

Career Information and Advice

Level 4 Diploma

Scheme code 04512

Guidance for Candidates

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	The qualification	4
2.1	What is the Diploma in Career Information and Advice?	4
2.2	How do I know that this qualification is right for me?	4
2.3	What do I have to do to achieve this qualification?	5
2.4	What do the individual units look like?	6
2.5	How do I choose which optional units to take?	7
2.6	What if I cannot gain enough credits for a full qualification?	7
2.7	What if I pick a combination of units which adds up to more than 45 credits?	7
2.8	Do I need to pass all of the units?	7
2.9	Do I need to complete the units in any specific order?	7
3	Assessment of the Units	9
3.1	How is the Diploma assessed?	9
3.2	What kind of evidence do I need to provide?	10
3.3	How much evidence do I need to provide?	11
3.4	How should I record my evidence?	11
3.5	Access to assessment	13
3.6	Appeals procedure	13
4	Glossary of Terms	14

1 Introduction

Welcome to the OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice. This booklet contains important information about your qualification along with guidance on identifying evidence from your workplace duties to demonstrate your competence.

The OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice demonstrates that you have the competence (the skills, knowledge and understanding) to carry out your duties to the required standard in your normal work situation. The qualification is based on the structure and units developed by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), the Sector Skills Council for the lifelong learning sector (www.lluk.org).

Both the structure of this qualification and the units from which it is constructed are approved by Ofqual. Your Awarding Body for this qualification is OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations). Ofqual has accredited the OCR qualifications and you can find full accreditation details on both the OCR website and the National Database of Accredited Qualifications.

The OCR website www.ocr.org.uk gives a range of information about the qualification, how it operates and other qualifications that may be of interest to you.

You can also visit the National Database of Accredited Qualifications website at www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk.

Definition of Key Terms

Ofqual

The regulator of qualifications in England (www.ofqual.gov.uk).

Awarding body

An organisation approved by the government to design and award qualifications which are accredited by Ofqual.

OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations) is the awarding body for this Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice (www.ocr.org.uk).

Centre

An organisation which offers a qualification to candidates (such as a school, college, training provider or workplace). Your centre will be the place where you have registered to take your qualification.

Sector Skills Council (SSC)

An independent, employer-led organisation which aims to build a skills system for the UK that is driven by employer demand. There are a number of SSCs which each have a specific focus on a particular sector of the economy.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)

The SSC for this award (www.lluk.org).

2 The qualification

2.1 What is the Diploma in Career Information and Advice?

The Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice has been specifically designed for those currently working, or preparing to work in para-professional roles providing career information and advice to clients. A core of mandatory units covers preparation for working in the careers guidance sector, awareness of career choice theories, and meeting the needs of clients. The wide range of optional units covers the diversity of roles undertaken by staff working in the sector.

This qualification aims to:

- provide professional development opportunities for those currently working in career guidance, in para-professional roles
- prepare candidates for employment in a career guidance role
- improve the essential knowledge, understanding and skills required for employment in a career guidance role, whilst employed
- update the knowledge skills and understanding of those already employed in a career guidance role to improve their performance

2.2 How do I know that this qualification is right for me?

This qualification is designed for candidates working in the career guidance sector wishing to gain an appropriate qualification for the purposes of their continued professional development.

This qualification may also form a progression route to the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development or appropriate higher education qualifications.

The Diploma is designed to reflect your work as you gain experience, specialise and seek promotion. Its purpose is to demonstrate that you have achieved the required level of competence and can maintain that standard as you carry out your duties consistently over a period of time. The Diploma is work oriented and you must have the opportunity to demonstrate your competence with current work experience (either paid or voluntary).

This qualification has been designed to help you to develop and demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding you will need to enable progression to further qualifications in the qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

OCR offers a range of related qualifications in this vocational area. Why not visit our website at www.ocr.org.uk to see the full range.

2.3 What do I have to do to achieve this qualification?

The OCR Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice consists of a number of separate units and a credit value is given to each one.

There are five mandatory units, each of which has a value of 6 credits. In addition there are 18 optional units, each with its own credit value.

To achieve the Diploma qualification you must achieve 45 credits in total. 30 credits will come from the five mandatory units. The remaining 15 credits need to come from the optional units.

Certificates may be claimed for individual units but please discuss this with your assessor.

The following tables contain the groups of mandatory and optional units.

Group A

OCR Unit No	Unit title	Unit Accreditation No (UAN)	Credit value	Level	GLH
1	Preparing to work in the career information, advice and guidance sector	A/502/8432	6	Level 4	40
2	Reflecting on practice and continuous professional development	D/502/8438	6	Level 4	40
3	Interview clients to determine their need for career information, advice and guidance	J/502/8417	6	Level 4	40
4	Meeting the career-related information needs of clients	L/502/8418	6	Level 4	40
5	Career choice theories and concepts to support clients	A/502/8401	6	Level 4	20

Group B

OCR Unit No	Unit title	Unit Accreditation No (UAN)	Credit value	Level	GLH
6	Plan and deliver career-related learning in groups	A/502/8429	6	Level 4	40
7	Assist clients to review the achievement of career-related actions	H/502/8425	2	Level 4	15
8	Provide ongoing support to clients	R/502/8436	2	Level 4	15
9	Use diagnostic and assessment tools with clients	A/502/8446	6	Level 5	40
10	Explore and agree how to meet the career-related needs of clients	T/502/8414	6	Level 4	40
11	Source, evaluate and use Labour Market Information with clients	Y/502/8440	3	Level 4	20
12	Engage with support networks to help clients to meet their career-related needs	L/502/8404	3	Level 4	20
13	Assist clients to apply for learning, training and work	Y/502/8423	3	Level 4	20
14	Negotiate on behalf of clients	T/502/8445	1	Level 5	30

OCR Unit No	Unit title	Unit Accreditation No (UAN)	Credit value	Level	GLH
15	Understand how to support specific client groups to overcome barriers to learning, training and work	D/502/8441	3	Level 4	20
16	Obtain and organise career-related information to support clients	J/502/8420	3	Level 4	20
17	Refer clients to sources of specialist support to meet their needs	Y/502/8437	2	Level 4	15
18	Undertake research on behalf of the service	J/502/8434	6	Level 6	40
19	Advocate on behalf of clients	H/502/8442	4	Level 6	40
20	Prepare to deliver services to clients in an outreach setting	M/502/8430	2	Level 4	15
21	Promote career-related learning to clients	F/502/8433	6	Level 4	40
22	Operate within networks to support the delivery of the service	D/502/8407	2	Level 3	20
23	Evaluate service provision	H/502/8408	3	Level 4	20

2.4 What do the individual units look like?

The units themselves are available on the OCR website.

Each unit contains the following information:

- The level at which the unit is set (as this is a level 4 qualification, the majority of the units are at Level 4, but there are a few optional units at higher levels)
- The credit value for that unit – to achieve the full qualification, you need 45 credits, 30 from the mandatory units and 15 from the optional units. The credit values attached to each will help you choose which combination of units is right for you and meets the requirements of the qualification as a whole.
- Guided learning hours (GLH) – this is the recommended number of hours required for someone to deliver the unit to you – you may still need extra time outside the GLH in order to complete the unit.
- The unit purpose and aim – a brief summary of the unit which describes what the unit is about and will help you decide how the unit relates to your work.
- The learning outcomes – these are what the assessment is confirming that you should be able to do on completion of the unit
- The assessment criteria – these detail what you must do whilst being assessed and are the things which you'll be required to provide evidence of in order to demonstrate that you can achieve the learning outcomes.
- Assessment – details of how the unit will be assessed (in this diploma, all assessment takes place internally within the centre, and is externally verified by OCR assessors).

- Evidence requirements – guidance on the recommended forms of evidence that may be available from your normal duties to prove that you are competent to the standard specified and which will be accepted as evidence for each of the assessment criteria. (Some observation of your performance by your assessor will be required.)

2.5 How do I choose which optional units to take?

Your tutor/trainer/assessor is likely to provide guidance on which of the optional units which are most appropriate for you to take. When making the decision, think about which units are likely to apply most to your own personal job role. You also need to consider the credit value of each unit. Remember you need to gain at least 15 credits from the optional units.

2.6 What if I cannot gain enough credits for a full qualification?

This qualification is very flexible and allows you to achieve recognition for what you have already achieved even if you do not finish the full qualification. OCR has systems in place which allow you to be awarded a certificate listing the unit (or units) you have achieved even if you are unable to complete the full qualification.

2.7 What if I pick a combination of units which adds up to more than 45 credits?

The achievement of 45 credits for the full Diploma qualification is a minimum – it does not matter if you choose a combination of units which comes to more than 45 credits.

2.8 Do I need to pass all of the units?

Information about the combination of units you will need to pass in order to achieve a full Level 4 Diploma in Career Information and Advice is given in section 2.2 above. You must pass each of the mandatory units, and sufficient optional units as required in order to gain the Diploma. However, each unit represents a worthwhile achievement in its own right, and certification is also available at unit level.

2.9 Do I need to complete the units in any specific order?

The qualification has been designed with the first five mandatory units in a logical progressive order. You do not have to *achieve* these units in any particular order, but it is strongly advised that

you study them in sequence where possible, especially if you are new to your role. Your trainer/tutor may choose to adopt a holistic approach to the delivery of the qualification – this will mean you are likely to look at more than one unit at a time, and explore the links between the units.

3 Assessment of the Units

3.1 How is the Diploma assessed?

All of the units are internally assessed by your centre's staff and externally verified by OCR assessors. The assessment will be carried out in your workplace. Your internal assessor will judge, from your evidence, whether or not you have reached the required standard. You will not have to take a formal written examination.

It is your assessor's role to satisfy themselves that evidence is available to meet all assessment criteria before they can decide that you have finished a unit. Where questioning has been used, your assessor must be satisfied that you will be competent under these conditions or in these types of situations in the workplace in the future.

You may claim evidence of prior learning and achievement as long as the evidence you present fully meets the criteria and you can prove that it is all your own work. It is important that your assessor is convinced that the competence you are claiming is still current (particularly in cases where, for instance, legislation has changed). If there are any doubts, additional evidence may be required, and your assessor should take steps to assess your competence directly.

It is important that you complete some form of initial assessment to identify the competence and knowledge that you already have, and any gaps on which you need to concentrate. This will help you to plan assessments as it allows your assessor to help you to understand where best to start identifying evidence. It will also identify any units that you will have difficulty completing.

Your assessor will need to agree a number of issues with you including:

- Finding the best sources of evidence to use for particular units
- Finding the best ways of assessing you
- Confirming suitable dates, times and places for your assessments to take place.

Your assessor will record their assessment planning and regularly give you feedback. When your assessor is satisfied that you have met all of the requirements for a unit, they must confirm this by signing an evidence record sheet for that unit to show that the assessment process is complete.

3.2 What kind of evidence do I need to provide?

Your **evidence** is the proof that your knowledge, understanding and skills meet the requirements of the qualification. It can be anything that proves:

- What you can do
- How well you can do it
- The level of knowledge you have in relation to what you do
- The level of understanding you have about what you do, how you do it and why you do it.

Your evidence could be in the form of:

- A case study
- A project
- A report, assignment or essay you have written to support your other evidence and relate it to your work role
- A reflective account of your own performance or of your application of theories in practice
- A record of oral and written questioning
- Records of professional discussions between you and your assessor
- Records of your assessor observing you carrying out your work
- Statements from witnesses about your competence
- Work products (which could include evidence produced for assessment from other quality standards)

Some of the evidence to prove your skills, knowledge and understanding will be provided by your assessor observing you carry out your duties and writing a report on what they have observed. After your assessor has observed you, they will ask you questions to confirm what you know and understand. This assessor's report (one piece of evidence) could be enough evidence to fulfil a number of requirements of your qualification.

Statements written by other people, which describe something you have done as part of your job, are called witness testimonies and are a useful source of evidence. They are particularly valuable if that person is an expert in their field and must be signed and dated by the person making the statement.

You need evidence to prove that you:

- Can do all the things described in the assessment criteria
- Have provided the minimum evidence described in the assessment requirements

3.3 How much evidence do I need to provide?

You do not have to produce a separate piece of evidence for each of the assessment criteria. Each piece of evidence should be matched to as many of these criteria as possible. The evidence you provide will be assessed (checked by your assessor against the unit requirements). Your assessor will want you to continue providing evidence until they are satisfied that there is enough consistent proof that you are competent. To be accepted as proof of your competence, your evidence must:

- come from work you have carried out in a real work situation (paid or voluntary)
- be your own work or relate to you
- reflect what you can do now, not what you could do a few years ago or what you wish to do in the future.

3.4 How should I record my evidence?

You may decide to keep some of your evidence in a file (a portfolio of evidence) or you may want to record what the evidence is and where it can be found. This is called signposting evidence. Your portfolio can be paper based or in an electronic format. The important thing to remember about evidence is that it must be available for your assessor to assess and for other people (called internal and external verifiers) to refer to in the future.

In some situations, the work that you are involved with may include confidential information relating to your organisation's clients. It may not be appropriate to include this information in your portfolio of evidence.

If the evidence contains confidential information, this information could be removed from the document before it is submitted as evidence. If the evidence takes the form of a document which is reporting on confidentiality sensitive details throughout, you could either:

- signpost the evidence within your portfolio (as long as it would be available for your assessor, internal verifier and external verifier to see) or
- your assessor could provide an observation report of what they have seen and how it shows that you are competent. This observation report would then form part of the evidence in your portfolio.

We have designed a Record of Achievement form for you to keep track of your unit achievements. There is an Evidence Log for you to list all of your evidence and give each piece a reference. There is also an Evidence Record Sheet which allows you, your assessor and the internal and external verifiers to see which assessment criterion (or criteria) each piece of evidence refers to. This form (or an alternative to it) is mandatory – you must keep a record of what has been assessed and where it can be found. Your assessor may give you alternative forms to use. This is acceptable as long as they include all the information needed.

You must keep your evidence record sheets (or alternatives that your assessor may give you) together in a file (either paper or electronic). It is your record of which evidence has been assessed and accepted by your assessor as proof of your competence and it details where it can be found. Your assessor will help you prepare this information.

The OCR Record of Achievement, Evidence Log and Evidence Record Sheets can be found on our website www.ocr.org.uk.

Summary

When collecting evidence, the following guidance will help you:

- Think about what activities you do in your current role and match these to the units specified for your qualification.
- Identify evidence that you could gather naturally while carrying out your everyday work and cross reference these to as many assessment criteria as possible (either within the same unit or across other units). Apply a single piece of evidence to as many units as possible. This is not only economical in terms of collecting evidence, but it also gives a more holistic, or rounded, picture of your competence.
- Go for quality rather than quantity. Well chosen pieces of evidence can count for much more than a vast amount of evidence which only loosely applies.
- Mix the types of evidence you offer. A good mixture containing some observation of practice, some products of your work, some witness reports and so on, leads to a more streamlined, better-balanced approach which is more convincing to your assessor.
- Choose evidence which reflects your current competence. Evidence can come from things you did in the past but your assessor must be convinced that the evidence you offer reflects your current competence.
- Do not include reference materials (such as company policies and training materials) as evidence, because they do not demonstrate your competence.
- You can also use your assessor's records of your assessment as evidence.
- You do not have to keep all evidence in a paper portfolio. If evidence is located somewhere else, for example, in a filing cabinet, or on a computer disk, record what the evidence is and where the evidence is located. The location of evidence needs to be clearly signposted on your evidence record sheet.
- You may find it useful to include a copy of your curriculum vitae (CV) with your evidence to show your previous qualifications and work history.
- Confidential and unavailable evidence. Your assessor should have access to this type of evidence to assess your competence. However, in some cases your assessor's description of the evidence they have seen will be more suitable, depending on the type of evidence.
- Discuss your planned evidence with your assessor regularly.

3.5 Access to assessment

We have tried to make sure that no unnecessary access restrictions will slow down your progress. You must have the same chances as everyone else to prove your competence and collect evidence. If you need mechanical, electronic or other aids to show your competence, please talk to your assessor about this. You can use aids as long as they are generally commercially available and it is practical to use them during your normal work.

3.6 Appeals procedure

We do not think that you will ever have to use our appeals procedure, but if you do, the process is described in the OCR publication Admin Guide to Vocational Qualifications - (reference code A850), which can be downloaded from the OCR website www.ocr.org.uk.

4 Glossary of Terms

Analyse	Examine in very close detail: identify important points and chief features
Critically analyse	Consider the claims of theorists, governments, authorities etc, what they are based on and how far they seem to apply to a given situation
Critically evaluate	Outline the criteria used to guide your assessment of which theories, opinions, models or items are preferable and then weigh arguments for and against something, assessing the strength of the evidence on both sides.
Evaluate	Assess the worth, importance or usefulness of something, using evidence
On-going support	Support clients on an ongoing basis to help them to progress their plan of action This could be where the client is working directly with you or where a particular aspect of their case has been referred to another service.
Referral	Determining a more detailed picture of the needs of the client and then obtaining a booked appointment for the client with another agency, where the referring agency for reasons of specialism or capacity is unable to assist the client further
Signposting	Where a client is simply directed to one or more appropriate sources of information, advice or guidance. An example of this would be giving the client telephone numbers of local agencies