
Parents' Information on Diplomas

From September 2009, your son or daughter may have the opportunity to study for one of the new diplomas being introduced in schools and colleges. Parents of Year 9 students will need to check with their school whether your son or daughter is able to register for a diploma.

What is a Diploma?

Diplomas are new and exciting qualifications for 14-19 years olds. They are for young people of all abilities who want to learn in different environments by providing them with opportunities in a variety of places – school, college and the workplace.

They will be an option alongside existing qualifications. This means they can be combined with qualifications such as GCSEs. They will allow your son/daughter to achieve a qualification that has a mix of classroom and practical learning, including work experience. The diplomas will allow them to gain the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for work or university.

Why should I encourage my son or daughter to do a Diploma?

Diplomas are new! They are like no other qualification and there are many benefits for your son/daughter. Young people will

- be able to progress from one level to another, from school or college to further/higher education, a training provider or an employer
- gain experience and understanding of the world of work in their chosen area
- take their diploma to employers and universities who will accept and value their achievement

What areas are Diplomas available in?

In Tameside, there will be four diplomas from September 2009

- Creative and Media
- Engineering
- Information Technology
- Society, Health and Development

Are there different levels of Diplomas?

Yes, there are 3 levels being introduced that your son/daughter could choose from:

- Foundation – equivalent to 5 GCSEs at Grade D-G
 - Higher – equivalent to 7 GCSEs at Grade A*-C
 - Advanced – equivalent to 3.5 'A' Levels
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How long does a Diploma last for?

It will take 2 years to complete a diploma. Young people could spend up to two days per week of their timetable on this.

- For the main part of their diploma (the Principal Learning) diploma students might need to travel to another school or college where expert tuition and facilities are available. This is usually the same venue throughout the course on the same day of the week.
- At Advanced Level, the diploma is a full time course and includes A Levels.

Why are the Diplomas different?

Diplomas are different because:

- they will allow young people to develop skills that relate to a number of industries but will also allow them to leave their career options open
- they will give young people an insight into work and provide the skills, knowledge and understanding they need for further or higher education or employment
- they will offer young people an option to the traditional qualifications
- they will offer employment readiness and essential skills for work, whichever industry they choose to go into

Will they have to do other Subjects?

At Key Stage 4, if your son/daughter takes a diploma, they will also have to study for those subjects that the law says they have to do – English, Maths, Science, RE, ICT, PE, Citizenship and Personal Development Curriculum (Careers Education, Work-Related Learning and Sex and Relationship Education).

As part of their diploma work, students have to study Functional Skills in English, Maths and ICT (as part of their GCSES in those subjects), personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS), and a minimum of 10 days work experience.

At Advanced Level, students will also need Functional Skills, PLTS and include an A Level or other qualification that will meet possible entry requirements for university. Work experience is for 20 days.

Will Employers and Universities accept Diplomas?

Yes! Because employers and universities have been involved in developing the diplomas. They will be recognised and valued by them as they will know the skills and knowledge that will have been achieved.