

# AIM Qualifications Access to HE Diploma (Computer Science) Level 3 Specification

**400/1322/4**

*V1 June 2023*



*Previously approved by the former AVA Open College Network West Midland*

## Document version history

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# Contents

<b>About us</b> .....	<b>3</b>
About this Access to HE Diploma specification .....	3
Find out more .....	3
<b>Section 1 – Qualification overview</b> .....	<b>4</b>
About this diploma .....	5
Progression opportunities .....	5
Diploma details.....	5
Qualification size .....	6
Notional Learning Hours (NLH) .....	6
Entry requirements .....	6
<b>Section 2 – Qualification structure</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Qualification structure and components .....	8
<b>Section 3 – Assessment</b> .....	<b>10</b>
How the qualification is assessed .....	11
Grade descriptors .....	12
Reasonable adjustment and special considerations .....	13
Standardisation .....	13
<b>Section 4 – Operational guidance</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Offering this Diploma .....	15
Fees and charges .....	15
Requirements to deliver this Diploma .....	15
Approval to offer this Access to HE Diploma .....	15
Resource requirements .....	16
Centre responsibilities.....	16
Registration and certification .....	16

# About us

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is an Access Validating Agency (AVA) licensed by QAA to award Access to HE Diplomas to successful students. AIM is the largest AVA In England and Wales and offers the widest selection of Access to HE Diplomas.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is a leading Awarding Organisation providing training providers/centres/colleges with high-quality, regulated, vocational and technical [qualifications](#) from entry level to level 6. AIM's qualifications are suitable for delivery in a variety of settings and are available in a wide range of subject areas. All our UK Level 3 qualifications carry UCAS tariff points which can count towards university entry requirements. We also offer non-accredited provision and the AIM Quality Mark.

AIM is an independent [end-point assessment organisation](#) (EPAO) specialising in assessments for apprenticeships for the creative, cultural and professional services industries.

## About this Access to HE Diploma specification

This specification contains everything you need to know about the Diploma and is intended for tutors, assessors, internal quality assurers, centre managers and other staff within AIM recognised centres and/or prospective centres. It provides information about the structure and delivery of the qualification. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Access to HE Centre Handbook, AIM Centre Handbook and other policy documents available on the website and in the AIM portal.

This is a live document and as such will be updated when required. Recognised centres will be informed via email if changes are made and it is your responsibility to ensure the most up to date version of the Diploma specification is used.

## Find out more

### Current AIM centres

Your centre lead will be happy to discuss the details of this qualification with you by emailing [centreleads@aimgroup.org.uk](mailto:centreleads@aimgroup.org.uk) or calling [0844 225 3377](tel:0844 225 3377).

### New centres

In order to offer this Diploma, you must be an AIM recognised centre and be approved to deliver this qualification. If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our business development team to discuss becoming an AIM recognised centre. They can advise you on the best Diplomas for your organisation. Email [businessdevelopment@aimgroup.org.uk](mailto:businessdevelopment@aimgroup.org.uk) or call [0844 225 3377](tel:0844 225 3377).

More information can be found on: [www.aim-group.org.uk/newcentre](http://www.aim-group.org.uk/newcentre)

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## Access to HE Diploma (Computer Science)

[www.aimgroup.org.uk](http://www.aimgroup.org.uk)  
[0844 225 3377](tel:0844 225 3377)



## **Section 1 – Qualification overview**



## About this diploma

The Access to HE Diploma is a full Level 3 qualification designed to prepare learners without traditional qualifications for entry into Higher Education (HE). The Diploma provides opportunity for learners to acquire and develop knowledge and skills needed to progress to higher education study and enables learners to develop social and emotional skills such as communication and confidence.

## Progression opportunities

Learners who complete and achieve the Access to HE Diploma could progress onto Higher Education courses including Bachelor Degrees, Foundation Degrees, Higher National Certificates and Diplomas (HNC/HND) and Higher Degree Apprenticeships. The Access to HE Diploma could also support access into employment areas where evidence of study and achievement at level 3 is required.

## Diploma details

AIM Qualifications Level 3 Access to HE Diploma (Computer Science)	
Assessment	Centres are encouraged to consider using a variety of assessment methods in order to prepare the learner for study at a higher level in their relevant subject area. These include essay writing, presentations, practical, academic displays, discussions, reflection, role play, research projects and field work.
Grading	Graded/Ungraded
Geographical coverage	England
Operational start date	01/08/2022
Review date	July 2027
Qualification number	400/1322/4
Credit Value	60 credits
Notional Learning Hours (NLH)	600 hours
Rules of combination	In order to achieve the Access to HE Diploma, learners must achieve:
	45 Credits which must be graded, academic subject content at Level 3 only
	15 Credits which must be either at Level 2 or Level 3 ungraded
	60 Credits in total

## Qualification size

All Access to HE Diplomas require the achievement of 60 credits maximum of which:

- 45 of the 60 credits must be graded at Level 3: pass, merit, or distinction. Such credits will arise from Academic Subject Content Modules.
- The remaining 15 credits are ungraded and can be achieved at either Level 2 or Level 3.
- Students may only be registered against units with a maximum combined, total credit value of 60.

## Notional Learning Hours (NLH)

Notional learning hours are the length of time required for a learner to complete their Diploma.

This includes all learning that may be relevant to the achievement of the learning outcomes including directed and private study, practical and project work, assignments, and assessment time.

For all Access to HE Diplomas the notional learning hours are 600.

## Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for students applying for the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Access to H.E. Diplomas. Centres adopting the Diploma are, nevertheless, required to ensure that learners admitted onto the Diploma possess the necessary skills and personal qualities to cope with the demands of the course. The AVA expects centres to establish that candidates normally operate to at least Level Two in English and Level One in Mathematics before being accepted onto a course leading to the Diploma. In addition, centres would be expected to provide advice and guidance about the demands of the course and to establish that applicants show appropriate levels of commitment and motivation.



## **Section 2 – Qualification structure**

## Qualification structure and components

This section details the rules of combinations for the qualifications.

Select the component titles to view the component details [here](#).

Rules of combination for: <b>Level 3 Access to HE Diploma (Computer Science)</b>	
<b>In order to achieve the Access to Higher Education Diploma, learners must achieve:</b>	
45	Credits which must be graded, academic subject content at Level 3 only
15	Credits which must be either at Level 2 or Level 3 ungraded
60	Credits in total
<b>In order to achieve the Access to Higher Education Diploma (Computer Science), learners must achieve:</b>	
0	Mandatory graded credits at Level 3
0	Mandatory ungraded credits at Level 2 or Level 3
30	Optional graded credits at Level 3 from any of the following academic subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creative Computing</li> <li>▪ Cyber Security</li> <li>▪ Data Analysis and Structure</li> <li>▪ Networking</li> <li>▪ Research and Reporting</li> <li>▪ Service Management</li> <li>▪ Web Design</li> </ul>
15	Optional graded credits at Level 3 from any of the following academic subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advanced Mathematics</li> <li>▪ Creative Computing</li> <li>▪ Cyber Security</li> <li>▪ Data Analysis and Structure</li> <li>▪ Networking</li> <li>▪ Research and Reporting</li> <li>▪ Service Management</li> <li>▪ Web Design</li> </ul>
15	Optional ungraded credits at Level 2 or Level 3 from any of the academic subjects listed above and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Professional Communication Skills – replacing ICT Module</li> <li>▪ Skills for Learning (Level 3 only)</li> <li>▪ Common Core</li> </ul>
60	Credits in total
<b>Credit Exemption</b>	
Overall, the total proportion of credits awarded or exempted through either credit transfer and/or recognition of prior learning must not exceed 30 credits	

### Access to HE Diploma (Computer Science)

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0844 225 3377

## Other Requirements

### Excluded Combinations

- Credits can be claimed for **either** Application of Hyper Text Pre-processor (PHP) unit **or** Web Server Scripting unit
- Credits can be claimed for **either** Fundamentals of Hyper Text Pre-processor (PHP) unit **or** Application of Hyper Text Pre-processor (PHP) unit
- Credits can be claimed for **either** Fundamentals of Structured Query Language (SQL) unit **or** Application of SQL unit
- Credits can be claimed for **either** Relational Databases unit **or** Database Development unit
- Credits can be claimed for **either** Website Development unit **or** Designing and Developing a Website unit
- Credits can be claimed for **either** Study Techniques unit **or** Preparing a Written Assignment and Preparing to Study units
- Credits can be claimed for **either** Research Topic unit **or** Applied Research Skills or Research Project units



## **Section 3 – Assessment**



## How the qualification is assessed

Centres are encouraged to consider using a variety of assessment methods in order to prepare the learner for study at a higher level in their relevant subject area. These include:

- essay writing, presentations,
- practical,
- academic displays,
- discussions, reflection,
- role play,
- research projects and
- field work.

Guidance on our expectations is available in the [AIM Qualifications: Access to HE Centre Handbook](#).

The assessment method for the qualification is by internally set assessments. Centres are free to devise their own assessments for each unit delivered.

The AVA would expect all elements of assessment practice, whether activities and their timing, evidence or feedback; to meet the following key principles of assessment as outlined below:

- Authenticity
- Fitness for purpose
- Inclusivity
- Sufficiency, reliability, and consistency
- Validity

Centres are encouraged to consider using a variety of assessment methods. The AVA expects centres to keep all elements of their assessment practice under constant review to ensure that the key principles are met. Centres are required to produce their assessment plan prior to the commencement of the course. This will be viewed by each Diploma Moderators. In developing a unit assessment plan, tutors should plan an assessment programme that meets the development needs of students and the demands of the unit in as few assignments as possible.

When planning assessment for a unit centres need to be aware of the:

- level and credit value of the unit
- status of the unit – graded or ungraded
- Learning Outcomes (LO) and Assessment criteria (AC)
- Grade Descriptors (GD) allocated to the unit when the unit is graded
- the word count - 1500-2000 words for a three credit unit and 3000 words for a six credit unit

If just one assignment is used to assess the unit, it must enable all:

- learning outcomes to be assessed
- allocated grade descriptors to be applied

All assessments should be designed in such a way as to minimise the requirement for reasonable adjustments to be made.

Assessments must not require learners to produce evidence above and beyond that stipulated in the assessment criteria.

Centres must ensure that assessments briefs are internally moderated before they are issued to learners and must be available to the Diploma Moderators during their first moderation activity.

Further guidance on assessment can be found in the **Access to HE Centre Handbook** and the **Access Grading Handbook** [Sections B](#) and [Section C](#).

## Grade descriptors

To achieve the Access to HE Diploma, a learner must be registered against and achieve units which meet the rules of combination as follows:

Grade descriptors are assigned to Level 3 units by the AVA. Each grade descriptor contains a number of components which reflect different types of performance and should be selected as appropriate for the subject and the demands of each assignment. Centres are able to select the components within each grade descriptor to be applied in the unit's assessment.

Components should be used as follows:

- A minimum of one component, from each grade descriptor allocated to the unit, must be used.

- The selected components must ensure that students can be rewarded for performance which exceeds the standard for pass (in graded units).
- Where descriptors are used more than once to assess a unit, different components from that descriptor may be used.
- The components used at merit and distinction must be the same set.

More information relating to the grade descriptors and their components can be found in the **Access Grading Handbook** [Sections B](#) and [Section C](#).

## Reasonable adjustment and extenuating circumstances

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations are available for all assessments, irrespective of whether they are internally or externally set. Where a learner or group of learners may not be able to access the assessment without reasonable adjustments, centres should ensure that they apply in good time for relevant reasonable adjustments to be made, using the [AIM Qualifications Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#) which gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the assessment criteria.

## Standardisation

Standardisation is a process that promotes consistency in the understanding and application of assessment practice. Full details on AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group's standardisation practices can be found in our Access to HE Centre Handbook.

Outcomes from standardisation events will be disseminated to centres by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group.



## **Section 4 – Operational guidance**



## Offering this Diploma

Centres wishing to offer this Diploma must be an AIM recognised centre. New centres can apply to become a centre using the centre recognition application process on our website: [www.aimgroup.org.uk](http://www.aimgroup.org.uk).

We can advise centres of the best and most efficient methods for offering this qualification. All procedures for the use of this qualification, including approval, registration of learners, verification and certification will be completed through the AIM portal and all centres will have an allocated customer experience advisor to support them.

## Fees and charges

Details of all our fees and charges can be found on our website, [www.aimgroup.org.uk](http://www.aimgroup.org.uk).

## Requirements to deliver this Diploma

To offer this Diploma, centres must ensure that tutors:

- Hold a qualification in the subject area and at the level above they are delivering.
- Hold or be working towards a relevant teaching or assessor qualification. The AVA recommends PGCE, Level 5 Diploma in Teaching and Learning or DTTLs. Please note it can be the minority of staff who are working towards this qualification and not the majority.

Centres must also ensure that they have in place an Internal Quality Assurance person who:

- holds or is working towards a Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practices or its equivalent
- has substantial experience of working in or assessing Access to HE Diploma qualifications
- is familiar with the assessment requirements of the Access to HE Diploma

## Approval to offer this Access to HE Diploma

Centres wishing to offer this Diploma must complete and submit a qualification approval request. [This can be found on the AIM website when choosing a qualification.](#) Some qualifications require centres to have specific resources in place and/or their assessors/internal verifiers should hold certain qualifications. Where this is the case, centres must provide evidence of resources/staff qualifications when completing the qualification approval request.

## Resource requirements

Specialist resources required to deliver this Diploma would include access to Computing and ICT facilities and to relevant suitable software. Additionally, appropriate hardware and technical support are expected.

Where centres choose to deliver the placement unit, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure the safeguarding of their learners and to ensure that learners are fully informed regarding any potential costs relating to the placement, for example DBS checks.

## Centre responsibilities

Each centre should identify a centre contact who will be responsible for:

- ensuring that the centre meets all the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group requirements for centre recognition and adheres to all [policies and procedures](#)
- Access to HE provision within the centre
- ensuring all procedures relating to the delivery of the Access to HE Diploma operate effectively in the centre
- ensuring all relevant AIM Qualifications documentation is distributed as required within the centre and that the security requirements for external assessment are adhered to, where applicable.

## Registration and certification

Once your centre has approval to offer a qualification, you will be able to register learners using the AIM portal. Learners must be registered onto the correct qualification via the portal. Centres then select their chosen components.

For all registration and certification processes, please refer to the portal guidance document which can be downloaded from our website's [centre handbooks and forms page](#). Details of assessment, internal verification and external verification can be found in the [AIM Qualifications: Access to HE Centre Handbook](#).

Learners achieving a qualification will be issued with a qualification certificate detailing the achieved qualification and components. Learners who have not achieved a qualification will, on request, be issued with a component certificate detailing the components achieved.

## Derby Office

### Registered address

3 Pride Point Drive  
Pride Park  
Derby DE24 8BX

## Wolverhampton Office

Aldersley House, Overstrand  
Pendeford Business Park,  
Wolverhampton, WV9 5HA

Tel: **0844 225 3377**

Email: [enquiries@aimgroup.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@aimgroup.org.uk)

Web: [www.aimgroup.org.uk](http://www.aimgroup.org.uk)

