribute to the AVA self-evaluation in its annual report to QAA. Providers are asked to consider the content of their external moderator reports as well as that identified in their own internal self-assessment reports for Access. Action points from last year’s reports should be carried forward to the new report, appearing again as points requiring action if no improvement has been achieved.

Follow up action

- CLMs are informed of salient points from the ARV prior to the Initial Visit of the new academic year
- We identify necessary actions from your responses and report progress directly to you and/or to the December Programme Manager Forum

Quality Review of centres

In addition to External Moderation visits we carry out a cycle of external quality assurance in the form of Quality Reviews. During Quality Reviews (QR) and External Moderation visits you are assessed against a set of criteria which create an overall risk rating of Green, Amber or Red. These QR visits are to ensure that you are still able to comply with the terms of the centre agreement and that centre policies and procedures are appropriate and consist of meetings with senior staff, assessors, internal verifiers and students. A QR report will be sent to your named quality contact **within four weeks** and any areas for improvement are noted, action planned and monitored.

New centres receive their first Quality Review visit 12 months after approval and following QR visits are scheduled based on the centre’s risk rating. Green centres receive a visit after three years, Amber centres after 18 months and Red centres will require immediate intervention.

Documents you will need:	AIM Awards AVA Access to HE Diploma Programme Specification Centre Agreement ARV Booklet
Documents we will use:	External Moderation visit reports ARV Booklet Quality Review Report
AVA Licensing Criteria:	Precept 5

2015/16

Promotion of an Access to HE Diploma

Providers must ensure that the correct titles of all AIM Awards Access to HE Discrete Diplomas and units are used in their advertising (as per the approved discrete Diploma Specifications/Units) and that Diplomas are not promoted in a manner that could be misleading to students or potential students. It should be noted that **achievement of an Access to HE Diploma does not guarantee entry to UK HE programmes**. Literature and comments must make this clear.

AVAs are required by QAA to “monitor providers’ published information about Access to HE to verify its accuracy and currency, and consistency with QAA requirements, including:

- a. promotional material related to Access to HE provision
- b. information about the admission of students to Access to HE courses
- c. information and guidance issued to students about their Access to HE course and the achievement of the Access to HE Diploma
- d. information issued to HE providers about Access to HE.”

Use of Logos

The common identity and recognition of Access to HE is promoted by the use of the QAA Access to HE logo. The Access to HE logo is a QAA trademark and may not be used for purposes unrelated to the Recognition Scheme for which it acts as a visual marker. All users must adhere to the QAA guidelines.



Access to HE Logo – Version 1

DO NOT COPY THIS LOGO

Version 1 of the logo is available to AVAs and Access to HE course providers, who may use it on any materials that are intended to support QAA recognised Access to HE provision. QAA also uses the logo on documents relating to its own Access to HE work.

To maintain high quality reproduction, the logo should not be copied from the illustrations in this document or elsewhere. The logo and guidelines can be downloaded from <https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AVAs/Pages/logos.aspx>

You should understand that the use of the QAA Access to HE logo in a way that is not consistent with QAA guidelines or the use of the AIM Awards logo in a way not consistent with the AVA guidelines may result in the withdrawal or withholding of approval to deliver an Access to HE programme.



AIM Awards Logo

DO NOT COPY THIS LOGO

AIM Awards -recognised and AVA approved centres may use the AIM Awards logo with the following conditions:

- The symbol must not be used on products or packaging or in any other format that implies endorsement by AIM Awards of any product other than authorised AIM Awards/AVA provision.
- The symbol must always be reproduced in the original format and colours as provided by AIM Awards and should not be separated, recreated or modified in any way.

- Exclusion zone - In order for the logo to maintain its strength and clarity it should always remain uncluttered. The area indicated by the box rule forms the exclusion zone. No other visual elements such as text, illustrations, graphic devices, logos or photographs should ever encroach upon this area.

The AIM Awards logo is available by emailing enquiries@aimawards.org.uk

Any use of the symbol that brings AIM Awards into disrepute will be referred to the AIM Awards Board of Trustees who may remove Centre Recognition and AVA approval from the organisation concerned. You should refer to our public information policy available for download from our website

<http://www.aimawards.org.uk/working-with-us/centre-handbook-and-forms/>

Promotional Materials – the approval process

Providers must ensure that their promotional materials are submitted to the AVA for approval before publication, according to the process outlined below:

- Providers must send draft artefacts to the AVA’s Marketing Officer tyrone.o’connor@aimawards.org.uk prior to final publication and in sufficient time to allow action following our feedback
- The AVA will check that the logos for QAA Access to HE (consistent with QAA and AVA guidance) and correct and AIM Awards have been appropriately used.
- The AVA will respond within 5 working days, by email, confirming use or requiring action of the provider before publication.
- If corrections are required, the materials should be resubmitted prior to final publication and in sufficient time to allow action following our feedback
- The materials are published only when AVA approval is conferred.
- The AVA will undertake an annual check of provider websites and promotional materials. If the use of the logo is not consistent with the QAA guidelines and the AVA requirements, the provider will be informed and conditions set within a specified timeframe.



Documents you will need:	Discrete Diploma Specification AIM Awards AVA Access to HE Diploma Programme Specification AIM Awards Public Information policy. QAA Guidelines for the use of the Access to HE logo.
Related QAA Licensing Criteria for AVAs:	3.11, 3.12, 3.13

Registering Students

Confirming identity

Once the discrete Diploma offer has been decided and **you – the provider**- are approved to deliver you can enrol students to the course. It is essential that upon enrolling students their identity is confirmed in order that **we – AIM Awards AVA** - can be assured that qualifications are being awarded appropriately. In most cases students have to complete an enrolment form and the centre checks their identity via a passport, driving licence or other documentation.

Unique Learner Numbers and the privacy notice

At the enrolment stage a range of information about each student must be obtained in order that they can be registered with us correctly, as a minimum: first name, surname, date of birth, postcode and ULN.

You are responsible for obtaining a Unique Learner Number (ULN) for each student and ensuring students are issued with a Privacy Notice explaining that their personal information will be shared with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and other education related organisations.

Standard text is available for this on the Learning Records Service website: <http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/documents/privacy-notices-eng.htm>

If a student chooses not to have their public information shared they must inform the Student Records Service. Further details about ULNs: <http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/documentlibrary/comms/aquickguidetodataquality.htm>

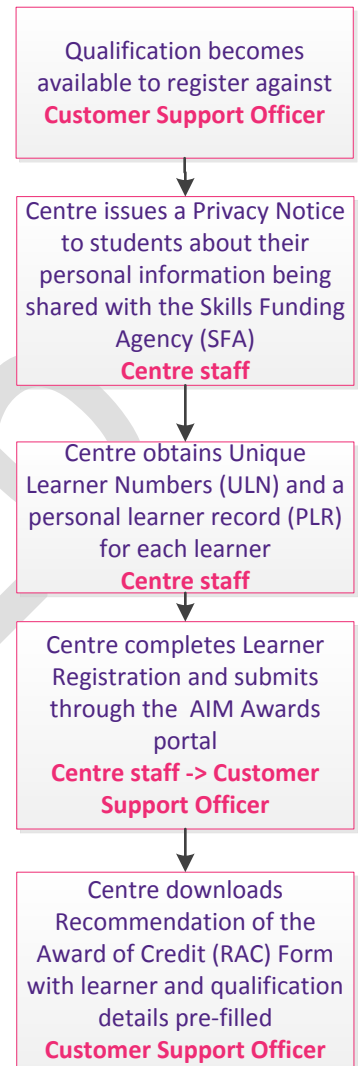
Registering students – the AIM Awards Registration and Awards Portal

Once you have approval to offer a qualification we will send the person that sent in the discrete Diploma an email inviting you to register students via the AIM Awards Online Portal.

You will need to set up accounts in order to use the Portal to carry out administration of your centre. You will need to discuss this with your Customer Support Officer and provide us with details of the staff that require accounts. We will send you a **Portal Guidance** document which provides full details about using the Portal and we can provide training if required. The AIM Awards Online Portal allows you to:

- Register students
- Submit documentation, including Course Amendment Forms
- Review students and runs
- Upload completed **Recommendation for the Award of Credit** (RAC) forms
- Authorise RAC claims for certification

You must ensure that students are registered onto the correct discrete Diploma on the Portal and check that the correct units are listed. You must check all student registrations carefully in order to avoid Maladministration and Malpractice. Please note that registrations will not be processed until the annual centre recognition fee has been paid.



Learners are required to be registered within 60 working days (12 weeks) of the start of their Access to HE programme, registrations after this date are considered late and will incur a charge as described in the late registration policy.

Learners must be registered onto 60 exact credits at registration, once registered these credits can only be altered under extreme extenuating circumstances.

Once students are registered an RAC form will be produced for each programme. **You will be able to download your RAC forms from the portal within four weeks of receipt of correctly submitted registrations.**

The RAC is used to claim the students' achievements at the end of the course and so the details must be checked carefully as these will appear on any certificates issued. RACs are allocated a Run Number which is used to identify them in communications.

Please inform us **within 14 days of receipt** of any changes that need to be made to the details on the RAC. We reserve the right to charge for replacement certificates issued as a result of inaccurate information provided by centres. For further information on RACs and claiming achievement please see page 36.

Late registration

Students undertaking any Access to HE Diploma, whatever their mode of study, must be registered for units to the value of 60 credits **no later than 12 weeks** from the start date of their Access to HE course, or before the student makes a formal application to a higher education course through UCAS or any other application process, whichever date occurs first.

Maladministration

Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in non-compliance with the specified requirements for delivery of Access to HE. Examples of potential maladministration include:

- A student being registered against different units with different dates of birth (eg due to a typo or administration error) which could lead to students not receiving the correct certificates
- Assessor ticking the wrong boxes on the RAC which could lead to student receiving credit for units they have not completed

Maladministration is always taken seriously by AIM Awards and our regulator, QAA. Full details of types of malpractice and how we deal with incidents of potential malpractice are defined in our **Malpractice** policy document.

Documents you will need:	Standard Student Registration Template Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC) Fees and charges Malpractice Portal Guidance
Related QAA Licensing Criteria for AVAs:	3.8, 3.9

The Awards Board

In order to meet QAA requirements we the AVA and you the provider must hold an Awards Board to act as the formal authority for the approval of the award of credits, grades and Access to HE Diplomas.

AIM Awards AVA policy and procedure for the Awards Board operates in accordance with QAA requirements as detailed in the QAA [Grading scheme handbook Section E: Student results and awards boards \(2013\)](#). Providers and moderators should refer to this source, the AVA guidance booklet and the AVA record template with its Appendix 1 template.

Purpose

The Awards Board is a formal meeting authorised by the Access to HE Committee to carry the formal authority for the award of the Access to HE Diploma. It is conducted according to a standard agenda which the AVA will provide and must be formally minuted.

Business

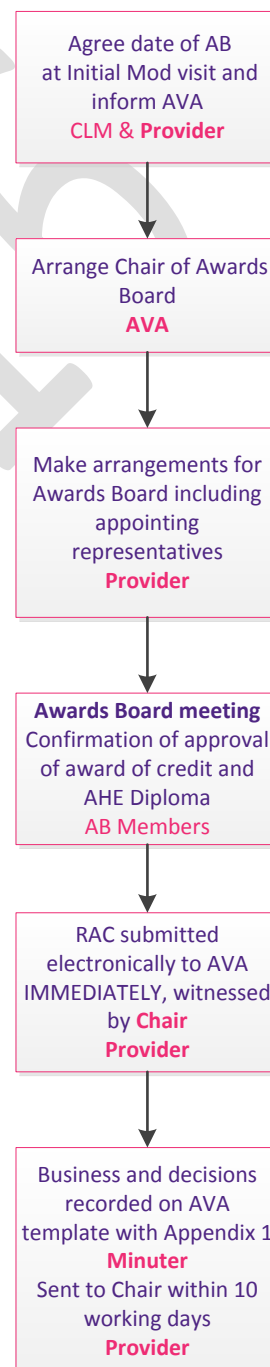
The main business is the approval of the award of the Access to HE Diploma and credits. The Awards Board will confirm that, for each student for whom the award of the Access to HE Diploma is approved, the rules of combination according to the named Diploma Specification have been met and the credit and grade profiles are accurate and complete.

The Awards Board receives **no information about offers for progression** to higher education which may have been made to any student, and such information will play no part in its considerations. The meeting of the Awards Board must be formally closed before any such information is shared.

The Awards Board also makes decisions about referrals, special cases, including extenuating circumstances, aegrotat and posthumous awards, and cases of academic misconduct as detailed in the QAA handbook and the current AVA guidance booklet.

Timing

The Awards Board follows the final moderation, usually by a few days. Normally, the Awards Board will be held on the same day for all discrete Diplomas in a Centre. Providers will agree the time and date with the CLM at Initial Moderation and notify the AVA so that AVA representation can be arranged. Providers will appoint their representatives.



Membership

Composition of Awards Boards may vary according to the size, range and organisation of the centre's Access to HE provision. Members in addition to the minimum specification may attend in particular circumstances, for example when specialist knowledge/experience/understanding is held and may be used to inform decisions to be made. The membership as a minimum must consist of the following representatives:

- **Chair: (AVA Representative).** To ensure that due process is followed.
 - AVA officer
 - AVA Lead Moderator
 - Independent CLM i.e. CLM at another centre in the AVA
- **Awards Board Lead Moderator.** To confirm assessment judgments.
 - Centre CLM – where possible
 - Subject Moderator, if CLM not available
- **Provider Representative.** To ensure all business and documents are ready for panel and presents to Chair.
 - Programme Manager/Diploma Lead
 - Quality manager
- **Minuting Officer.** To minute the business of the Awards Board and records all decisions
 - Provided by AVA.

Additional Representatives may also attend to observe and support the business of the awards board. They may be:

- Discrete Diploma coordinator
- Subject tutor
- Discrete Diploma Moderator
- Subject Moderator

For full details of the role of each member please refer to our AIM Awards AVA Awards Board guidance booklet.

Procedure

The teaching team's final assessment decisions for each student are brought to the Awards Board via the AVA document: *Recommendations for the Award of Credit (RACs)* - completed prior to the Awards Board. These decisions follow internal moderation and external moderation. The Awards Board deliberates on the recommendations made, and approves the award of credits, grades and Access to HE Diplomas to students who have met the requirements of the discrete Diploma Specifications.

Awards Board decisions are recorded on the Awards Board minutes and the RAC(s).

Special Cases

The Awards Board also makes decisions about special cases, including referrals, extenuating circumstances, aegrotat and posthumous awards, and cases of academic misconduct as detailed in the QAA handbook and the current AVA Awards Board guidance booklet.

Referrals All on course recommendations for referrals must be made to the Centre Lead Moderator (see page 15). When this occurs **at the end of the course the recommendation must be taken to the Awards Board.**

The following procedure is normally followed:

- Decision is made whether a referral opportunity (third submission) should be allowed.
- Referral conditions are set, preferably within 2 weeks but with an ultimate deadline of 25th August, to be confirmed by the Chair of the Awards Board.
- The assessment decision of the referral is confirmed by the Awards Board Lead Moderator who amends the RAC accordingly, informs the Chair of the Awards Board and ensures that the student is informed.
- The RAC is returned to the AVA.
- The AVA checks the RAC and where appropriate, issues the Access to HE Diploma and transcript of achievement to student by the end of August.

Extenuating Circumstances In most cases, extenuating circumstances that affect achievement on individual units (for example, in relation to requests for extended deadlines) are handled at course level, and appropriate action and decisions taken according to your approved procedures. You must document cases of extenuating circumstances and the action taken. The external moderator will confirm that you have appropriate procedures in place and that these are operated consistently.

The awards board will consider cases where extenuating circumstances have affected performance in more than one area or in any other way that falls outside the your normal processes and is not dealt with elsewhere in this documentation.

A case may only be brought to the Awards Board where no prior action has been taken. Cases of extenuating circumstances that are brought to the awards board must:

- have been considered by your course team and external moderator prior to the meeting.
- be fully documented and include evidence which is presented in a standardised manner
- include your recommendation to the awards board on whether each individual claim for extenuating circumstances should be supported and to what degree.

Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

- **Aegrotat** awards may be approved by the awards board, where:
 - Student unable to complete award because of exceptional extenuating circumstances
 - Medical certificate supports
 - Student has achieved at least 30 credits
 - Diploma awarded with full credits but unit/grade profile is incomplete
 - Diploma states "Aegrotat Award"
- **Posthumous** - may be made at the discretion of Awards Board

Academic Misconduct Prior to the Awards Board, academic misconduct is to be dealt with via your usual procedure, endorsed by us. Your report on the investigation of the case and your professional judgment will be considered as evidence.

In **serious** cases the Awards Board will only consider the award of credit for units not affected by the misconduct. Penalties may include:

- Disqualification for all or part of the award
- Suspension/exclusion of student

In **less serious** cases penalties may include:

- Resubmission
- Referral

Penalties may **not** include alteration to grades.

Appeals Grounds for appeal to the Awards Board are restricted to:

- Evidence of administrative error in assessment process.
- Extenuating circumstances that for good reason could not be notified prior to Awards Board.

Appeals may not be made against academic judgments. These must be agreed at final moderation.

For on-course issues see AVA Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure, available on the website:

<http://www.aimawards.org.uk/working-with-us/centre-handbook-and-forms/>

Documents you will need:	Grading scheme handbook Section E: Student results and awards boards (2013) Documentation and evidence to support Special Cases AIM Awards AVA Awards Board Guidance Booklet and Appendix 1 document. Recommendations for the Award of Credit (RACs) Discrete Diploma Specifications AVA Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure
Related QAA Licensing Criteria for AVAs:	5.27

Getting results and certificates

Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC)

RACs are issued for each run of student registrations per discrete Diploma. The RAC will contain the course code, title, students' names and registration numbers as well as an individual page for each student listing the unit names and codes for the 60 credits worth of units identified at registration. The RAC must be checked on receipt to ensure the details are correct in terms of the spelling of students' names, the required units and Unique Learner Numbers. **Please be advised that the exact names on both the Student Registration and RAC are those used on certificates.**

Once a unit has been fully assessed the assessor must complete the RAC with either Achieved or Not Achieved for ungraded units or with the assigned grade for graded units. At the Final Moderation visit, once they are satisfied that the work, assessment, verification and assigned grading meets the required standard the completed RAC must be signed by the lead assessor and IV of the discrete Diploma and the subject Moderator. This is then taken to the Awards Board. The RAC will be submitted electronically immediately following the Awards Board with the signed front page of the RAC being returned to the AIM Awards offices by the Awards Board Chair. Where you (the provider) have AIM Awards Portal access you may be able to complete these steps online.

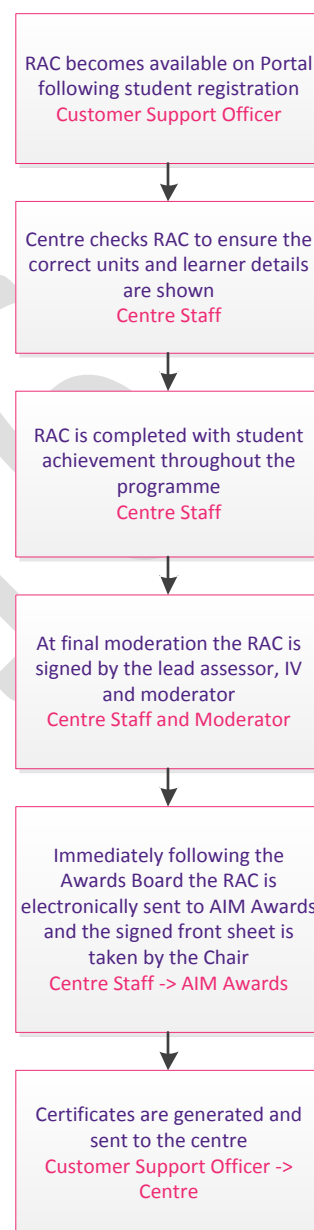
Timescale for issue of results

Once a correctly completed RAC with all signatures has been received by us (the AVA) certificates and a summary of credit achievement will be produced and issued by post to your internal Centre Administration Contact **in 6 weeks or by A Level Results Day at the latest**. Students who have achieved the Access to HE Diploma will be issued with an Access certificate and a further certificate detailing the units and grades achieved. Students that have not achieved the Diploma will be issued with a unit certificate with details of the units and grades achieved. **Please be advised we reserve the right to withhold certificates if fees are outstanding at the time of despatch.**

Certificates will be sent to the centre who registered them, not necessarily where the course was delivered. You, the provider, are responsible for the distribution of the certificates to students.

Ordering replacement certificates

In certain circumstances providers are able to request replacement or amended certificates on behalf of their students. In most cases we, the AVA, will require the students' original certificates in order to make amendments, unless they have been lost or damaged. Where we do not receive the originals the replacement certificates are labelled as "Replacement" with the date of printing. A record of replacement certificates issued is kept.



You can request amended certificates for the following:

- Spelling error in student name
- Transposed names (ie surname and forename wrong way around)
- Incorrect results

Where a certificate has been lost you can request a replacement. If the student has lost the certificate and is asking for a replacement you must ensure that you have obtained and approved valid proof of identity from the student. Students may request replacement certificates where a centre ceases to exist.

In order to request amended or replacement certificates you must complete a **Replacement Certificate Form** and pay our replacement certificate fee (detailed on our **fees and charges**). We will issue replacement certificates **within 10 working days** of receipt of a valid claim.

Documents you will need:	Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC) Replacement Certificate Form Fees and charges Access to HE – Centre Request for Award of Credit Amendments Form
Documents we will use:	Log of Replacement Certificates Certification Process
Related QAA Licensing Criteria for AVAs:	3.8, 5.27, 5.28, 5.29, 5.30, 5.31, 5.32

Enquiries post Awards Board

Centres must take all reasonable steps to check that completed RACs are complete and accurate prior to the Awards Board meeting taking place. The detail of the RACs must reflect the decisions agreed by the Moderators.

Whilst we accept that sometimes a mistake may happen, AIM Awards view such requests as serious and not to be undertaken lightly by centres as such a request calls into question the internal QA systems within a centre.

Please note that changes following the Awards Board may delay the issue of certificates. If additional moderation is required to validate requests (e.g. postal or by centre visit), centres will be charged.

Amendments to Award of Credit after Awards Board

Amendments to the award of credit after the Awards Board will be made in exceptional circumstances only and only on receipt of evidence.

Requests for changes after the Awards Board must be submitted using the **Access to HE – Correction of Award Form** (one form per learner), completed by a Senior Manager/named Quality Contact for AIM Awards' consideration.

Completed forms must be emailed to your allocated Customer Support Officer **along with supporting evidence for the change being requested** (for example assessed student work, assessment and internal verification records).

The Centre Lead Moderator must approve any changes to the RACs. Once notified by the centre's Customer Support Officer, that the changes have been agreed, the centre may then amend the RAC and re-upload for the Centre Lead Moderator to verify. If changes are not agreed the original Award of Credit will remain.

There will be a charge of £25 per learner for amendments following the Awards Board.

Amendments to Award of Credit after Certification

- The centre must check all certificates on receipt
- Any amendments to the award of credit requiring a certificate reissue will be made in exceptional circumstances only
- Reissued Certificates will be chargeable
- Requests will only be considered from Senior Manager/named Quality Contact for the centre. Requests will not be considered from Tutors/Assessors, Internal Verifiers.
- The centre must follow the procedure below, to ensure a clear robust process for handling is maintained:
 1. The centre must make the request in writing, by completing the **Access to HE – Correction of Award Form** (one form per learner), clearly stating how the amendment has come about
 2. The centre must provide clear evidence including assessment records to support the change to the learners' certificate
 3. The centre must provide details of :
 - internal investigations that have taken place to establish why the situation occurred,
 - measures that have been put in place as a result to ensure a similar instance is not able to occur in the future
 4. The original certificate(s) must be returned to AIM Awards before a replacement can be issued
- On consideration of the request, AIM Awards will either support or refute the claim. If supported the CLM will sign off and authorise any amendments that have been agreed.
- The amended certificate(s) will be reissued **within 20 working days** of CLM authorisation.

Appendix 1 – Programme Checklist

Week	Activity
Week 1	Confirm with AVA the Discrete Diplomas running for academic year and the units within them
Week 4	Agree date for CLM initial visit
Week 5	Finalise Assessment Schedule for the academic year
Week 6	Finalise Internal Moderation plan for the academic year
Week 7	Submit any promotional materials for next year to AVA for approval before publication
Week 8	Confirm details of learners to be registered with the AVA
Week 10	The CLM will visit the provider around 10 weeks from the start of the programme(s) at a mutually agreed date
Week 12	Final change to register learners with the AVA
Week 14	Confirm with AVA the date and time of Awards Board
Week 16	AVA imports learner registrations to Gradetraka / RAC available on Portal
Week 24	Subject Moderation takes place
Week 36	Final Moderation
Week 37	Awards Board takes place and RACs submitted to AVA for certification
Week 41	Certificates dispatched to centres by recorded delivery
Week 43	Annual Review visit report template send to centres by AVA completion
Week 44	Annual Review visits take place
Week 45	Annual Review visits take place