



# A Guide to the ABP Customised Framework

The Association of Business Practitioners is a UK awarding body linked to the Association of Business Executives (ABE), an awarding body recognised by the UK regulatory authorities for qualifications.

ABP offers a wide range of standard Business and Management qualifications at a variety of levels based on the UK National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Through a network of UK and overseas ABE offices, our centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

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# 1 ABP Customised Framework

## 1.1 Introduction

The ABP Customised Framework enables providers of education and training to design flexible and customised qualifications. These qualifications can support access to education and employment, lifelong learning or the requirements of particular employers and employees.

The ABP Customised Framework consists of centre-devised ABP Awards, Certificates and Diplomas. *Table 1* illustrates the qualifications that you can develop within the ABP Customised Framework.

*Table 1: ABP Customised Framework*

Qualification Level & Titles	Award 10-120 hours	Certificate 130-360 hours	Diploma >370 hours
7	ABP Postgraduate Award	ABP Postgraduate Certificate	ABP Postgraduate Diploma
5 & 6	ABP Professional Award	ABP Professional Certificate	ABP Professional Diploma
3 & 4	ABP Intermediate Award	ABP Intermediate Certificate	ABP Intermediate Diploma
1 & 2	ABP Foundation Award	ABP Foundation Certificate	ABP Foundation Diploma
Entry	ABP Entry Award	ABP Entry Certificate	ABP Entry Diploma

## 1.2 Benefits

Some of the benefits of the ABP Customised Framework are:

- its flexibility, coherence and relevance across eight levels
- certification of small or larger blocks of learning
- the opportunity to customise a qualification for specific employment or industry needs
- the potential for links to existing qualifications or to other qualifications which are recognised by other organisations, such as UK universities
- the ability to provide the knowledge, skills and understanding that underpin the National Occupational Standards for a particular sector
- the opportunities for progression to either a higher level qualification or to an extended programme of study at the same level.

### 1.3 Selecting an ABP qualification

The following guidance describes the key aspects of customised ABP qualifications. These two sections will help you decide which qualification best suits your needs. Support on selecting the qualification that can meet your requirements is available from ABP.

Customised ABP qualifications offer flexibility - they can be designed from a choice of unit sizes and qualification sizes and are available from Entry level up to level 7 in stipulated sizes. These pre-defined qualification sizes allow you to develop qualifications that compare to full level 2 and 3 qualifications and to university qualifications.

## 2 ABP Customised Framework – Short Courses

### 2.1 ABP Short Courses: introduction

ABP Short Course qualifications are flexible, centre-devised qualifications that offer a choice of levels and qualification sizes and can be packaged to provide blocks of learning at the same level or at different levels.

*Table 1* shows the customised ABP Short Course title that relates to each level and size of qualification.

### 2.2 ABP Customised Framework: qualification levels

**Each qualification must have a designated level, from Entry level to level 7. At least 75% of the total qualification hours must be at one overall qualification level. This allows 25% of the total qualification hours to be made up of units at different levels to the overall qualification level.** For example, in a level 3 qualification composed of a total of 120 hours, at least 90 hours of the qualification must be at level 3. The use of different level units may be useful when practical or theoretical skills are required at a different level to the vocational skills.

The depth, breadth and complexity of knowledge, understanding and skills within your qualification will define your qualification level. The selected level of your ABP customised qualification will determine the title of Postgraduate, Professional, Intermediate, Foundation or Entry, as shown in *Table 1*.

### 2.3 ABP Customised Framework: qualification size

**The ABP Customised Framework offers the choice to develop an Award, Certificate or Diploma qualification (see [Table 1](#) for qualification sizes).** The size of your qualification is determined in hours. Depending on the number of hours, your qualification will be an Award, a Certificate or a Diploma; for instance if the qualification size totals 90 hours then it will be classified as an Award.

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<sup>†</sup> The Learning and Skills Council [www.lsc.org.uk](http://www.lsc.org.uk) define a full level 2 qualification as 325 guided learning hours and a full level 3 qualification as 595 guided learning hours.

## 2.4 ABP Customised Framework: unit size

The smallest unit size consists of 10 guided learning hours. Other unit sizes can be any multiple of 10 to a maximum unit size of 120 guided learning hours. The definition of guided learning hours is ‘a notional measure of the substance of a qualification’. It includes an estimate of time that might be allocated to direct teaching, instruction, and assessment, together with other structured learning time, such as directed assignments or supported individual study. It excludes learner initiated private study. All of the qualifications within the ABP Customised Framework must be made up of units. The size of a unit is measured in guided learning hours. Units in a single qualification can be of the same size or different sizes. An ABP Short Course qualification can consist of only one unit, if this fits your particular requirements.

## 2.5 ABP Customised Framework: core and option units

**All units must be expressed in outcomes and each unit can be defined as a core or an option unit.** The units in the ABP Short Course qualification can consist of mandatory core units only or the qualification can be composed of core units and a group of option units. If you are offering an element of choice in your qualification then you must make clear:

- the core units
- the option units
- how many option units must be completed to be awarded the full qualification.

You will own the intellectual property rights, for all the units you write.

## 2.6 ABP Customised Framework: imported units

**Units from standard ABP qualifications can be incorporated into a customised ABP qualification, provided this supports the coherence of your qualification and is subject to the following rules.**

- If you plan to use standard ABP units in your customised qualification, the adopted unit’s learning outcomes and assessment requirements must not be altered
- a customised ABP qualification can be composed entirely of standard ABP units provided the resultant qualification is meaningful, fulfils your aims and does not duplicate or significantly overlap any standard ABP qualification

## 2.7 ABP Customised Framework: assessment and grading

**Any units internally devised by you are internally assessed by you. ABP provides quality assurance through external verification. The assessment of the ABP customised qualifications is at unit level. The notification of performance, which is issued with the qualification certificate, will record all the units achieved by the learner and if the units are graded will include the unit grade. There is no overall qualification grade.** For all the units you write, you can select to assess and grade ABP Short Course qualification units as pass, merit or distinction. Alternatively you can choose not to grade your units but assess each unit as pass or not achieved. It is your decision to grade or not to grade your units.

The simple approach is unit assessment as pass or not achieved. A pass is awarded for the achievement of all the learning outcomes against the specified pass assessment criteria. Learners need to achieve all the pass assessment criteria to pass the unit. All learners, regardless of how well they achieve the pass assessment criteria, will only have pass recorded on their notification of performance. Some units are best assessed using this approach, for example a qualification:

- containing units that are competence based
- containing units that are based on personal skills development (confidence, assertiveness, etc.)
- at Entry Level, where 'pass'/'not achieved' is the most suitable method to assess and grade the learner's achievement.

## 2.8 ABP Customised Framework: qualification titles

The qualification title must:

- **reflect the content of your qualification**
- **be distinctive**
- **not duplicate or emulate standard ABP qualification titles.**

**ABP will own the ABP qualification title but you will own the intellectual property rights for all the units you write.** A qualification title can be defined once the qualification level and size have been decided. The qualification title must relate to the nature, aims and content of your qualification. It is advisable that you obtain ABP approval for your qualification title before you produce marketing material that uses an unapproved qualification title. Your ABP contact can offer you guidance on qualification title approval.



For further information please visit our website at [www.abp.org.uk](http://www.abp.org.uk)