



01. THE DIPLOMA
CHOOSING YOUR OPTIONS FOR YEAR 12

Introducing The Diploma

Are you keen to learn more about subjects that interest you – but want to keep your options open?

Do you want a course that combines theory with practical activities?

Do you want to choose a qualification that helps you prepare for university or a job?

The Diplomas are an exciting qualification based on a hands-on style of learning. You'll enjoy learning in different environments including the workplace, choosing to study subjects which interest you and tackling challenging projects.

For example, on a Diploma course, you could find yourself doing work experience with an online shopping company, creating a Healthy Eating initiative for an infant school or creating and editing a monthly magazine.

On a Diploma course, you'll also study English, maths and ICT, while developing skills such as communication and project management that employers really value. This means your options are open, whichever Diploma you choose.

Sounds good? Then read on.

How Diplomas work

There are three levels of Diploma – Foundation, Higher and Advanced.

You can choose to do an A level as part of your Diploma. And if you want, you can take extra A levels as well.

WHAT SUBJECTS COULD I STUDY?

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

Diplomas are not yet available in every school or college. Your teacher or careers adviser will tell you which subjects are available in your area. If you need to go to another school or college for some of your Diploma classes, your school or college will arrange this.

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



WHAT WILL I STUDY IN A DIPLOMA?

Diplomas are made up of the English, maths and ICT skills you will need in order to deal with everyday life, along with learning about your Diploma subject. You'll also get skills like teamwork, creative thinking and problem solving which employers, universities and colleges value.

Your Diploma also includes a range of optional courses you can choose from. These could be relevant to your Diploma subject, or something that reflects your other interests and career ambitions – such as a language, a science or a creative subject.

Each Diploma gives you the chance to work on a project, letting you put the skills you are learning into practice. Your project will depend on your choice of Diploma – for example, on a Creative and Media course, you might get involved in designing costumes or a stage set for a play.

Finally, when you take a Diploma, you will get the chance to spend at least 10 days working with an employer, experiencing what you're learning for real.

WHERE WILL I STUDY MY DIPLOMA?

You will probably study your Diploma partly in school and partly at college, or you may study full-time at college. Whatever you do, you'll get the chance to experience at least 10 days in the workplace.

HOW ARE DIPLOMAS ASSESSED?

All Diplomas will be assessed through both exams and work marked by a teacher. Different parts of each Diploma will be assessed in different ways (for example, your project will usually be assessed by a teacher).

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT A DIPLOMA?

Diplomas allow you to learn both through theory and practice. So as well as finding out about things from books and people, you will get to apply this knowledge by doing things in a practical environment. This could be through a performance or show, a business enterprise or by making something.

For example, for the Advanced Diploma in Information Technology, you could design and develop your own multimedia product using video, audio, music and animation. For the Higher Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment, you may build a wall or a door and design a building.

You can find out more about each Diploma subject by talking to your teacher or careers adviser.

	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: • 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

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIPLOMAS AND APPRENTICESHIPS?

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

On a Diploma course, you will spend most of your time at school or college. A Diploma gives you an introduction to a broad range of careers within a particular industry,

and prepares you for a wide range of jobs and university courses. For example, after taking a Diploma in Creative and Media, you could go on to become a jewellery designer, a TV screenplay writer or an animator... or something completely different.

WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD TO STAY ON?

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) helps people over the age of 16 fund their final years of learning. To find out more, visit www.ema.direct.gov.uk

What could I do after a **Diploma?**

Diplomas are designed by employers and universities to give you the skills and learning you need, no matter what you decide to do next.

Once you finish your Diploma course, you could go on to:

- apply for a place at college or university
- do an Apprenticeship, or
- start a job.

Your career adviser can help you make the right choice.

WILL MY DIPLOMA BE HELPFUL WHEN I APPLY FOR A PLACE AT UNIVERSITY?

Yes. Universities and colleges were involved in creating Diplomas, so you will get the skills you need to succeed on a further or higher education course.

The Advanced Diploma gets the same number of UCAS points as 3.5 A levels. Listing your Diploma on your university application will show you have the knowledge and skills needed for higher education.

And because Diplomas teach you useful skills like researching projects on your own as well as working in teams, you may find it easier to adjust to study at university.

WILL MY DIPLOMA BE USEFUL WHEN I APPLY FOR A JOB?

Yes. The Diploma was developed with the help of employers to give you the skills, knowledge and experience you need to do well in the working world. Over 5,000 businesses, from Toyota to Barnardo's, have been involved so far.

Because you get the chance to learn in different settings, including the workplace, you'll get a real insight into what work is like – helping you develop skills that employers really value, like customer service and project management.



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

Remember that every extra qualification you gain will help you earn more over your 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 introduction of the new Diplomas is undoubtedly one of the most exciting developments in education for young people over the past generation. It is clear that they will engage and stretch learners of all abilities, and provide universities with students who will be able to present new skills and competencies.”

Julian Skyrme, Admissions Policy and Widening Participation, University of Manchester

What next?

To help with your choices for Year 12 and above, you can get good information and advice from your teacher or careers adviser at your school or college or from a Connexions adviser – see www.connexions-direct.com

Want to know more about Diplomas?

Check out these leaflets:

- **The Diploma: a guide for parents**
- **A handy guide to Diplomas: choosing your options for Year 10**
- **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.



“The Diploma will offer young people of all abilities a stimulating and challenging learning experience. It is designed to develop young people who are articulate, questioning and able to work on their own initiative. Students will be introduced to the principles and values expected of people who work in the sectors covered by the Diploma and will be able to make informed choices about their future careers. The applied approach to learning, coupled with the mandatory work experience, will give employers confidence that Diploma students will understand, and make a positive contribution to, the work of their organisations.”

**Martin Narey, CEO,
Barnardo's**

You can download this leaflet or order copies online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications Search using reference DCSF-00503-2008.

You can also order more copies by calling 0845 60 222 60; textphone 0845 60 555 60. Please quote reference 00503-2008LEF-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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