

Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)

Course Overview

Access to Higher Education Diplomas are designed for mature, motivated, and academically-focused students, providing an opportunity to return to study and apply for higher education (HE) degree courses in just one year. Access courses are very demanding but very rewarding; you will need lots of commitment and a positive attitude to learning new skills and gaining knowledge. We understand that returning to education as an adult can be daunting, but you will be studying alongside like-minded adults in an area with an adult ethos. You will need to develop good time management skills to balance your college and home/work life. The Humanities course runs over three days a week and has the added benefit of starting after 9am and finishing by 3 or 4.00pm. We do expect full attendance as missing sessions will inevitably affect the quality of your assignments.

The Access to Humanities diploma offers students a wide range of progression opportunities and is ideal if you already have an interest in English literature, history or human/environmental geography. The course has a strong tutorial system and you will receive full guidance and support for your HE and career plans. Your personal tutor will help you manage your learning effectively and the college provides friendly, confidential support through any problems you may have during your time with us. Access courses are validated by the QAA and are considered to be the adult equivalent of three A levels; they are accepted as a Level 3 entry requirement for all UK universities and the majority of undergraduate degrees.

For many students (aged 19-23) who do not yet have a full level 3 qualification, Access courses will be free; if you are 24+ and do have to take out an advanced learner loan to pay for the Access course fees, this loan will be written off if you progress to university and complete your degree.

What you will learn

You will study a range of topics linked to your university progression plans, taken from modern history, English literature, and human/environmental geography. All students will develop their academic study skills in preparation for university; these are included as separate modules and are also embedded within the course units.

We cover many interesting and engaging topics in the three main subject areas; most of our students are pleased with how these topics are brought to life in more relevant and engaging ways than they may have experienced in the past. For many students it will be the first time studying these topics and we assume no prior knowledge - although it is always useful if our students keep up to date with the news and have an interest in general knowledge.

It may be possible to take an additional GCSE alongside the course if this is needed for progression onto particular university courses, but you would have to pass a pre-entry assessment first and make sure that you can commit to an additional 3 hours of study per week. More information will be provided at interview, alternatively you can attend one of our open days or contact the Science and Humanities department directly.

Entry Requirements

Applicants should be aged 19 plus by the 31 August prior to starting the course.

You will also need to hold English and maths GCSEs at grade 4/C or above as this is what the universities require. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to study for one of these qualifications alongside your Access course.

One satisfactory reference from your previous place of study or work will also be required.

In order for you to progress onto an undergraduate degree at a British university, it is essential to have achieved a minimum of a GCSE grade C (4) in English and maths. It is your responsibility to check the GCSE grade profiles and Access Diploma requirements for the universities that you are interested in applying to and to attend a number of university open days.

Consideration will be given to applicants who do not have both English and maths GCSE as it may be possible (subject to a pre-entry assessment) to take one GCSE alongside the Access course. We also offer a full-time pre-access course where students can study up to six GCSEs in one year before moving on to the Access course. Very good communication skills are essential for this course, particularly in written English, as extended essays, controlled assessments and presentations are the main forms of assessment.

Course Fees

You will need to supply your own stationery and will be advised about certain texts/books which may be integral to your course.

On completion of your access course if you wish to apply to university there will be a fee for your UCAS application.

There are no course fees if you are under 24 on 31st August of the year in which you start the course AND you do not possess a full Level 3 qualification.

If (a) you are under 24 and already have a full level 3 qualification, OR (b) you are over 24 (irrespective of any qualifications you have achieved), then course fees are applicable. However, you may be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan to cover these and the advanced learner loan is written off if you progress to university and complete your degree. This is unique to Access to HE courses.

Course Progression

Students may progress from Access to Humanities onto a range of university courses, both locally and nationally. Examples include English literature and language, creative writing, media, journalism, education studies degrees leading to primary teaching, history, law, geography, philosophy, international relations, politics, media and film, linguistics and archaeology. Many of our students have high aspirations and we encourage them to apply to a range of both local and Russell Group universities, with consistently high progression rates.

This course is very adept in preparing students for further study and the humanities team has links to a number of universities to further support your progression aims.

Course Details

Course Code	P00362
Start Date	07/09/2026
Study Hours	Full Time
Duration	1 year
Campus	Abbey Park Campus
Level	3

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What Happens Next

Apply online via the College website. You will need details of your qualifications (certificates), a reference and a personal statement which sets out your university and career plans, to complete your application. Once your application has been successfully processed, you will be invited for a formal interview, learn more about your chosen course of study and tour the facilities. You will then need to confirm your acceptance of the course offered to you.