

TQUK Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification in Health and Social Care (Extended Certificate) (RQF)

The Basics



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What are AAQs?

Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) have been approved by the Department for Education (DfE). When combined with A Levels as part of a mixed-study programme, AAQs offer learners a high-quality entry route into higher education with the added benefit of UCAS tariff points.

The TQUK Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification in Health and Social Care (Extended Certificate) (RQF) is designed for learners aged 16-19. Its purpose is to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for progression to higher education and careers within the health and social care sector.

It provides learners with a strong foundation of knowledge and skills in health and social care principles that complement theoretical concepts covered in the A Level curriculum.

This integrated approach will enable learners to gain a thorough understanding of academic principles and their practical application. It will also enhance their university/college applications, giving them a competitive edge.

What will Learners Study?

The AAQ seeks to provide learners with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and practices that underpin health and social care.

It comprises five mandatory units as outlined in the following table:

Unit	Unit Title
Unit 1:	Principles and Practices of Working in Health and Social Care
Unit 2:	Health, Safety, and Infection Control in Health and Social Care
Unit 3:	Safeguarding in Adult Health and Social Care
Unit 4:	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Health and Social Care
Unit 5:	The Person-Centred Approach in Health and Social Care

The Focus of the Qualification

This AAQ is equivalent to one A Level and may typically be completed as part of a two-year study programme.

Learners will develop their knowledge and skills of the core values that underpin high-quality health and social care provision and explore how the values are incorporated into practice.

In Unit 1, learners will explore the fundamental principles of working in the health and social care sector, including the roles and responsibilities of professionals, effective communication, and the importance of ongoing professional development. They will examine key legislation relevant to the sector and how legal and regulatory requirements shape best practices.

Unit 2, learners will examine health and safety concerns, the measures required to maintain a safe working environment, and the strategies used to ensure effective infection control.

In Unit 3, learners will gain an understanding of safeguarding, including recognising the signs of abuse or neglect and the appropriate reporting mechanisms to follow when concerns are raised.

In Unit 4, learners will consider the significance of equality, diversity, and inclusion and how these principles shape practice.

In Unit 5, they will examine person-centred care, exploring its role in meeting individual needs, promoting dignity, and ensuring high-quality support for an individual.

Total Qualification Time

An estimate of the overall time a learner will typically take to achieve and demonstrate the required level of attainment:

Qualification	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Direct Study	Total Qualification Time (TQT)
TQUK Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification in Health and Social Care (Extended Certificate) (RQF)	360	40	400

Assessment

The assessments are unitised and consist of an Examination Assessment (EA) and a non-examination Assessment (NEA). The NEA will be released each year in September.

The assessment weightings are:

Year	Unit	Assessment Method
Year 1	Unit 1: Principles and Practices of Working in Health and Social Care	Examination Assessment
	Unit 2: Health, Safety, and Infection Control in Health and Social Care	Non-examination Assessment
Year 2	Unit 3: Safeguarding in Adult Health and Social Care	Examination Assessment
	Unit 4: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Health and Social Care	Non-examination Assessment
	Unit 5: The Person-Centred Approach in Health and Social Care	Non-examination Assessment
Assessment Weighting	Examination Assessment (EA)	40%
	Non-examination Assessment (NEA)	60%

HE Progression

The AAQ has been designed to support progression to higher education and may support entry to the following degree programmes:

Degree Programmes				
Healthcare Management	Health and Social Care	Healthcare Science	Mental Health Nursing	Nursing
Midwifery	Occupational Therapy	Public Health and Social Care	Social Work	Speech and Language Therapy

Benefits for Future Study

Throughout the AAQ, learners will have the opportunity to develop written and verbal communication skills, proficiency in academic writing, critical thinking and analysis, time management skills, and the ability to carry out independent research.

These skills closely align with university expectations and will ensure that the learners are prepared for the rigour of higher-level study, where they can apply them at an advanced level.

This knowledge and skills development will be invaluable to learners wishing to further their studies in disciplines such as nursing, public health management, advocacy, and counselling.

A Levels to Complement this AAQ

The A Level subject areas that would complement this AAQ include Biology, Chemistry, English Language, Law, Mathematics, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, and Sociology.

Combining the AAQ with A Levels in Biology, Mathematics, or Psychology would introduce learners to scientific knowledge, analytical skills, and person-centred care principles. This would be particularly relevant for degrees in nursing, midwifery, and occupational therapy.

Studying the AAQ with A levels in Sociology, Psychology, and Law would benefit learners interested in the impact of social structures, knowledge of social behaviour, legal frameworks, and ethical decision-making. This combination provides a pathway into public health, social work, and healthcare policy.

Learners may choose to combine the AAQ with A Levels in Biology, Mathematics, or Physical Education. This would allow learners to explore physiology and gain an understanding of movement and exercise, and analytical approaches to assess and monitor an individual's physical performance. This combination would support entry to degrees in physiotherapy, sports therapy, and occupational health.

More Information

For further information about the TQUK Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification in Health and Social Care (Extended Certificate), please visit the [TQUK website](https://www.tquk.org).

If you're new to Training Qualifications UK, you can contact us by calling [03333 583 344](tel:03333583344) or emailing business.development@tquk.org.