



Skills for Learning Professionals

## Frequently Asked Questions

This is our F.A.Qs page, if you have a question that does not appear below please send us an email to: [14-19@lluk.org](mailto:14-19@lluk.org)

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### What is the Diploma?

The Diploma is a new qualification that combines theoretical study with practical experience and is based on subjects and skills relating to work.

Diplomas give students an insight into work and will help them make decisions about their future direction without closing down options. Diplomas will provide the skills and knowledge needed for progression into employment and into further and higher education.

### Why are Diplomas being introduced?

Diplomas are part of a national programme to encourage young people to continue learning for longer, by widening their choices and helping them get the qualifications they need to succeed in work and life. As well as the new Diplomas, GCSEs and A levels are being updated, the International Baccalaureate is being introduced in every area and the number of Apprenticeships increased. These changes will mean that all young people can choose a qualification which suits their interests and learning style and allows them to fulfil their potential.

### When and where will they be introduced?

Schools and colleges in 149 areas across England will offer the Diploma from September 2008. More will begin teaching it as it is phased in during 2009 and 2010. By 2013, all 17 Diploma subjects will be available in every area. Schools and colleges are forming partnerships in their local area so that if a young person wants to take a Diploma which is not offered at his or her school, there are arrangements in place to ensure that a nearby school or college will be able to do so. In some cases, Diploma students will spend some of their time at school and some at college and in the workplace.

### Who will do a Diploma?

Diplomas will suit students of all abilities who are attracted by a course that combines theoretical and practical learning relevant to work. The courses will give a strong grounding in specific sectors, but will also ensure students have wider skills and knowledge to prepare them for work in any field and for further and higher education.



### What skills are Diploma students going to develop?

Diploma students will develop subject knowledge that relates to their chosen industry area, demonstrate competence in English, Maths and ICT, and acquire analytical, research and practical skills essential to success in employment and further learning. Some of these skills will be sector specific; some are common to all industries, such as team-work and self-management

### Who has designed the Diplomas?

Employers have been integral to the creation of the Diploma. They have worked with representatives from universities, schools, colleges and awarding bodies to set out what students with Diplomas need to have learnt. The qualifications are offered by all the main awarding bodies.

### What about other qualifications?

Three levels of Diploma will be available which complement the existing offer available for 14 to 19-year-olds. Students will be able to switch between the different types of qualification: some may choose to take a Higher Diploma from 14 to 16, and then do A Levels, an Apprenticeship or potentially an International Baccalaureate (IB); or they might do GCSEs, and then start an Advanced Diploma at 16. GCSEs or A levels can be taken as part of a Diploma and alongside it. Other established qualifications such as BTECs and NVQs continue to be offered but will also be available as components of the Diplomas. In the longer term we expect to fund only those qualifications which feature in Diploma, Apprenticeship, A Level, GCSE or IB programmes.

### Are schools and colleges going to be adequately funded to deliver Diplomas?

Yes. Schools and colleges will be funded through local authorities. Allocations for 2008/9 will be announced in December but are likely to be at least as much as for equivalent existing courses. The grant will take account of the different needs of areas, such as transport costs.

### Are Universities going to accept young people with Diplomas?

Yes, universities will regard the Diploma as broadly equivalent to 3 A levels. They have been involved in designing Diplomas and many have expressed their support. UCAS are currently working out the value of the Diploma in their tariff system. Universities will be able to specify particular combinations of options within a Diploma which reflect your entrance requirements for particular courses.



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### What is a Diploma worth in the School and College Achievement and attainment tables and in terms of UCAS points?

QCA are still to announce the exact equivalencies for the first Diploma qualifications but in terms of the amount of time it takes to teach and the challenge involved in completing a composite qualification like the Diploma, we expect a Foundation Diploma to be broadly equivalent to 5 GCSEs grade D-G, a Higher Diploma to be broadly equivalent to 7 GCSEs grade A\*-C and an Advanced Diploma to be broadly the same as 3 or 3.5 a levels. UCAS will be taking their decision about the Diploma tariff either later this year or early next.