



What are Diplomas?

Are you keen to help your child make decisions about their future – without limiting their options?

Would your son or daughter enjoy putting into practice what they're learning in the classroom?

Diplomas are an exciting qualification designed to give students valuable skills for life. They involve hands-on learning which is fun, exciting and teaches skills your child will need in the future.

Diplomas have been developed by schools, colleges, universities and employers working together. They are set to become one of the three main education options – alongside GCSEs and Apprenticeships – and they can take students on to college, university or the career of their choice. Diplomas could be the right choice for your child. Read on to find out more.

What are the options available?

Ten Diploma subjects will be available from September 2009:

- Business, Administration and Finance
- Construction and the Built Environment
- Creative and Media
- Engineering
- Environmental and Land-based Studies
- Hair and Beauty Studies
- Hospitality
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing and Product Design
- Society, Health and Development

More Diploma subjects are being developed and will be available in the future. See www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas for more details.

Age 14-16	Age 16-19	Age 19+
GCSEs	A levels	Employment
Higher Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Higher Education
Foundation Diploma	Higher Diploma	Further Education
Other Qualifications	Foundation Diploma	Advanced Apprenticeship
	Advanced Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship
	Apprenticeship	
	Other Qualifications	

Diplomas are not yet available in every school or college. Your child's teachers or careers adviser will be able to tell you which subjects are available in your area. If your child needs to go to another school or college for some Diploma classes, their school or college can arrange this.



What do **Diplomas** involve?

There are three levels of Diploma – Foundation, Higher and Advanced. Diplomas can be studied at any age.

Each Diploma will involve a mix of:

- **Principal learning** which focuses on developing the knowledge and skills that are needed for the Diploma subject your child has chosen, with a real emphasis on learning by doing.
- **Generic learning** which is the same for all Diplomas. It will help your son or daughter gain a good standard in the English, maths and ICT skills needed to deal with everyday life – as well as giving them a good grounding in the personal, learning and thinking skills which they will find useful both at university or college and in the workplace.

- **Additional and specialist learning** which allows your son or daughter to choose extra subjects to study. These subjects could be related to their Diploma, or simply ones that reflect their interests and ambitions.

Diploma students will also get the chance to do at least 10 days work experience and to work on a project to put into practice what they're learning. For example, for the Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment, they might complete a project designing a new structure.

Diplomas are assessed through a mix of exams and work marked by a teacher, to reflect the practical nature of the learning. The different parts of the Diploma are assessed separately and the results combined to make the whole Diploma. This means that your child will get credit for each part that they achieve as well as a grade for the whole thing.

	Principal Learning	Generic Learning			Additional or Specialist Learning	Equivalent to
	Main Subject e.g. Engineering	Project	Functional skills	Work experience	Optional courses agreed with your teacher	
Foundation Diploma	Practical assessments + 1 exam	Project	ICT/Maths/ English Level 1	Minimum 10 days	Choose from a range of qualifications including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTECs • GCSEs • A levels 	5 x GCSEs, (grade D-G)
Higher Diploma	Practical assessments + 1 exam	Project	ICT/Maths/ English Level 2	Minimum 10 days		7 x GCSEs, (grade A*-C)
Advanced Diploma	Practical assessments + 2 or 3 exams	Extended Project	ICT/Maths/ English Level 2	Minimum 10 days		3.5 A levels

“The University welcomes the Diplomas for their potential to extend opportunity to more young people, enabling them to take advantage of a high quality university education at Warwick and elsewhere, regardless of background.”

**Nigel Thrift,
Vice Chancellor,
University of Warwick**



What can my child do with a **Diploma?**

A Diploma can open many doors for your son or daughter because it equips them with the skills they need for either university or work, it is the first step they can take towards a career of their choice.

Although each Diploma focuses on a particular career area, it teaches a mix of subjects, giving a well-rounded education. So if your son or daughter chooses a particular Diploma subject such as Engineering, it doesn't mean they will have to opt for a career in engineering.

DO UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES RECOGNISE DIPLOMAS?

Yes. Universities and colleges have been involved in creating Diplomas, and will recognise them alongside A level and GCSE results when they are assessing your child's application for a place. An Advanced Diploma gets the same number of UCAS points as 3.5 A levels.

A Diploma should give your child the analytical and research skills they need to succeed on a higher or further education course – and a good grasp of study approaches, such as problem-solving and teamwork.

Diplomas are designed to help your child become self-motivated and forward-thinking, making it easier for them to cope with the adjustment to life at college or in work.

Universities including Warwick, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds say Diplomas have the potential to be excellent preparation for the most demanding university courses.

Case study

Chris, 15, wants to study a Creative and Media Higher level Diploma but also wants to pursue his interest in languages.

His course will include topics he needs for his Diploma such as creativity and responding to a brief, along with functional skills in English, maths and science. For his additional and specialist learning Chris is choosing GCSE in Chinese.

*This case study is an illustration of how and why a student might decide to do a Diploma. It does not refer to a real individual.

“We need to give our youngsters every possible chance of fulfilling their potential and I am delighted to welcome this imaginative development. The Diploma will sit alongside A levels to provide us with an entire suite of entry qualifications for Higher Education.”

Prof. Michael Arthur,
Vice Chancellor,
University of Leeds





WILL A DIPLOMA HELP MY CHILD GET A GOOD JOB?

Yes. Because Diplomas are designed to help students gain the skills they will need in the workplace, they aim to create self-aware, confident, work-oriented recruits whom employers will value.

Over 5,000 businesses have been involved so far in developing Diplomas. Big employers such as Toyota, Vodafone and npower are actively involved in championing the Diploma.

Students will get the opportunity to learn in different settings, including at least 10 days experience in the workplace. They'll get an insight into what work is really like, helping them make decisions about their future – and learn skills employers prize, like punctuality, self-discipline, customer service and project management.

Remember that every extra qualification your child gains will help them earn more over their lifetime:

Lifetime earnings shown by level of qualification*

Degree or equivalent	£1,819,792
A level or equivalent like Advanced Diplomas or Advanced Apprenticeships	£1,233,024
GCSE grades A-C or equivalent like Higher Diplomas or Apprenticeships	£1,022,112
Other qualifications	£978,848
No qualifications	£873,392

*Source: Learning and Skills Council 2007

The important thing to remember is that a Diploma can help your child make decisions about the future, while keeping their options open. Each Diploma is a broad introduction to an exciting industry, but it will also teach skills you can take wherever you go.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIPLOMAS AND APPRENTICESHIPS?

On an Apprenticeship, your child will normally be employed and will spend much of their time at work. But they will continue training too and get the qualifications they need for the future.

On a Diploma course, your child will spend the majority of their time at school and college. A Diploma gives an introduction to a broad range of careers within a particular industry, and prepares students for a wide range of jobs and university courses. For example, after taking a Diploma in Society, Health and Development, students could go on to become a nurse, physiotherapist, social worker or youth worker, or something completely different, if they decide on a different career path.

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE COST OF FURTHER STUDY?

You may be able to get financial help through the Education Maintenance Allowance for your child to stay on in education after age 16. Around 45% of students over 16 in full-time learning do so already. To find out more, visit www.ema.direct.gov.uk

“Rolls-Royce welcomes the Diploma as a relevant and innovative qualification for young people of all abilities. With its emphasis on both academic and practical learning, the Diploma will provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, in employment or at university, without restricting their options.”

**Margaret Gildea,
Executive Vice President of Human
Resources – Operations and Skills
and Capability,
Rolls-Royce**



What next?

It is important that your child gets good information and advice to help them choose what to do next. They can talk to a teacher or careers adviser at their school or college or to a Connexions adviser – www.connexions-direct.com

Want to know more about Diplomas?

Check out these leaflets:

- A handy guide to Diplomas: choosing your options for Year 10
- A handy guide to Diplomas: choosing your options for Year 12
- The Diploma: Business, Administration and Finance
- The Diploma: Construction and the Built Environment
- The Diploma: Creative and Media
- The Diploma: Engineering
- The Diploma: Environmental and Land-based Studies
- The Diploma: Hair and Beauty Studies
- The Diploma: Hospitality
- The Diploma: Information Technology
- The Diploma: Manufacturing and Product Design
- The Diploma: Society, Health and Development

You can also visit the www.direct.gov.uk website and check out the section on Diplomas – www.direct.gov.uk/diplomas/

The website has information about where each Diploma is available and what each course involves.

You can download this leaflet or order copies online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications Search using reference DCSF-00498-2008.

You can also order more copies by calling 0845 60 222 60; textphone 0845 60 555 60. Please quote reference 00498-2008LEF-EN.

For further information, see www.teachernet.gov.uk/diplomas

For more information about the new 14–19 curriculum, visit www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19

Information about the structure of Diplomas and resources to support their delivery by schools and colleges are available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority at www.qca.org.uk/diploma

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