

All the key information that an awarding body needs – on one page!

Key Dates - Diplomas

Sep 2008: First five Diplomas

Sep 2009: Five more diplomas

- Business, administration, finance

- Environment & land-based

- Hair and beauty studies

- Hospitality

- Manufacturing & product design

Sep 2010: Four more diplomas

Sep 2011: Three more diplomas

See www.qca.org.uk/diploma for further details

and http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_13915.aspx for timescales

Key Dates – Diploma Aggregation Service

September 2008 – Live (ie registration of real Diploma candidates)

Key Entities

DAB: Diploma Awarding Body

Able to award Diploma as a whole.

CAB: Component Awarding Body

Contributes units that can be part of a Diploma, but does not award the Diploma itself.

ULN: Unique Learner Number

Key Actions

DABs: you must extend your IT systems to communicate with Minerva via web services

CABs: interface can be manual, but if large volumes then you should also use web services

What Is A Diploma?

The Diploma is a new type of qualification for students that want an alternative to GCSEs and A Levels. Diplomas are more vocational and will generally involve hands-on experience. The following levels will be available:

- **Foundation Diploma** (Level 1) – equivalent to GCSE grade D-G

- **Higher Diploma** (Level 2) – equivalent to GCSE grade A-C

- **Advanced Diploma** (Level 3) – equivalent to A Level (ok for university entry)

The Diploma is a key element of the 14-19 reform. It will be component-based and it is unlikely that a student will be able to cover all components with a single learning provider – Diploma partnerships are therefore being formed. For this reason, awarding bodies are being encouraged to offer components (ie units) that can go towards a Diploma being awarded via another awarding body.

What Was Minerva?

Minerva was the project to deliver the Diploma Aggregation Service, which manages the (optional) registrations of candidates for the Diploma, upload of marks for each component and award of qualifications.

The Diploma Aggregation Service is in the form of a web-site (<https://www.diplomaaggregationservice.org/DAS>) and this provides human interfaces and also *web services*. These are services that other web-sites and internal IT systems can access over the internet - in a similar way that a human would. For Diploma Awarding Bodies (DABs) access is *only* via web services – there is no human interface.

What Does The Diploma Aggregation Service Do?

For awarding bodies there are three main functions:

Registrations: The centre can register the candidate and the Diploma Aggregation Service will pass on registration details to the DAB automatically. There is no requirement for a CAB to register the candidate's component.

Achievement: Depending on the component and how it is marked, centres or exam officers or CABs can upload the candidate's grades for a component (unit). N.B. all DABs must be a CABs as well.

Claim of Diploma: When the Diploma Aggregation Service receives the final component's grade it will issue a Claim of Diploma request to the DAB, which should print the certificate.

NB. In order to use the service you will need ULNs for each candidate. See our MIAP On A Plate document for further information on ULNs.

What Should You Do Now?

If you are a DAB then you need to modify your IT systems to register your candidates and upload marks on the Diploma Aggregation Service web-site via web services.

The web-site not allow you to perform these activities manually on the web-site so, if you wish to be involved with the Diploma as a DAB, you *must* modify your IT systems to communicate via web services. For further advice on web services you can contact rod@gordonassociates.co.uk

If you are a CAB then you have a choice: you can upload marks to the DAS site through a human interface or via web services. Your decision will probably depend on the number of candidates you are processing.