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Welcome to your Access to Higher Education Diploma.

The Access to HE Diploma’s we offer are full Level 3 qualifications designed to prepare you for entry into Higher Education (HE). Highly respected and acknowledged throughout both the Further Education (FE) and HE sectors.

Your course is designed to prepare you with the skills you need to study at university, this means writing essays and reports, giving presentations and learning to manage your time effectively.

Our team at learndirect Professional Development are here to support you throughout your learner journey. You’ll be allocated a personal assessor who will have regular contact with you via our online platform and messaging system. They have extensive experience in the field that you will be studying, and a wealth of knowledge to ensure that you have the best learning experience during your time with us.

All of our course materials are easy to understand, and provide you with a broad range of additional information to support your learning.

We hope that your experience with us will be satisfying and rewarding.

Good luck!

learndirect Professional Development team.

Learner Support Advisor
Email - pdev@learndirect.com
Telephone - 0116 366 7567
Your Access to Higher Education Diploma

The Access to HE Diploma is a nationally recognised level 3 qualification, regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). In order to attain the Access to HE Diploma you must achieve 60 credits overall.

45 graded credits at Level 3 from Assignments concerned with academic subject content
Academic Assignments are those whose content is 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
And
15 ungraded credits at Level 3.

Rules of Combination for each Diploma Delivered
The awarding organisation (Open College Network West Midlands), have checked each diploma to make sure it meets all the requirements necessary for you to be able to achieve the 60 credits required for the full diploma. This is to ensure that the Assignments which appear in your programme provide you with the correct combination of graded and ungraded Assignments.

Ungraded Assignments
The emphasis of these Assignments is to develop the study skills you are going to need to help you to complete your Access programme, as well as being skills that you need to develop in preparation for study at university. These assignments are completed at the beginning of your programme, in order to prepare you with the best chance of gaining the full diploma. The grades for these assignments will be either a Pass or Refer.

Subject Graded Assignments
These are subject specific assignments based on the qualification title that you have chosen. On the first page of the study materials for these Assignments, it will state that the unit is graded, and how many credits it is worth, either 3 or 6 credits. Your assignment is then graded as either Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Should your preferred university require you to achieve a certain number of credits at Merit or Distinction, it is these Assignments where you need to focus your attention on achieving the higher grades required.
You will be able to see what you need to do in order to achieve a Merit or Distinction grade later in this handbook.

Course duration
With distance learning the programmes are designed to give you the flexibility to work at your own speed, and to allow you to fit your study around your home, family and work commitments. The minimum expected time for a learner to complete their Access to Higher Education Diploma is 9 months, the maximum is 2 years. After a short amount of time on the course you’ll be capable of things you hadn’t previously thought possible.
Completing your Diploma

Your course has been put together in a specific order that has been approved by our awarding organisation, but also by a number of universities. It is extremely important that your assignments are completed in the order that you see them. The first 6 assignments contribute to the 15 credits of ungraded assignments that you need in order to achieve your full qualification. These are mandatory and are part of your diploma for the purpose of developing the study skills necessary throughout your Access Course and further on into University.

Next Steps

During your time with us, it is likely that you will complete your university applications in readiness to continue your education once you have achieved your Access to HE Diploma. If, by the time you have achieved your Access to HE Diploma, you have not yet applied to university, then this is the next step for you to be considering. Learners must bear in mind each University has their own set of admission criteria and places are subject to demand.

Varying admission criteria can include but are not limited to the following:
- Number of credits to be attained at Merit or Distinction level.
- Successfully passing a face-to-face interview at the University.
- Passing a Universities proprietary literacy and numeracy assessments.
- Completion of specified work placements or work experience.

We strongly recommend learners starting an Access to Higher Education Diploma have a GCSE Grade A – C in Maths and English (or equivalent Level 2 such as Functional Skills/Key Skills etc.) OR a full L2 NVQ qualification in a related subject.

Each learner must undertake their own research to ensure their diploma is properly specified and gives them the best possible chance of gaining entry to their university of choice. This research should be undertaken as soon as possible. learndirect Professional Development will not be able to accept any liability for the inability of any Access to Higher Education Diploma learner failing to secure an offer from a Higher Education institution.

Each year we issue a UCAS applications guide. The information contained within this guide will support you with the completion of your application form. The guide will be posted to your online account in August.

Registration

At the point of registration, (this is not your enrolment date and the college will inform you of this deadline), your centre will register you for the named diploma and against 60 credits for the diploma you are studying, ensuring that the 60 credits selected meet the rules of combination.
**Access to HE Diploma Support Team**

We have a dedicated team of support staff for your Access Course, their responsibilities are detailed below and include who you should contact with various types of queries.

**Learner Support Advisors**

The Learner Support Advisors are here to provide you with advice and guidance about a number of general areas relating to your course. They will advise about every stage of your application, including detailed progress reports on how your application is progressing. They will also direct you to information relating to the Advanced Learner Loan and course payments. Once on program a dedicated Learner Support Advisor will call you on a regular basis to check your progress and to make sure that your studies are going to plan.

How to contact the team. There are two ways of contacting the team, either Email: pdev@learndirect.com or Tel: 01163667567

If you are experiencing technical problems, send as much detail as possible enabling us to locate the issue and get it resolved as quickly as possible to your learning support advisor, or through, pdev@learndirect.com

**Access to Higher Education Manager**

The Access to HE Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the courses. In addition, they act as the main contact between our centre and the awarding organisation for all programme related issues. You should contact them with queries about your course, if you are experiencing problems or difficulties, or have concerns or complaints that you wish you raise.
Assessors

Your assessor is responsible for guiding and supporting your learning whilst on program. They will be responsible for marking your assignments and giving you with feedback about the work you've produced, and how you can improve. If you are having difficulties with an assignment, or with understanding the content of your study materials, you will be able to contact them through the messaging system in your approved contacts email. Please note that assessors are unable to call or give support via telephone. You should contact your unit assessors if you require an explanation or guidance about a particular assignment, including any feedback that you may have been given about your work.

Please note: Your unit assessor will change as you progress through your assignments, so it won’t necessarily be the same person throughout your entire course, this depends on their subject specialism. Please check before sending a draft, this is to ensure that you are sending it to the right person. You will find out who your unit assessor is by going into your email support contacts, your unit assessor will automatically update as you complete each unit.
An Introduction to your Learndirect Professional Development e-portfolio

Before you can begin your course you have the opportunity to personalise it and make it totally unique to your own individual learning needs. Throughout the process you will be able customise elements of your course and your online learning environment so that it is totally unique to you.

By doing this section before you begin your course we will be able to build a programme of study that is tailored to your unique needs and challenges you as a learner in a meaningful way to ensure that you gain the most from your studies with us. You can customise and add skills to your e-portfolio to suit you. By clicking on the information icon, you will see a brief overview of mandatory and additions that can be added to your course, to make it bespoke to your needs.

Work through each section of the introduction, completing your profile as you go. Upload an image is simple. Take a few seconds to ensure your basic profile details are correct (don’t worry, you can update these at any point during your course).

Work through the questions that you see on the screen.

You can opt out of sharing your data with employers when you get to the following question, just tick the box which is most appropriate.
Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

Once you have completed your employer questions you will see a provisional Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Your ILP is your "route map" which shows your start date and “provisional” end date for your course. It is very important that you look at all of the due dates for the assignments carefully, as if you do not submit your assignments on time you could jeopardise your funding for this course. Think about things like holidays or any other busy periods in your life where you might not be able to study, or indeed study more.

Next to each unit, the GLH (Guided Learning Hours) for that unit are published. Most learners study for about 10 hours per week and submit one assignment every 2-3 weeks.

What you need to do now, is to review all the submission dates and confirm that you are happy with them. If you think you need longer or shorter for any of the assignments, please click on the end date and select a new end date for that assignment. Below is an example of an ILP.

**Your ILP**

All learners are provided with an Individual Learner Plan for their course. You can view your ILP below. The ILP sets submission dates for each unit of study in the course so that learners have clearly defined targets in order to achieve their goals. It is very important that you meet the submission date deadlines for your course. If for any reason you believe you may be late submitting an assignment you should contact your tutor immediately so that your circumstances can be discussed and an extension arranged if necessary.
Learner Declaration
You are now required to confirm your Learner Declaration and view our Provider Declaration. Once you have started your course if you need to make any changes or alterations etc. we can discuss these with you then.

At this stage you must declare you’re learning style and whether to have any learning difficulties or disabilities. Hover over the area, highlighted in bold to change your preferences.

My preferred learning style is: Visual
I have the following additional learning requirements: none

The Learner Agrees to:
- Complete all tasks and activities set within the agreed timescales.
- Inform my tutor immediately if I will potentially miss a submission due date.
- Communicate in a timely way any change in personal circumstances, which may affect my successful completion of the qualification.
- Understand and follow Equal Opportunities, Data Protection Act and Health and Safety rules and procedures.

Learner Declaration: I can confirm I have agreed to do my utmost to achieve the objectives set out on this plan. I agree that I have completed all of the enrolment paperwork and I understand all of the information provided.

Learner Signature: [signature]
Date: 17/11/2017

The Provider Agrees to:
- Ensure the learning and assessment you receive is of the highest possible quality.
- Agree target dates with you that are realistic, achievable and challenging.
- You will have access to general information, advice and guidance about our services.
- You will be treated with understanding and respect.
- We will respond quickly to your comments and suggestions.

Once you have signed this document, all of your personalised data will to be stored and your e-portfolio personalised to you, ready to begin your learner journey with learndirect Professional Development.
Getting started

Once you log in, there is a quick guide to the functionally of your e-portfolio. Tap on the guidance button at the bottom of the left hand column and hover over each information icon, to give a brief overview. You will also get a quick guided tour when you first log in.

Below are two of the functions on your dashboard.

- **Messaging**
  You can use the Messaging section to contact your assessor. You can also use this section to send messages to any connections that you have made with fellow learners. At the bottom right hand side of your screen there is also a chat box, click to open and then you will be able to instant message your connections and even make new connections.

- **Course Statistics**
  The Course Statistics section can be used to access and amend your IEP (Individual Learning Plan), this shows you when each of the assignments for your course are due to be submitted. NB. If you are funding your course through an Advanced Learner Loan, your assignments MUST be submitted on time or else you face losing your funding.
Your Dashboard

When you login to your e-portfolio account, the first screen you will see is your dashboard. This provides you with an overview of your course, including your progress, assignment deadlines, and your main menu on the left hand side.

Course

In your Course units you will find the following buttons

- **Study materials**: course content material for your guidance
- **Extended learning** – glossary of terms, reading lists, other resources
- **Assignment** – this is your unit assignment. You should not attempt to complete any assignment without first working through the study materials.
- **Assessment feedback** – when a completed assignment has been marked, you can access the feedback from your assessor here.

**Unit Debate** – these are included to allow you to debate each end of unit question with your fellow learners. When posting comments to debates, you must respect the views of others, and not use inappropriate language of any kind. All debates are monitored on a regular basis – if the comments being posted are deemed to be inappropriate and in contravention of our Learner code of conduct, we reserve the right to remove the debate function from your course.
Assignment

Within the assignment you will have an area to type in your answer using the text box below.

You can either type your responses to the questions straight into the text box which appears on the system, or you can upload a Word (or similar) document to the system using the ‘upload’ functionality. Be mindful that if you use the text box option, any formatting that is in your work will be lost. It is therefore recommended that you only use the text boxes for assignment questions that require short answers, such as the one above. When you come to your graded Assignments, you should produce your work in Word (or similar) and upload the document.

**NB:** If you use the later method of uploading a document in a word format you must type in the text box “Uploaded word file attached.

If you experience problems submitting an assignment, please contact your Learner Support Advisor. Please also note that you cannot submit the next assignment until your previous one has been marked by your unit assessor, and has passed.

If you are not currently waiting for an assignment to be marked and you are still having problems submitting an assignment, then please contact your Learner Support Advisor, explaining the problem in as much detail as possible, and include a screen shot with your message.
The messaging system works in the same way as email. You can send a new message, contact other learners on your course, and reply to messages received. In order to contact other learners on your course, you must first ‘connect’ with them. This works in the same ways as requesting contacts on social media platforms. The standard response time is 5 working days, however if you have not heard back, please contact your Learner Support Advisor in the first instance.

**Assessment**
Assessment activities have been created to cover the learning outcomes for each unit, and are designed to test your knowledge, understanding and skills. The range of assessment activities may include:

- Essays
- Academic reports
- Presentations
- Online timed tests
- Case study
- Research report
- Journal article

Assessment is undertaken at the end of each unit. For each unit, there is an assignment brief which outlines:
- The task(s) you are required to complete.
- The assessment criteria that each task(s) relate to.
- The grade descriptors (statements concerning what is expected for a Merit and Distinction grade) used when marking and grading your work, only applied to grade Assignments.
- Submission date by which you need to have completed and submitted your assignment.

Once you have submitted an assignment for marking, you will receive feedback from the relevant unit assessor within our standard turnaround time of 5 working days.
Grading of units - Ungraded Units

You will achieve a pass or refer for these the ungraded Assignments (1-6). A successful submission (pass) for an ungraded unit will be classed as ‘Achieved’. If you receive a refer for any of the assignments for ungraded units, **you are only permitted to resubmit one more attempt**. You will only be able to amend the part of the assignment that you have not achieved, and not the entire piece of work. In this case, you may wish to contact your unit assessor to gain clarification of the feedback they have provided. **Once you have had a unit referred, you are required to re-submit this within 5 working days, failure to do so could result in withdrawal from programme.**

Drafts

**You are only permitted to email one draft of your ungraded unit assignment to your assessor in order to gain feedback before you submit your final piece of work for marking. If you have not sent a draft before this point, you will forfeit the right to submit another draft. You will not be able to submit another draft if you have a re-submission. Assessors are not permitted to: - make detailed corrections to a draft submission, provide information about predicted grade indicators, or other detailed information about possible grading judgements. You are only allowed to submit a draft for the unit that you are currently working on, and should not submit a draft for your next unit.**

You can use the ‘attach’ document functionality within the messaging system of your portfolio for this purpose.

For some of the ungraded assignments, you will find that not all of the assessment criteria is included within the actual assignment brief. This has been done for a reason! Towards the final stages of your qualification you will complete a final study skills assignment that incorporates, all of the units that you completed at the start of your programme. This assignment will show that you have gained a clear understanding and knowledge required to be able to carry forward this to university.

Please note that once you have had the ungraded assignments marked, you may notice that ‘your progress’ or your e-portfolio, will show some of them as only partially achieved. This is nothing to be concerned about, and it will not affect the completion of your qualification, as you complete your final study skills unit towards the end of your programme, this will change.

You should work through your study materials in their entirety before starting any of the assignments, as you will need the information that they contain throughout your course. When it comes to completing the assignment, you should answer only what you are asked to do. Put simply, just follow the instructions given in the assignment brief for each unit.
Graded Units
These attract either a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade. The grade descriptors that are used for marking purposes are clearly visible on the first page of the study materials for each unit, and again with the assignment. If you need to achieve Merits or Distinctions in order to meet the entry requirements for the university of your choice, you will need to refer to the grade descriptors so that you know what you will need to do to achieve the higher grades. You are also permitted to contact your unit assessor to gain clarification and guidance before you start work on the assignment.

Please note that at a certain point in your qualification, you will no longer be able to send draft copies to your assessor.

Assessors can only provide generalised feedback if you ask a question, and cannot provide you with any indication on how to achieve a better grade in your assignment. Any feedback given about draft assignments(where permitted) for graded units will not be grade specific; the feedback cannot provide information about predicted grade indicators or other detailed information about possible grading judgments. Your assessors can only provide you with feedback about your draft, and engage in dialogue of a general kind, which allows you to see how you might develop your response to the assignment brief.

Once the grade has been awarded, it cannot be changed. You are not permitted to resubmit until you achieve the grade you need for university. You must therefore work with your unit assessors so that you fully understand what you need to do in order to achieve the required grades.

If your assessor refers a graded unit, you will only be permitted to resubmit one more attempt, and you will also only be able to amend the part of the assignment that you have not achieved, and not the entire piece of work. Once you have had a unit referred, you are required to re-submit this within 5 working days. If you do not, your re-submission grade will be downgraded to a Pass only, if you go over the due date.

It is therefore imperative that you do not submit any assignments, until you have worked through all of the study materials for the unit, and fully understand the requirements of the assignment brief. In the case of a referral, you may wish to contact your unit assessor to gain clarification of the feedback they have provided before making any changes to your original work and resubmitting it for marking. Providing that the first attempt was submitted on time, and that the resubmission is successful, you will be awarded with a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade.

If you submit a graded unit assignment after the set deadline, your grade will be capped at a Pass, unless there are extenuating circumstances that resulted in the late submission.
All Units
You will only be able to email a draft of your work to your unit assessor if the assignment brief states that you are permitted to do so. You can use the ‘upload’ document functionality within the messaging system for this purpose. This option will not apply to all units, so you must check each assignment brief.

If you resubmit your work but at the second attempt it has still not achieved a Pass, then a formal request for another opportunity to submit must be made via your email messaging system to the Access to HE Manager. Making this request does not automatically result in a second resubmission being granted.

These requests can only be approved for a maximum of 15 credits, and grades for these units will be capped at a Pass.

Word limits
All assignment briefs will specify the maximum length/size of work that is required from you. This will be in the form of word or time limits. These limits must be adhered to, but you are allowed to be 10% over the maximum stated. Please remember that elements of a written assignment such as appendices, bibliography, references list, contents page, and title page are not to be included in the word count. Often students feel that they cannot possibly do justice to a subject within the limit that has been set. However, the skill that you need to develop is the ability to write/present your work concisely, and demonstrate that you understand that some points are more important than others.

Appeals
The procedure for appeals applies when you ask for unconfirmed grade indicators to be reconsidered, after work has been graded but prior to Internal Moderation. If you wish to ask for reconsideration of one or more of the grade indicators given by your assessor for any individual assignment, you must do so within one week of receiving feedback of your graded work. The appeals procedure can be found in, Guidance- Advice and Guidance.

In the first instance, you must contact your unit assessor to ask for a full explanation of the grading decisions made. This process should give the reasons for the grade, and how you could more fully have met the assessment and grading criteria.

If you are not satisfied with the explanation provided by your unit assessor, you should refer to the matter to the Access to HE Manager, who will respond within 5 working days.
Moderation of assignments and Final Award Board

All Assignments are subject to both Internal and External Moderation as part of our Quality Assurance process. A random sample of completed assignments will be selected for each part of the moderation process each month. You may notice from time to time that one of your previous marked assignments has changed status from a Pass to a Refer. This means that the Internal Quality Assurance team have requested further information in your assignment to justify the original grade. You should contact your unit assessor in the first instance to see what further information is required, and you will be given the opportunity to re-submit your assignment, for the part marked as referred. If for any reason, after Internal Moderation has been completed, you have not achieved the grade you need for university, you should contact your preferred university to seek their advice – sometimes they are willing to review applications on a case-by-case basis. If your preferred university is not willing to review your application, you may need to look at alternative options for your HE studies.

Once you have achieved your final assignment.
Once your final assignment has been marked by your assessor the internal quality assurance team will carry out further sampling, then your work will go to the final award board. All results are provisional until confirmed at the final award board.

Please note: Final award boards sit every two months so, depending on when you completed your qualification, the whole process of internal moderation and final awards boards can take between 8-10 weeks; something to consider when thinking about university for September.

Final Assessment Board
The Assessment Board will look at your results and formally be approved by the Academic Board. Your certificate will then be requested from the awarding organisation, and you should expect to receive this 2-3 weeks after completing. You will then receive your Access to HE Diploma certificate together with a transcript of your achievement. The transcript will detail the grades you have achieved for the graded Assignments (45 Level 3 credits). The remaining 15 credits (ungraded Assignments) will be shown as ‘Achieved’ and the level you have achieved them at (Level 3). All results are provisional until confirmed at the final award board.

Extensions to assignment submission dates

Time management is an important skill for you to develop early in your course, particularly as you are studying online. However, we accept that there may be occasions when you are unable to meet an assignment deadline. In these situations, you must follow the guidance outlined below. If you require a short term extension, you must make this request in writing to your Learner Support Advisor before your submission date, otherwise your assignment grade can be capped as a Pass.

These requests will only be granted at a Manager’s discretion, and are likely to permit you a limited number of days to complete and submit your assignment. Your grade will not be capped at a Pass, provided that your assignment is submitted within the revised deadline.
These requests will be recorded on your learner account, including the length of extension approved and the nature of the request.

Any repeat or frequent requests for extensions of this nature will be closely monitored, and may result in future requests being declined.

The course team may request a referral if you have submitted work after a deadline without an agreed extension, and this work has failed to meet the requirements of one or more of the associated learning outcomes. If this occurs within the duration of a course, the recommendation is referred to the Centre Reviewer, who is the External Moderator appointed by the Open College Network West Midlands.

If your work needs to be referred at the end of the course (for example, as the consequence of assessments that have been taken in the last 4 weeks of a course), this will be decided at the Final Awards Board at the end of your course.

If you are experiencing personal extenuating circumstances which may seriously impair your ability to complete your assignment, then you may request an extension due to extenuating circumstances. Examples of extenuating circumstances include a serious accident or injury, long term illness, or bereavement of an immediate relative. Requests on grounds of extenuating circumstances may only be made formally in writing to your learning support adviser, and must be accompanied by verifiable and current third party evidence. No request shall be considered after the submission deadline for an assignment has passed, unless there are valid and exceptional reasons such as physical incapacity due to a serious accident.
Equality & diversity: Treating everyone fairly
We are committed to treating everyone fairly, and we respect and value the differences between all the people we work with. We challenge any inequality we see, and we ensure we provide suitable support for people’s different needs and circumstances. We’re here to inspire you to achieve your potential, and we will respond to your needs and feedback to make sure you do.
Our responsibilities

- we’ll provide you with an environment that is free of discrimination
- we’ll explain your rights and responsibilities and how you can complain or make suggestions for improving our service
- we’ll provide you with Equality and Diversity training that will be useful with us and in the workplace
- we’ll treat you fairly and with respect as an individual regardless of your gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or whether you have any disability
- we’ll assess your needs in order to help you achieve your goals.

Your responsibilities

- you’ll respect others around you as individuals
- you should understand that your views may be different to others
- you’ll respect others’ beliefs and understand that bullying or harassment of others will not be tolerated
- you’ll help other learners to feel included
- you should talk to the learndirect Professional Development team if you have any concerns and they can also help sign-post you to organisations who can provide specialist support.

Bullying and Harassment

Learning and working environment

- We are committed to creating open and conducive learning and working environments where everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are opposed to and will not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment or unacceptable behaviour where this makes an individual feel intimidated or offended.
- We will ensure all individuals have clear routes to report incidents and/or concerns and for these to be managed fairly and fully. We will strive to ensure all individuals feel comfortable to express their views, experiences and perceptions but in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner.
• Any form of prejudice, discrimination and/or stereotypical attitudes will be challenged and supported by training on equality and diversity practice. We will ensure that all our learning materials and public and internal communications reflect the diverse society in which we live and enable individual access to working or learning with us.

Reporting
• We will respond to complaints and/or concerns and how people involved will be supported. Where learners are following work-based training in employers, they will also be subject to their employer’s disciplinary procedure(s).
• For learners: The quickest and easiest way for a learner to raise a concern a complaint is through their assessor or directly to their Learner Support Advisor, alternatively they can contact the centre manager.
• Where a learner is learning through one of our supply chain partners, this will initiate their own procedure first and the learner will be advised of who will take responsibility for resolving their concern or complaint and how long this should take.
• Where a learner does not feel able to do this, the following options are available to all learners:
  • Call us on 0800 101 901 (the learndirect helpline is open Monday – Friday 8am-9pm, Saturday 9am-6pm and Sunday 10am-6pm)
  • Contact us online by completing a short web form. See www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/
  • Write to us at ‘FREEPOST’ learndirect’ (no stamp required)
  • We are committed to promoting equality for all. If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact us: By letter at: FREEPOST learndirect By telephone on: 0800 101 901 By email at: translations@learndirect.com Online at: www.learndirect.com/help/contact-us/

Safeguarding: you have the right to be and feel safe
We strive to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment for all our learners. We have a policy of zero tolerance to bullying, abuse, grooming and harassment, and aim to protect you from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. We will support you in understanding how to keep yourself safe in society, and will tell you what steps we will take on your behalf should we ever have any concerns for your welfare.
Our responsibilities
- we will make sure you understand what safeguarding is
- we have safeguarding reps who you, or your tutor, can talk to about any concerns
- our staff are trained to respond to any concerns you may raise
- our staff will ensure you feel safe in centres and in the workplace
- our staff have contacts with organisations and agencies which can help you with specialist advice should you need it

Your responsibilities
- you’ll look after yourself and look out for your friends and colleagues
- you’ll make sure you know who you can go to for help and advice
- tell us if you’re in danger or have any concerns, and staff will refer you for specialist help.

We will ensure that all employees adopt and abide by the Company’s Safeguarding Code of Conduct, are proactive and respond to any allegations appropriately in accordance with the companies reporting procedures. If you are experiencing problems outside of your studies (such as abuse) which may be affecting your progress, please contact in the first instance your assessor or the Senior Qualifications Assurer who will then notify the Safeguarding Representative for learndirect Professional Development.
Prevent
Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions both locally and nationally in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

learndirect Professional Development values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society’s values. Individuals have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

Any identified concerns as the result of observed behaviour or reports of conversations to suggest that an individual maybe vulnerable to or supports terrorism and/or extremism, must be addressed, reported and where appropriate escalated following the learndirect Professional Development Safeguarding Procedure.

Escalation can be via Safeguarding Representatives or the shield ensures that all concerns are picked up and addressed by a safeguarding professional, responsible for determining an appropriate resolution and contacting outside agencies where appropriate.

To aid the promotion of community cohesion, we have added a PREVENT module to your programme. For some learners, this is a mandatory component of the course; for others, it is an optional addition.

Additional Support
learndirect Professional Development is committed to ensuring that all learners have access to a high quality learning experience and aims to support inclusion for all of our learners. We believe that this experience helps learners to build resilience and supports them to progress and successfully prepare for employment.

Some learners may need additional support and we will use our best endeavours to ensure that provision is made for those who need it. Where learndirect Professional Development is unable to provide support to address a special educational needs or disability learners will be referred to appropriate specialist provision.

At learndirect Professional Development we have a policy for learners with Special Needs, this policy is the Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Policy (SEND).
Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures that govern your Access to HE Diploma can be made available to you on request.

These include:
- Appeals
- Complaints
- E-safety
- Equality & Diversity
- SEND
- Malpractice, Maladministration, Fraud & Anti-Bribery Policy
- Safeguarding
- Prevent
- Learner Disciplinary Code of Conduct
Concerns, complaints and appeals

At learndirect Professional Development we are committed to handling all types of contacts by our learners quickly, accurately, and fairly. We aim to fully resolve any concerns or problems you might have and if there is anything we cannot resolve or put right straight away we will explain why and say what we can do.

How we will deal with your query or complaint:

**STAGE 1**
Advise the *learndirect* staff member you work most closely with about your query or complaint and give them the chance to resolve the matter. If you’re unhappy with the outcome, or with how long it is taking, or if you think it is not appropriate to raise the issue with them go to Stage 2.

**STAGE 2**
Contact us via any of the means described in the ‘how to contact us’ section of this policy. We will try to give you an answer straight away, and if we can’t we will work with an appropriate subject expert or operational *learndirect* manager. You will receive an update or resolution within 5 working days.*

**STAGE 3**
If you are not happy with the outcome you must advise us that you wish your query or complaint to be escalated. It will then be reviewed by the *learndirect* Customer Service Coordinator and you will be contacted within a further 10 working days.

**STAGE 4**
If you remain unhappy with the outcome of your query or complaint you must put all of your concerns in writing and send a letter to *learndirect* complaints (stage 4), 3rd Floor, Dearing House, 1 Young Street, Sheffield, S1 4UP. The matter will then be independently investigated by the Customer Service Officer. They will look at how your query or complaint was investigated, the response you received, and will speak to the people involved. A reply will be sent within 10 working days of receipt.

What we need to know from you
To be able to handle your query effectively we will need the following information when you contact us:

- Your name & location
- What type of programme you are undertaking with learndirect
- Your user name (if applicable)
- Full details of what your query or concern is.
Appeals
If you wish to appeal against an assessment decision made, you have the formal appeals procedure in your e-portfolio system. If you go to guidance-Advice and Guidance, the policy is stated. You can also find the complaints procedure here and, various other policies.

Learner Code of Conduct - What we expect from you during your studies

The activities and assignments you will complete as part of your course are designed to enable you to:

- Attain the aims and learning outcomes for individual assignments and the programme as a whole
- Identify, develop and apply a range of related skills
- Encourage your interaction with the indicative content contained in the study materials
- Develop your ability to be an independent and successful learner by using reflective learning techniques.

It should be remembered that personal reflection is strengthened if you possess underpinning knowledge of fact and theory to provide a foundation for your thinking. You are therefore encouraged to read and research your subjects widely in order to broaden your consideration of factors beyond the boundaries of your study materials.
**Learner Discipline and Behaviour**

During your time on your programme, you can expect that:

- The course content and assignments will be appropriate to your needs and the requirements of the qualification awarding organisation
- Your assessors will be qualified, experienced and committed
- You will receive fair and consistent assessment, and prompt feedback about your work
- You will be informed about the academic appeals procedure
- You will be treated with respect

In return, we expect you to:

- Behave appropriately and professionally
- Abide by regulations pertaining to health and safety, and equality and diversity
- Follow good academic practice
- Work conscientiously and to the best of your ability
- Complete and submit assignments on time
- Promote equality, community cohesion and good relations between learners and staff
- Show respect for course content and materials, staff at learndirect and one another
- Take responsibility for your studies, and for your progress on your course.

**Acceptable Use of IT Systems**

The following terms of acceptable use apply to your Virtual Learning Environment (learndirect Professional Development) and other connected services. These terms also cover remote access, regardless of which device is used to make the connection e.g. personal computer, smart phone or tablet. All activity on your account is linked to you as an individual; you are therefore responsible for any misuse. Access may be restricted or removed as a result. Therefore, you must not share your login details or password. This is also in accordance with the following:

- The Data Protection Act 1998
- Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988
- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Telecommunications Act 1984
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Copies of these acts are available online from the official government website for UK citizens www.direct.gov.uk. If you are found to be breaking the law, legal sanctions will apply.

The following are not permitted at any time:

The creation, display, production, storage, circulation or transmission of pornographic or other offensive material in any form or medium. This includes sending posting or displaying offensive images, language or any other type of offensive content including the bullying, harassment or intimidation of others.
Users must not create, run, store or transmit:
- Defamatory or libellous material
- Material that infringes copyright including unlicensed or illegal software
- Unauthorised software
- Unsolicited commercial or advertising material

Users must not:
- Intentionally provide or submit false information (i.e. on ILPs, in assignments etc.)
- Flood debate/forums with inappropriate content, material or comments
- Use others’ passwords or log-in identities
- Deliberately introduce any virus, worm, Trojan horse or other harmful or nuisance programme or file, or deliberately circumvent any precautions taken by us to prevent this from happening
- Use any part of the system for commercial purposes or profit
- Use any part of the system for political purposes
- Use any part of the system inappropriately
- Copy any code, software or content provided

**Disciplinary Action**

Any behaviour which is likely to cause offence or harm to others, or bring learndirect Professional Development into disrepute, could result in disciplinary action.

Such behaviour could include:
- Using social media forums that are not regulated by learndirect Professional Development to gain answers in order to complete your course work, or aid others in completing their course work.
- Using non-regulated social media forums where offensive language or behaviour is used, where others could take offence at, and used in discussions.
- Offensive language and/or behaviour, including contravention of Equal Opportunities Policy
- Any bullying, taunting, or harassment of others whether directly, or through messages, debates or forums
- Non-submission of work and inadequate academic performance
- Any contravention of the Acceptable use of IT Systems terms stated previously
- Any contravention of the Learner Code of Conduct, such as demonstrating a lack of respect to others

Breaches of discipline may be minor, major or gross. Examples of each type of breach are given below for guidance. This list is not exhaustive and professional judgements will need to be made about the severity of each breach.

**Minor Breach** – late submission of assignments, wilful submission of sub-standard work or substandard performance.

**Major Breach** – persistence of a minor breach, acting in an unsafe manner including failure to comply with learndirect policies and procedures, plagiarism or copying the work of other learners, and repeated non-submission or late submission of assignments, repeated wilful submission of sub-standard work or sub-standard performance.
**Gross Breach** – persistence of a major breach, serious threat including threats made in messages or debates/forums, mobile phone and text messages, harassment, bullying, breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy, and any criminal activities affecting learndirect Professional Development or other learners. Using non-regulated social media forums to gain an advantage with course work, or use language that others could take offense to.

Any breach of discipline will be fully investigated, and depending upon the severity and frequency, will result in appropriate action being taken. This could include restrictions to functionality within learndirect Professional Development i.e. removal of access to debates/forums, or being blocked from contacting other learners. In the most serious cases (gross breach), you may be withdrawn from your course and access to your account removed.

**Academic Offences**
Throughout your studies, and when you progress to Higher Education, it is expected that you will produce assignments that represent ‘best academic practice’. By this we mean, that your work is your own, it is referenced appropriately, and you have not committed any academic offence.

An academic offence is any act that is intended to modify or evade the conditions of assessment in an unauthorised manner, and by unfair means, this includes the use of non-regulated social media forums that have not been approved by learndirect Professional Development. The following are examples of such academic offences, but do not represent an exhaustive definition.

**Learning and Assessment Malpractice Procedure**
Malpractice consists of those acts which undermine the integrity and validity of learning & assessment, the certification of qualifications, and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification.

learndirect Professional Development does not tolerate actions (or attempted actions) of malpractice by learners in connection with qualifications delivered by learndirect Professional Development.

learndirect Professional Development acknowledges that it is required to report cases of malpractice to Awarding Organisations and Funding partners (as applicable) if evidence is found that results or certificates may be invalid.

learndirect will be vigilant regarding learning & assessment malpractice and where malpractice occurs it will be dealt with in an open and fair manner.

**We aim to:**
Define malpractice in the context of learning, assessment and certification set out the rights and responsibilities, with regard to malpractice, of the learner. We will respond effectively and openly to all requests for an investigation into an incident or a suspected incident of malpractice.

learndirect Professional Development reserves the right, in suspected cases of malpractice, to withhold the issuing of results/certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation results/certificates may be released or withheld.
learndirect Professional Development will take positive steps to prevent or reduce the occurrence of learner malpractice. These steps may include: Showing learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources including websites. Learners should not be discouraged from conducting research; indeed evidence of relevant research often contributes to the achievement of qualification units. However, the submitted work must show evidence that the learner has interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and has acknowledged any sources used.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism by copying and passing off, as the learner’s own, the whole or part(s) of another person’s work, including artwork, images, words, computer generated work (including Internet sources), thoughts, inventions and/or discoveries whether published or not, with or without the originator’s permission and without appropriately acknowledging the source collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work.

We reserve the right to test any learner’s work for plagiarism. If you are found to have committed plagiarism, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious and repeated cases, the awarding organisation will be notified and your qualification will be at risk.

**Fabrication of results**
It is an academic offence for a learner to claim to have carried out surveys, questionnaires, experiments, observations, interviews or any form of primary research which they have not in fact carried out. Non-regulated social media forums are monitored by both learndirect Professional Development and external sources, including universities.

**Collusion**
Collusion is the deliberate attempt to gain advantage by presenting work that is not solely your own as if it were, and where the source of the unreferenced work is that of another learner who has schemed in the deception. Collusion is recognised by the duplication of passages or phrases in written work or in oral presentations, and it involves a conspiratorial attempt to deceive. Collusion must not be confused with the good practice of collaborative learning and peer support, where collaborative learning means that a learner may benefit from sharing third-party material (books, articles etc.).

Being party to collusion by providing material to another learner is just as much an academic offence as using such material. Sharing your assignments, either completed or draft, is therefore inadvisable.

If you are approached by another learner requesting to see copies of your assignments, decline the request and inform your unit assessor immediately.

**Cheating in timed tests**
A candidate know to have committed cheating in a timed test will be deemed to have committed an academic offence and therefore subject to disciplinary action.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Whilst this handbook contains much of the information that you will need to know about your Access to HE Diploma, we have included some other FAQs that may help you:

Q: Do I need to buy any books for my course?
A: You are not required to purchase any books for your course, unless you wish to. There is a reading list in the Extended Learning area of your study materials.

Q: I can only access a few sections of the study materials, why is this?
A: If you are applying for a loan from the Learner Loans Company, you will have restricted access to our system until such a time that your loan is approved. However, you will have access to everything you need to complete your first few Assignments. Once your loan is approved you will gain access to all your course materials.

Q: What are the CPD course in my e-portfolio account?
A: They are unaccredited courses and so will not feature as part of your university entry requirements quoted on any conditional offer. CPD courses are there to expand your knowledge in lots of different areas.

Q: I’m completing Maths and English in the Independent Learning Skills as part of my Access programme, are these GCSEs?
A: The Independent Learning Skills that you added to your programme when you first enrolled are there to help you to improve your skills in these areas. These are not qualifications.

Q: I don’t have my GCSE certificates anymore – how do I get copies?
A: If you can remember which examining board you took your GCSEs with, then you can contact them direct to order replacement certificates. The most popular examining boards for GCSEs are Edexcel/Pearson and OCR. They will charge you for this service, and replacement certificates are likely to take up to 8 weeks to be sent to you. If you cannot remember which examining board you took your GCSEs with, then you can contact the AQA who will be able to issue you with a letter which confirms your exam results. There is a charge for this service. You should also check with your preferred university if they will accept this letter, or whether they need to see certificates as well.

Q: How do I find out who my unit assessor is?
A: You can find out who your unit assessor by looking in the support contacts of your email account. Please note they do change as you progress throughout your course.

Q: How do I send drafts to my unit assessor? And can I keep sending drafts?
A: In your emails to your unit assessor, below there is a single unit upload button, this is where you upload the draft. You are only permitted to send one draft per assignment, and only for assignments where it is permitted. In the course introduction, the information required will state whether or not you can submit a draft.
Q: Are quotes and citations included in my word count for my assignment.
A: No. References, appendices and footnotes are generally NOT included in the word count. You are allowed a 10% margin on your word count.

Q: I need a distinction, can my assessor let me know what I need to do to get these.
A: No. You assessor can only give you general advice when providing feedback on assignments.

Q: Can I send my assessor another draft copy if I have a referral.
A: No. You have to re-submit the part of the assignment that you got wrong. You cannot submit a whole new assignment amending everything that was previously incorrect.

Q: My assignment has changed from a Pass to a Refer, however I am working on another assignment. Why has this happened?
A: Throughout your qualification internal quality assurers look at your assignment to check that it conforms to the national standards set out by OCN West Midlands. Occasionally the internal quality assurer will refer your assignment, and your unit will change from Pass to a Refer. You will need to contact your learning support adviser, so they can contact the unit assessor that marked it, to provide you with the evidence that is required to re-submit the assignment.

Q: My University will not accept me without my certificate.
A: Most universities will accept you with a provisional result, which you can ask for, once you have completed your qualification.

Q: How do I link my UCAS Application to your centre?
A: At the top of your dashboard there is a document titled UCAS, this will provide you with all the information that you require to apply through UCAS, please note applications close towards the end of December. The date is included in the document.
The Learner Voice

We want everyone to have a great experience with us. We want to continually improve how we do things and would appreciate you sharing your experience with us. You can help by telling us what you think, how we did and what you thought of your experience with us.

You can share your feedback with us in a few ways.
- take part in surveys
- call the learndirect Professional Development team on: 0116 366 7567
- email the team at pdev@learndirect.com

Your feedback is important to us!
## Document History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Revision Notes</th>
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<td>Original</td>
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