



Training
Qualifications UK

Alternative Academic Qualification Factsheet

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

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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 provide learners with a high-quality entry route into higher education with the added reassurance of allocated UCAS tariff points.

The purpose of the AAQ in Health and Social Care is to provide learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to progress to higher education and ultimately work 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 full understanding of academic principles and their practical application. This will, in turn, showcase their ability to apply concepts and techniques and strengthen their university/college applications, giving them a competitive edge.

The target age group

This extended certificate has been designed for learners aged 16-19 who wish to develop core knowledge and understanding of health and social care principles.

What will learners study?

The AAQ seeks to equip learners with in-depth knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and practices that underpin health and social care. This extended certificate comprises five mandatory units as outlined in the following table:

Units
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

The qualification is equivalent to one A Level and comprises five units that learners would typically complete within a two-year study programme. It allows learners to 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.

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.

Learners will also examine health and safety concerns, the measures required to maintain a safe working environment, and the strategies used to ensure effective infection control. They 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.

Additionally, learners will consider the significance of equality, diversity, and inclusion and how these principles shape practice. They will develop an understanding of person-centred care, exploring its role in meeting individual needs, promoting dignity, and ensuring high-quality support of the 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)	360	40	400

Assessment

Assessments for this qualification are unitised and consist of an examined 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	Examined 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	Examined 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	Examined assessment	40%
	Non-examination assessment	60%

HE progression

The qualifications have been designed to support progression to higher education. They 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

Knowledge and skills and benefits for future study

The qualification will help learners develop specialist skills such as critical thinking and evidence analysis to support informed decision-making. They will build problem-solving and reflection skills by exploring strategies to address the challenges covered in the content. This will provide a strong foundation for independent learning and the practical application of knowledge at university level. Learners will also collaborate on case studies, improving their communication skills and understanding of professional values. They will explore ethical reasoning and learn about advocating on behalf of individuals, preparing them for higher-level study.

This knowledge and skills base will be invaluable for learners wishing to further their studies in nursing, public health management, advocacy, and counselling.

A Levels to complement this AAQ

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

Combining the qualification 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 qualification 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 would provide an excellent pathway into public health, social work, and healthcare policy.

Learners may also combine the qualification with A Levels in Biology, Mathematics, or Physical Education. This would allow them 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](#). 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.