

## AVA Policy Statement and Guidelines

### OCNSER GCSE Equivalents for Access Provision 2009-10

#### 1. Background

OCNSER inherited a number of GCSE equivalent schemes from its merged AVA origins. For 2009 onwards we are setting out to revise these schemes and this document is a guide for how to operate the existing schemes for 2009-10.

#### 2. The purpose of GCSE equivalent schemes

##### 2.1 GCSE Entry Requirements for some HE courses and professions

Several higher education courses and a range of professions have entry requirements of the achievement of GCSEs or equivalents at grade C or above in English and/or Maths and/or Science. Individuals seeking to enter these courses and/or professions should be given accurate advice by centres regarding the necessary entry and admissions requirements.

In particular Entry to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) requires GCSE achievement as expressed below. The final decision on whether to admit a student to an ITT course on the basis of GCSE equivalent achievements, rests with the individual ITT providing institution<sup>1</sup>.

Extract from the ITT requirements guidance from the Teacher Development Agency

R1.1 That all entrants have achieved a standard **equivalent to a grade C** in the GCSE examination in English and mathematics, and that all who intend to train to teach pupils aged 3-11 additionally have achieved a standard equivalent to a grade C in the GCSE examination in a science subject.

To go direct to this advice follow the link below:

[http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/ittstandards/guidance\\_08/itt/R1\\_1.aspx?section=scope](http://www.tda.gov.uk/partners/ittstandards/guidance_08/itt/R1_1.aspx?section=scope)

Individuals seeking to enter these courses and/or professions should be given accurate advice by centres regarding the necessary entry and admissions requirements.

##### 2.2 The aims of the OCNSER Access GCSE Equivalent Schemes

These schemes are only for use by students on OCNSER Access to HE Diplomas. The GCSE equivalent schemes are intended to enable Access students to meet the

<sup>1</sup> Extract from TDA 'Routes into Teaching' advice pages: "Many Access to HE GCSE equivalents are recognised by teacher training course providers but the final decision is down to your chosen course provider so to be sure you need to contact them directly to check." See <http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit/adviceandevents/onlineevents/transcripts/routesintoteaching/routesintoteaching19.aspx>

matriculation requirements for entry to a range of HE degree courses where a GCSE pass at grade C or above is required.

The schemes do NOT have any function beyond this and are not intended to be used as a substitute for any statutory requirements placed on an individual in order to be competent to practice, whether this be as a teacher, nurse, midwife etc.

Access centres must make clear the status of any GCSE equivalent to students upon commencement of the Access Diploma. Students obtaining a place on an HE course using an OCNSER approved GCSE equivalent scheme, must be advised that they may have to undertake additional statutory requirements (such as obtaining an actual GCSE or taking another prescribed test) in order to be qualified to enter a specific career.

### 3. LSC funding for GCSE equivalent schemes/courses

The LSC has made it clear that stand-alone courses entitled 'GCSE equivalent' or similar, using non-qualification units, are NOT eligible for funding. Therefore there are only two ways of providing GCSE equivalent schemes for Access students:

- a. **Within** Access courses as a part of the 450 glh (if full time) – see section 4 below
- b. **Outside** Access courses and separate from the glh for the Access course using the **NOCN Qualifications in Progression** as a separate qualification aim. – see section 5 below.

### 4. GCSE equivalent schemes within an Access course

#### 4.1 Outline

Centres may use the GCSE equivalent units and relevant rules of combination as set out in the relevant **OCNSER GCSE Equivalent Scheme Handbooks**<sup>2</sup>.

In 2009-10 centres may continue to use the old **OCN Hampshire Isle of Wight & Sussex or OCN Kent & Medway Schemes**. These schemes will be closed at the end of 2009-10 and only the new OCNSER equivalent schemes will be available for use in 2010-11. Details of these schemes are also available from our GCSE Equivalent web pages.

#### 4.2 Evidence for the Portfolios

Centres may offer classes within the guided learning hours for an Access Diploma to teach one or more GCSE equivalents and in some cases (usually the GCSE English equivalent) tutorial sessions may be used to map elements of evidence produced for other parts of the Access course towards achievement of

<sup>2</sup> These can be downloaded from our GCSE Equivalent web pages  
<http://www.ocnser.org.uk/access-to-higher-education/grading>

the GCSE equivalent. In such cases the minimum assessment requirements are specified in the relevant OCNSER GCSE Equivalent Scheme Handbooks.

### 4.3 New Schemes for 2010-11

In 2009-10 OCNSER is developing new GCSE equivalent schemes for Maths, English & Science. Centres will be consulted and the schemes will be published before the end of the Spring term 2010 for implementation in 2010-11

### 4.4 Moderation

Access moderators will monitor GCSE equivalent courses and will write a short supplemental report on them for each centre. In some cases a separate moderator may be appointed for one or more GCSE equivalents, for example for a Maths or Science equivalent or where the centre has specifically requested, and agreed to pay for, additional moderation.

## 5. GCSE equivalent scheme offered outside the taught hours (glh) of an Access Course.

### 5.1 Outline

A Level Two **NOCN Qualification in Progression (QCF) in Award or Certificate** size, can be offered to Access students as an additional qualification aim to support the readiness of Access students to enter higher education.

OCNSER is able to endorse the achievement of specified units within these qualifications as being equivalent to a grade C pass at GCSE level in Maths and English. This option does not currently have a Science GCSE equivalent.

The benefit of this scheme is that centres can obtain additional qualification funding for students as long as they provide separate and distinct provision with its own glh outside the Access to HE Diploma.

The publication '**Access to HE GCSE Equivalent Scheme Handbook 2009-10**' is available from our web pages<sup>3</sup>.

### 5.2 Registration and Certification

In using this GCSE Equivalence option centres must register the learners against the relevant NOCN Qualification in Progression<sup>4</sup> and pay the appropriate registration fee. This is a distinct and separate process from Access learner registration.

Students will receive an NOCN Qualification in Progression certificate upon successful completion. Centres may also request a separate OCNSER GCSE equivalent certificate upon payment of the relevant additional fee.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ocnser.org.uk/access-to-higher-education/grading>

<sup>4</sup> This will be a listed qualification aim on the LSC Learning Aims Database

Credits achieved via the NOCN Qualifications in Progression do NOT automatically count towards the achievement of the Access to HE Diploma as they are part of a separate qualification. The credits achieved can be used for APL towards the achievement of an Access Diploma if the relevant OCNSER AVA procedures for APL are followed (see 5.3 below). Where centres are not intending to APL any credits achieved into a Access Diploma, they should ensure that students are able to gain up to 60 credits without the inclusion of any Level 2 credits gained via these additional NOCN qualifications.

### **5.3 Optional APCL Procedure**

Where a centre wishes to include Level 2 credit achieved via an NOCN Qualification in Progression within an Access Diploma the APCL procedure outlined in Section 2 of the '**Access to HE GCSE Equivalent Scheme Handbook 2009-10**'.