

DOCUMENT:

**Assisting 14-19 Diploma learners through the  
UCAS application process**

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## 1. Introduction and context

You may be aware that UCAS is currently hosting a project which is being funded by the Department for Education. The project aims to explore the experiences of 14-19 Diploma learners when accessing higher education (HE) to identify barriers which may be preventing these students from reaching the destination they aspire to at university or college. Once these barriers have been acknowledged, measures will be implemented to try to remove them for future learners.

One barrier which has emerged from this work is that it has been difficult for HE admissions tutors to interpret Diploma applications from the information presented to them by the Apply system. This is largely owing to the fact that over the 2010 application cycle, Diploma students throughout the UK did not complete their applications in a standardised format. It has also been difficult for admission tutors to identify the Additional and Specialist Learning qualification, and it has therefore been challenging in some cases to formulate meaningful offers for these students.

As a consequence, a best practice guide has been produced for students demonstrating how to complete a UCAS application to standardise the method of applying. UCAS strongly encourages you to use this guide, as admissions tutors will be informed of the content and expect to see applications presented as the guide describes.

In addition, UCAS recommends that advisers follow the advice and recommendations in this document to ensure that applications are supplied to UCAS containing accurate and correct details of the student's studies.

Please read the 'Overview of the 14-19 Diploma' section below. You should use this guide only if you are delivering the *exact* qualification that is described below.



## 2. Overview of the 14-19 Diploma

The 14-19 Diplomas are reasonably new qualifications and were first introduced into English schools and colleges in September 2008 as part of the wider 14-19 educational reforms. The Advanced Diploma is a two-year full-time qualification for young people aged 16 and over. It offers a unique blend of theoretical and practical learning and allows students to study in work-related settings; both real and simulated. It has been developed with employers and universities to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the sector related to their chosen Diploma.

From September 2010 the subjects, or lines of learning, which students can study are:

- Creative and Media
- Construction and the Built Environment
- Engineering
- Information Technology
- Society, Health and Development
- Hair and Beauty Studies
- Environmental and Land-based Studies
- Manufacturing and Product Design
- Business, Administration and Finance
- Hospitality
- Sport and Active Leisure
- Retail Business
- Public Services
- Travel and Tourism

The **Advanced Diploma** is a group award consisting of a number of standalone qualifications. Once achieved, the Advanced Diploma is equivalent to a minimum of 3.5 A levels.

The standalone qualifications incorporated in the group award are:



### **Principal Learning**

Comprising units directly related to the line of learning of the Diploma and graded from A\*- E.

### **Extended Project**

Independently organised project undertaken by the learner resulting in the presentation of an extended piece of writing, an artefact or performance piece. Graded A\* - E.

### **Functional Skills**

Level 2 qualifications in English, Maths and ICT, ungraded but achievement is compulsory.

### **Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL)**

Level 3 qualification or qualifications of the student's choice. The volume of study for the ASL must be at least 360 guided learning hours.

The **Progression Diploma** is also a group award qualification in the 14-19 Diploma programme but is slightly smaller in volume than the Advanced Diploma. It is the equivalent of 2.5 A levels when complete. The Progression Diploma consists of the following standalone qualifications:

- Principal Learning
- Extended Project
- Functional Skills in English, Maths and ICT at Level 2.

Students studying these qualifications also have to undertake 10 days' work experience and develop personal, learning and thinking skills.



### 3. Considerations

#### **Using the staff area of Apply, have you shortened the list of qualifications which the student can select for their application form?**

Ensure that the following qualifications are selected on your school or college's qualifications list where appropriate. These can be set up in the staff area of Apply:

- Advanced Diploma which is labelled: Advanced Diploma (14-19 Level 3)
- Progression Diploma which is labelled: Progression Diploma (14-19 Level 3)
- Extended Project which is labelled: Extended Project (Level 3)
- Ensure for the Advanced Diploma you also include in this list the Additional and Specialist Learning qualifications which your school, college or consortia offers as part of the group award, for example: A level, BTEC qualifications.

Through shortening the list of qualifications the student can select, there will be less choice for the student when selecting their qualifications. This will increase the likelihood that the student will complete the application form correctly.

#### **Before sending the application to UCAS, have you checked that Diploma students have selected the following qualifications?**

##### **Advanced Diploma students**

Advanced Diploma students should indicate that they are taking the following qualifications:

- Advanced Diploma labelled Advanced Diploma (14-19 Level 3), with the correct title of the qualification selected
- Extended Project labelled Extended Project (Level 3), with a title / short description of their Extended Project
- Additional and Specialist Learning qualification: A level, BTEC etc.

##### **Progression Diploma students**

Progression Diploma students should indicate that they are studying the following qualifications:

- Progression Diploma labelled Progression Diploma (14-19 Level 3) ), with the correct title of the qualification selected



- Extended Project labelled Extended Project (Level 3), with a title / short description of their Extended Project

Check that students have also entered any other qualifications which they have previously studied or taken outside of their Diploma award, for example GCSEs, additional A levels outside of the Diploma Additional and Specialist Learning qualification etc.

**If there are mistakes and students have not completed their qualifications as described above, please ask your student to rectify their application before sending it to UCAS.**

Students need not indicate that they are studying Principal Learning or Functional Skills in the qualification section as these awards are incorporated in the overall Advanced Diploma award.

The Extended Project should be presented separately as this is individual to each student and may be particularly relevant to the course the student is hoping to study.

**Before sending the application to UCAS, have you checked the student's personal statement?**

To help admission tutors to identify the student's application, ensure that they make reference to the qualification somewhere in their personal statement if you feel this is appropriate. Again, suggest Advanced Diploma students to indicate which qualification they are taking for their Additional and Specialist Learning, if you feel this is appropriate.



## 4. Advice for teachers when writing a reference for a 14-19 Diploma student

In addition to the advice above, to assist admission tutors in identifying Diploma applications UCAS recommends that you include a short description of the qualification within your adviser reference.

You should also describe what the student is undertaking as part of their studies in as much detail as you see fit, particularly mentioning the Additional and Specialist Learning and if appropriate a more full description of the achievements in Principal Learning and the Extended Project.

Below are two examples which demonstrate how this might be done for Advanced and Progression Diploma students. Please feel free to use this as a template for your own references:

### **Advanced Diploma**

*Joe Bloggs is studying the 14-19 Advanced Diploma. The Diploma is a new group award qualification which consists of a number of standalone qualifications including Principal Learning, Extended Project, Functional Skills and Additional and Specialist Learning. To complete the award, Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills are also required, as is a minimum of 10 days' work experience. In its entirety, the Advanced Diploma is the equivalent of 3.5 A levels.*

*Joe is studying the Advanced Diploma in Creative and Media which includes an A level in Art as his Additional and Specialist Learning. His Extended Project has explored the use of photography in the media.*

### **Progression Diploma**

*Joe Bloggs is studying the 14-19 Progression Diploma. The Diploma is a new group award qualification which consists of a number of standalone qualifications including Principal Learning, Extended Project and Functional Skills. To complete the award,*



*Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills are also required, as is a minimum of 10 days' work experience. In its entirety, the Progression Diploma is the equivalent of 2.5 A levels.*

*Joe is studying the Progression Diploma in Creative and Media. His Extended Project has explored the use of photography in the media.*

## **5. Further advice**

If your student receives an offer from an institution which is unclear, please contact the HEI directly to ask them to clarify what they expect your student to achieve to fulfil the offer.



## 6. Further context

Admission tutors will be made aware that it has been recommended that advisers should include a sentence such as the examples above, and therefore will expect to see something like this in applications from 14-19 Diploma students.

Following this advice will allow admission tutors to clearly identify that the student is applying with a 14-19 Diploma, which will improve the institution's ability to make clear and appropriate offers to your students.

## 7. Contacts

If you have any queries about using the staff area of Apply please contact:

For general enquires contact our dedicated schools and colleges customer services team:

- 0845 123 8001

For training on the Apply systems please contact our Professional Development Team:

- 01242 545 712
- [cpd@ucas.ac.uk](mailto:cpd@ucas.ac.uk)

If you have any queries about the 14-19 Diploma or anything presented in this guide please contact the Diploma and Qualification Data Officers at UCAS:

Joanna Wilkins	e: <a href="mailto:jm.wilkins@ucas.ac.uk">jm.wilkins@ucas.ac.uk</a>	t: 01242 223 725
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