

# **ATHE Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance**

603/5422/7

Specification Version 1.0 Valid from 16.01.2020



## Contents

Contents .....	2
Introduction .....	3
About ATHE.....	3
Our Qualifications .....	3
Support for Centres .....	4
Introduction to ATHE's Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance .....	5
The Aims of the Qualification .....	5
Entry Requirements.....	5
Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations .....	6
Support and Recognition .....	6
Progression from Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance .....	6
Resources Required by Centres .....	6
Modes of Delivery .....	7
Definition of Guided Learning Hours (GLH), Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Credit.....	7
Total Qualification Time (TQT).....	8
Credit .....	8
Qualification Structure for the Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance .....	9
Guidance on Assessment and Grading.....	9
Assessment .....	9
Methods of Assessment .....	9
Recording Assessment Judgements .....	9
Putting an Assessment Strategy in Place .....	9
Qualification Grading .....	10
Grading system .....	10
Qualification Grading Structure .....	11
Determining the Overall Qualification Grade.....	11
Quality Assurance of Centres.....	12
Malpractice .....	12
Guidance for Teaching and Learning .....	12
Top Tips for Delivery .....	12

## Introduction

### About ATHE

Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE) is a global awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual and other United Kingdom and international regulators. We provide centres with a wide variety of qualifications including, but not limited to: business and management, accounting, law, computing, health & social care and religious studies. For the full list please visit our website: [www.athe.co.uk](http://www.athe.co.uk)

ATHE has also developed a wide range of bespoke qualifications for clients.

The ATHE mission is to provide outstanding qualifications, customer service and support, enabling centres to thrive and their learners to achieve and progress. We will support this mission by:

- providing qualifications which enable learners to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to society both socially and economically
- delivering the highest standards of customer service
- delivering support and guidance which meet the needs of all centres and enable them to improve performance
- upholding and maintaining the quality and standards of qualifications and assessments
- having a commitment to lifelong learning and development.

### Our Qualifications

Our qualifications have been created with the involvement of expert input from managers and staff in colleges, industry professionals and our qualification development team. We have also taken into account feedback from learners and consulted with higher education institutions to ensure the qualifications facilitate progression to higher levels. We have taken advantage of the flexibility of the RQF to develop a suite of awards, certificates and diplomas that offer progression across many of the RQF levels.

Key features of the qualifications include:

- regular reviews of the units and the associated support materials so they are current and meet the needs of learners
- alignment of the programmes of learning to degree and higher degree qualifications in HEIs in the UK and international institutions, so there is comparability and smooth progression for learners
- a smaller qualification for learners who do not have the time to undertake a full-time programme
- challenging and relevant learning with flexible methods of assessment allowing tutors to select the most appropriate methods for their learners
- opportunities for learners to achieve higher grades by unit and overall qualification and reach their maximum potential
- learning that develops knowledge, understanding and skills e.g. problem-solving and interpersonal skills needed by effective accounting professionals.

## Support for Centres

We are committed to supporting our centres and offer a range of training, support and consultancy services including:

- a comprehensive guide for centres on delivering ATHE qualifications
- qualification guidance, assessor guidance, suggested resources and sample assignments for all units which have been written and verified by experienced practitioners
- verification and guidance with all internally devised assignments
- guidance on how to deliver, assess and quality assure the qualifications
- an ATHE centre support officer who guides centres through the recognition process, learner registration and learner results submission
- health check visits to highlight areas of good practice and any areas for development
- an allocated member of our team who can work with centres to support further improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- the services of a team of experienced external verifiers
- opportunities for training and staff development
- access to free webinars to support delivery, assessment and QA processes
- support for business development.

## ATHE Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance

This document provides key information on ATHE's Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance, including the rules of combination, the content of all the units and guidance on assessment and curriculum planning. It should be used in conjunction with the ATHE handbook "Delivering ATHE Qualifications". Further guidance and supporting documentation on curriculum planning, internal verification and assessment are provided separately in the Delivering ATHE Qualifications handbook and via the ATHE website.

This qualification is regulated by Ofqual and is listed on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications. Each qualification has a Qualification Number (QN). This number will appear on the learner's final certification documentation. Each unit within a qualification also has a Unit Reference Number.

The QN number for this qualification is as follows:

ATHE Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance	603/5422/7
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## Regulation Dates

This qualification is regulated from 16.01.2020 and its operational start date in centres is 01.02.2020

## Availability

This qualification is available to learners who are registered at a recognised ATHE centre which is based in England, Wales or internationally, outside of the United Kingdom.

## Introduction to ATHE's Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance

### The Aims of the Qualification

The aims of this qualification are to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of areas. Areas include professional and ethical responsibilities, financial reporting, advisory skills in planning strategic acquisitions and mergers, management accounting, taxation information and audit and compliance in practice. These are pertinent to the development of participants and to accounting roles in organisations. The qualification also supports progression for learners to higher qualification levels and professional qualifications. The associated sample assignments support the development of skills needed by individuals working in the Accounting profession.

The Level 7 Accounting and Finance qualification has been developed to conform to the requirements of the RQF.

This qualification is therefore designed to provide:

- opportunities for learners to develop a breadth of knowledge and understanding of subject matter related to accounting
- development of underpinning skills, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in working life
- units that are directly related to learners' current responsibilities or that meet a particular interest and support career development
- a base for continued learning and a desire to constantly develop as an individual, further improving knowledge, understanding and skills.

### Entry Requirements

This qualification is designed for learners who are typically aged 18 and above.

ATHE's policy regarding access to our qualifications is that:

- they should be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- they should be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- there should be equal opportunities for all those wishing to access the qualifications.

Centres should review the prior qualifications and experience of each learner and consider whether they provide the necessary foundations to undertake the programme of study at level 7. For learners with disabilities and other specific needs, this review will need to take account of the support available to the learner during teaching and assessment of the qualification. If there are exceptional entrants, centres should contact ATHE.

For learners who have recently been in education or training the entry profile is likely to include one of following:

- level 6 qualifications in Accounting or finance related subject
- other related level 7 subjects
- other equivalent international qualifications.

Learners must have an appropriate standard of English to enable them to access relevant resources and complete the unit assignments.

Learners must also have an appropriate standard of Mathematics to enable them to achieve the Learning Outcomes at the standards set by the Assessment Criteria in each unit.

Mature learners may present a more varied profile of achievement that is likely to include relevant work experience (paid and/or unpaid) with levels of responsibility, participation and/or achievement of relevant professional qualifications. This may be used for recognition of prior learning (RPL). Learners may also hold RQF qualifications which will enable them to claim an exemption from part of the qualification.

Please note that the UK Visas and Immigration Department (UKVI) requires adult students to have acceptable English language ability before they can apply to become an adult student under Tier 4 (General) of the points-based system. As an education provider you must ensure that the applicant is competent in the English language where the programme is taught and assessed in English. This should be at IELTS 6.5 or 7 at a minimum of CEFR level C1 for an RQF qualification at level 7.

Centres are required to recruit learners to qualifications with integrity. Centres must carry out robust initial assessment to ensure that learners, who undertake qualifications, have the necessary background knowledge, understanding and skills to undertake the learning and assessment at level 7. This assessment should take account of any support available to the learner within the centre during the programme of study and any support that may be required to allow the learner to access the assessment for the units within the qualification.

ATHE will review centre recruitment policies as part of the monitoring processes.

### **Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations**

ATHE's policy on reasonable adjustments and special consideration aims to enhance access to the qualifications for learners with disabilities and other difficulties (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) without compromising the assessment of skills, knowledge and understanding. Centres are also required to have their own policies for reasonable adjustments and special considerations. Where the learner has been awarded a reasonable adjustment or special consideration this must be recorded on the assessment sheet and the learner record. External Verifiers will take account of this information at the external verification of learner work. Further details on reasonable adjustments and special considerations are provided in the ATHE policy document, which can be found on our website. Please contact ATHE if you are uncertain about adjustments for certain learners.

### **Support and Recognition**

This qualification has been developed with the support of higher education providers and centres who are currently offering or planning to deliver accounting qualifications at this level.

### **Progression from Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance**

This qualification supports learners studying alongside the ACCA Professional Papers. Learners who complete the qualification will have the opportunity to 'top-up' and acquire a master's degree with ATHE university progression partners such as the University of Bolton. They may also seek career advancement via employment.

### **ATHE Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

There will be occasions where learners wish to claim recognition of prior learning that has not been formally assessed and accredited. ATHE has provided detailed guidance on RPL which is available for centres on the ATHE website. Centres may also contact ATHE directly to obtain further clarification or discuss the requirements for RPL.

### **Resources Required by Centres**

ATHE expects centres to provide the right human and physical resources needed to ensure the quality of

the learner experience. Centres must ensure that staff have the appropriate level of subject knowledge and are normally qualified to at least a degree standard. It is desirable that staff have a teaching and/or assessing qualification and practical experience of accounting.

The physical resources required will vary depending on the style of delivery. Where distance or blended learning is used, ATHE expects centres to have appropriate learning support materials, infrastructure and technology in place to meet student needs.

This information will be checked by external verifiers on their visits to centres.

### **Modes of Delivery**

Subject to checks by external verifiers centres are able to deliver this qualification using the following modes of delivery, in order to meet the needs of their learners. These can include:

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Blended learning
- Distance learning.

### **Definition of Guided Learning Hours (GLH), Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Credit**

Values for Total Qualification Time, Guided Learning Hours and Credit, are calculated by considering the different activities that a learner would typically complete in order to achieve the learning outcomes of a qualification at the standards provided.

The needs of individual learners and the differing teaching styles used mean there will be variation in the actual time taken to complete a qualification.

Values for Total Qualification Time, Guided Learning Hours and Credit are estimates.

### **Guided Learning Hours (GLH)**

The term Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is an estimate of the amount of time, on average, that a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, **will immediately guide or supervise** the learner to complete the learning outcomes of a unit to the appropriate standard.

GLH are intended to provide guidance for centres on the amount of time required to deliver the programme and support learners. GLH are made up of activities completed by the learner **under immediate guidance or supervision** of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training. Whether through actual attendance or via electronic means, the activity must be in real time.

Some examples of activities that can contribute to Guided Learning Hours include:

- Supervised induction sessions
- Learner feedback with a teacher in real time
- Supervised independent learning
- Classroom-based learning supervised by a teacher
- Work-based learning supervised by a teacher
- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a teacher in real time
- E-learning supervised by a teacher in real time
- All forms of assessment that take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including where the assessment is competence-based and may be turned into a learning opportunity.

## Total Qualification Time (TQT)

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is a guide to the amount of time a learner would take, on average, to complete the different activities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of a whole qualification at the standards provided.

TQT includes all the activities described under guided learning hours (GLH) plus an estimate of the number of hours a learner will be likely to spend in completing other work, **which is directed by** the tutor. This could include preparation, study or any form of participation in education or training, including assessment, but unlike Guided Learning this is **not under the immediate guidance or supervision** of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

Some examples of tutor directed activities that can contribute to Total Qualification Time, include:

- Preparation
  - Preparation for classes
  - Preparation for assignments
  
- Study
  - Independent research/learning
  - Background reading
  - Compilation of a portfolio of work experience
  - E-learning
  - Drafting coursework or assignments
  - Working in student teams
  - Watching a pre-recorded podcast or webinar
  - Work-based learning.

## Credit

The credit value specifies the number of credits that will be awarded to a learner who has achieved the learning outcomes of a unit at the specified standard.

Each credit represents 10 hours of learning time and equates to 10 hours of Total Qualification Time. Therefore, one 15 credit unit represents 150 hours of Total Qualification Time. Learning time is a notional measure which indicates the amount of time a learner at the level of the unit is expected to take, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria.

Learning time includes all the activities described under Guided Learning Hours and additional learning. The credit value of the unit will remain constant in all contexts regardless of the assessment method or the mode of delivery. Learners will only be awarded credits for the successful completion of whole units.

The level is an indication of relative demand, complexity and depth of achievement and autonomy.

Each qualification has agreed rules of combination which indicates the number of credits to be achieved, the units that are mandatory and the choice of optional units. The rules of combination for the unendorsed qualifications and the pathway specific qualifications are given below.

## Qualification Structure for the Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance

### ATHE Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance is a 100 credit qualification

To obtain the Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance learners must achieve all five mandatory units.

**The Total Qualification Time is 1000 Hours.**

**The Total Guided Learning Hours is 300**

**The Total Credit value is 100.**

Unit Title	Level	Credit	GLH
<b>Mandatory Units</b>			
Unit 1: Corporate Reporting for Strategic Business - Advanced	7	20	60
Unit 2: Core Financial Management - Advanced	7	20	60
Unit 3: Management for Strategic Performance - Advanced	7	20	60
Unit 4: UK Taxation for Business and Individuals	7	20	60
Unit 5: Audit and Compliance Advanced	7	20	60

## Guidance on Assessment and Grading

### Assessment

#### Methods of Assessment

ATHE encourages centres to use a range of assessment vehicles that will engage learners and give them an opportunity to both demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a topic and to evaluate how they might apply that knowledge in a given context. This should be part of the assessment strategy.

We would recommend avoiding essay writing and that more varied types of assessment are included. This might include assessment through:

- a research activity resulting in the compilation of a report
- an academic paper or article for publication
- the compilation of a case study
- a critical review and evaluation of a chosen company's policies, procedures and systems
- a set project completed for an employer (also known as an 'employer-engagement' activity)
- the production of a portfolio of evidence relating to a particular unit.

This list is by no means exhaustive but gives examples of some creative assessment methods that could be adopted.

### Recording Assessment Judgements

Assessors are required to record assessment judgements for each student by unit. ATHE has provided a template for centres to use to record their judgements and this form should be used. The form enables the centre to record any adjustments due to special considerations or reasonable adjustments. Any adjustments following appeals should also be recorded. These records must be retained as they will be checked at external verification visits. All learner work must be retained for a minimum of four years after certification has taken place.

### Putting an Assessment Strategy in Place

You will need to demonstrate to your External Verifier that you have a clear assessment strategy supported by robust quality assurance in order to meet the ATHE requirements for registering learners for a qualification. In devising your assessment strategy, you will need to ensure that:

- centre devised assignments are clearly mapped to the unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria they have been designed to meet and are submitted to ATHE for approval prior to issue to learners.
- the command verbs used in the assignment are appropriate for the level of the qualification, e.g. analyse, evaluate, synthesise.
- the assignment gives the learner sufficient opportunity to meet the assessment criteria at the right level, through the work they are asked to complete (The RQF level descriptors will be helpful to you in determining the level of content of the assessment).
- students are well-briefed on the requirements of the unit and what they have to do to meet them.
- assessors are well trained and familiar with the content of the unit/s they are assessing.
- there is an internal verification process in place to ensure consistency and standardisation of assessment across the qualification.
- assessment decisions are clearly explained and justified through the provision of feedback to the learner.
- work submitted can be authenticated as the learner's own work and that there is clear guidance and implementation of the centre's Malpractice Policy.
- there is an assessment plan in place identifying dates for summative assessment of each unit and indicating when external verification will be needed.
- sufficient time is included in the assessment planning to allow the learners time for any necessary remedial work that may be needed prior to certification.

## Qualification Grading

### Grading system

The grading algorithms and overall grade thresholds published in any ATHE specification may be subject to change where this is necessary to maintain standards.

This qualification involves assessment using judgements against 'Pass', 'Merit' and 'Distinction' Assessment Criteria to make a decision about whether a learner has met the required standard. Our grading system is simple and we do not currently envisage the need to change this. However, should a change become necessary, the change would be published in an updated version of the specification with a clearly revised version number and a new 'valid from' date on the front cover. We will write to all centres in good time to inform them of this change so that plans for any changes can be made to your programme delivery, internal assessment and quality assurance arrangements.

The ATHE grading system where a qualification result can be either Pass, Merit, Distinction or Fail is as currently follows and we plan to maintain this system for the foreseeable future:

- Learner meets all Learning Outcomes at Pass standards stated in the assessment criteria in a unit > Learner gains a Pass for the unit
- Learner meets all Learning Outcomes at Pass standards, and where available also at Merit standards stated in the assessment criteria in a unit > Learner gains a Merit for the unit
- Learner meets all Learning Outcomes at Pass standard, and where available also at Merit and Distinction standards stated in the assessment criteria in a unit > Learner gains a Distinction for the unit
- Learner does not meet all Learning Outcomes at Pass standards stated in the assessment criteria in a unit > Learner gains a Fail for the unit
- Learner meets the rules of combination in a qualification and points for achieving units are added up > points are converted to an overall qualification grade > learner meets minimum number of points required > learner achieves a Pass, Merit or Distinction for the qualification
- Learner does not meet the rules of combination in a qualification and/or points for achieving units are added up > points are converted to an overall qualification grade

- Learner does not meet rules of combination or minimum number of points required > learner achieves a Fail for the qualification but may receive unit certification for those units achieving a Pass.

## Qualification Grading Structure

### Determining the Overall Qualification Grade

Assessment is completed on the basis of achievement of the Learning Outcomes at the standards set by the Assessment Criteria in each unit and the learner can achieve a pass, merit or distinction. The units are equally weighted. As well as receiving a grade for each individual unit, learners will receive an overall grade for the qualification. The calculation of the overall qualification grade is based on the student's performance in all units and the points gained from all units required for the Extended Diploma. The learner must have attempted the valid combination of units. The formula for establishing the overall grade is as follows.

#### Points for each 20-credit unit achieved are:

Pass (achieves Learning Outcomes at the standards stated in pass assessment criteria) – **40 points**

Merit (achieves Learning Outcomes at the standards stated in pass and all merit assessment criteria) – **53 points**

Distinction (achieves Learning Outcomes at the standards stated in pass, all merit and all distinction Assessment Criteria) – **66 points**

#### Calculations for the overall qualification grade:

#### Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance (100 credits)

Pass 200 - 264

Merit 265 – 329

Distinction 330 +

#### Example grading for Level 7 Extended Diploma in Accounting and Finance

##### Example 1

Marina has achieved a total of 252 points for the qualification:

Unit no.	Unit result	Unit points
1	Merit	53
2	Pass	40
3	Distinction	66
4	Pass	40
5	Merit	53
	<i>Total</i>	<i>252</i>

Marina has achieved 252 points and will be awarded a Pass grade for the qualification as the requirement for a Pass is 200 - 264 points.

##### Example 2

David has achieved a total of 278 points for the qualification:

Unit no.	Unit result	Unit points
1	Pass	40
2	Merit	53
3	Distinction	66
4	Distinction	66
5	Pass	53

David has achieved 278 points and will be awarded an overall Merit grade for the qualification as the requirement for a Merit is 265 - 330 points

### **Quality Assurance of Centres**

Centres delivering ATHE qualifications must be committed to ensuring the quality of teaching and learning so that the learner experience is assured. Quality assurance will include a range of processes as determined by the centre and this could include: gathering learner feedback, lesson observation, analysis of qualitative and quantitative data etc. There must also be effective standardisation of assessors and verification of assessor decisions. ATHE will rigorously monitor the application of quality assurance processes in centres.

ATHE's quality assurance processes will include:

- Centre approval for those centres which are not already recognised to deliver ATHE RQF qualifications
- Monitoring visits to ensure the centre continues to work to the required standards
- External verification of learner work.

Centres will be required to undertake training, internal verification and standardisation activities as agreed with ATHE. Details of ATHE's quality assurance processes are provided in the ATHE Guide "Delivering ATHE Qualifications" which is available on our website.

### **Malpractice**

Centres must have a robust Malpractice Policy in place, with a clear procedure for implementation. Centres must ensure that any work submitted for verification can be authenticated as the learner's own. Any instance of plagiarism detected by the External Verifier during sampling, will be investigated and could lead to sanctions against the centre.

Centres should refer to the Delivering ATHE Qualifications Guide, the ATHE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Guidance on Centre Malpractice Policies. These documents are available on the ATHE website.

### **Guidance for Teaching and Learning**

Learners learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. We would encourage practitioners delivering our qualifications to use a range of teaching methods and classroom-based activities to help them get information across and keep learners engaged in the topics they are studying. Learners should be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and need to be able to demonstrate a high degree of independence in applying the skills of research, analysis and evaluation. You can facilitate this by using engaging methods of delivery that involve active learning rather than relying on traditional methods of lecture delivery to impart knowledge.

Your approach to delivery should give the learners sufficient structure and information on which to build without you doing the work for them. In achieving the right balance, you will need to produce well-planned sessions that follow a logical sequence and build on the knowledge, understanding and skills already gained.

### **Top Tips for Delivery**

- Adopt a range of teaching and learning methods, including active learning.

- Plan sessions well to ensure a logical sequence of knowledge, understanding and skills development.
- Include study skills aspects, e.g. how to construct a report or Harvard Referencing. Build time into your Scheme of Work and Session Plans to integrate study skills teaching.
- Set structured additional reading and homework tasks to be discussed in class.
- Elicit feedback from your students. Get them to identify where the work they have done meets the Assessment Criteria and demonstrates achievement of the Learning Outcome.
- Contextualise your activities, e.g. using real case studies as a theme through the sessions.
- Use learner experience from the work place or other personal learning.
- Take an integrated approach to teaching topics across units, where appropriate, rather than always taking a unit-by-unit approach. In this way, learners will be able to see the links between the content of the different units.

## **Unit Specifications**

### Unit Format

Each unit in ATHE's suite of level 7 qualifications is presented in a standard format. This format provides guidance on the requirements of the unit for learners, tutors, assessors and external verifiers.

Each unit has the following sections:

### Unit Title

The unit title reflects the content of the unit. The title of each unit completed will appear on a learner's statement of results.

### Unit Aims

The unit aims section summarises the content of the unit.

### Unit Code

Each unit is assigned a unit number that appears with the unit title on the Regulated Qualifications Framework.

### RQF Level

All units and qualifications in the RQF have a level assigned to them which represents the level of achievement. The level of each unit is informed by the RQF level descriptors. The RQF level descriptors are available on the ATHE website.

### Credit Value

The credit value is the number of credits that may be awarded to a learner for the successful achievement of the learning outcomes of a unit.

### Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Guided learning hours are an estimate of the amount of time, on average, that a tutor, trainer, workshop facilitator etc., will work with a learner, to enable the learner to complete the learning outcomes of a unit to the appropriate standard.

### Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as the result of the learning process.

### Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria describe the requirements a learner is expected to meet in order to demonstrate that the learning outcome has been achieved. Command verbs reflect the level of the qualification.

### Unit Indicative Content

The unit indicative content section provides details of the range of subject material for the programme of learning for the unit.