

# Candidate Access Policy & Procedure

## 1. Introduction

Gatehouse Awards is dedicated to offering access to all Candidates wishing to take a qualification, free from discrimination of any kind, as detailed in the *Diversity and Equality Policy* and in line with the Equality Act 2010.<sup>1</sup> In some circumstances Centres may need to request Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations to be made for Candidates with particular requirements or in light of unforeseen circumstances, respectively.

Both Gatehouse Awards and its Approved Centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications, and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Gatehouse Awards will also consider the need to maintain competence standards as well as comply with health and safety requirements.

All personal data gathered on Candidates in respect of any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations requested and/or granted will be held in the strictest confidence and only be used for the purposes of ensuring all assessments are carried out in a fair and consistent manner and that all results issued are valid and reliable. All data will be held in accordance with the current data protection legislation including, but not limited to, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations.

## 2. Definitions

There are three ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained:

- By making Reasonable Adjustments
- By making Special Considerations
- By permitting an Exemption

**Reasonable Adjustments** – These are arrangements made prior to assessment which help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that may place the Candidate at a significant disadvantage during the assessment process. Reasonable Adjustments must not affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes, but may involve changing usual assessment arrangements, adapting assessment materials, providing assistance during assessment, re-organising the physical environment of the assessment or adapting the assessment method using assistive technology.

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on the Equality Act 2010 can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

**Special Consideration** – These can be applied during or after an examination when unforeseen circumstances may prevent the Candidate from attending or completing their examination, such as temporary illness, bereavement, or disruption to the examination.

**Exemption** – This is an arrangement made prior to assessment which can be described as a form of a reasonable adjustment as a last resort, since no other access arrangement is available. This exempts the Candidate from taking a part of the assessment. An exemption may be applied due to a Candidate having a disability which makes it impossible for them to demonstrate the required skills.

**Controlled Examination** – This refers to examinations which are set externally and must be delivered in line with the conditions specified by Gatehouse Awards' Regulations for Conducting Controlled Examinations.

### 3. General Guidance for Centres

Gatehouse Awards recommends that Centres have suitable facilities to allow access for Candidates with physical disabilities, including wheelchair access and disabled toilet facilities.

Centres must not discriminate against any Candidate on the grounds of race, gender, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender-reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and religion or belief and must at all times adhere to the Equalities Act 2010. All Centres must have a suitable Equality Policy which details the way in which they adhere to this legislation.

Centres must also ensure that all relevant staff are aware of how a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration should be processed in line with this policy.

### 4. Reasonable Adjustments

Where Reasonable Adjustments are made, these must:

- not affect the integrity of the award
- reflect the current needs of the individual Candidate
- not give the Candidate an unfair advantage over other Candidates
- ensure that assessment continues to be valid, reliable and comparable against stated criteria.

#### 4.1. Examples and Eligibility

The following section provides information on when Reasonable Adjustments can be made, an overview of what eligibility criteria will be applied, and whether the Centre may apply the Reasonable Adjustment without seeking prior approval from Gatehouse Awards (C) or whether it must make a formal request (AO) before doing so.

The Centre must ensure that they have the capacity to provide the relevant adjustment.

Reasonable Adjustment	Eligibility /Evidence	Controlled Examinations	Other Assessments
Extra time	Statement of special educational needs OR Psychological assessment carried out by a qualified psychologist OR Specialist assessment carried out by a specialist teacher OR Medical report	AO	AO
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids and tinted spectacles	Visual impairment / Medical Report	C	C
Use of hearing aids/hearing induction loops	Hearing impairment / Medical Report	C	C
Colour naming by the Invigilator for Candidates who are colour blind	A statement from a GP or optometrist	AO	C
Bilingual translation dictionary	First language is not English, and the Learner is not being assessed in ESOL, English language or Literacy	C	C
Low vision aid / magnifier	Visual impairment	C	C
Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanner	Visual impairment – medical evidence	AO	C
Supervised rest breaks	Medical / psychological / physical disability Medical / psychological report	AO	C
Separate invigilation	Autism/dyslexia/ADHD – any condition which requires additional time, use of reader or scribe, etc. Medical report	AO	C
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Medical Report / Other	AO	C
Assessment material in enlarged format	Visual impairment – medical evidence	AO	C
Assessment material in Braille	Visual impairment – medical evidence	AO	AO
Assessment material in BSL	Hearing impairment / muteness – medical evidence	AO	AO

Assessment material in audio format	Visual impairment	AO	AO
Responses in BSL	Hearing impairment / muteness – medical evidence	AO	AO
Responses in Braille	Visual impairment – medical evidence	AO	AO
Reader except for any reading test	Statement of special educational needs OR Psychological assessment carried out by a qualified psychologist OR Specialist assessment carried out by a specialist teacher OR Medical report	AO	C
Scribe except for any writing test	As above	AO	C
Scribe for writing test*	Specific circumstances only, such as major injury to hand, blindness, etc. MUST HAVE MEDICAL REPORT	AO	AO
Prompter	As above	AO	C
Other	As stipulated	AO	AO

Candidates requesting Reasonable Adjustments, or an Exemption must provide their Centre with evidence of their disability. medical condition or learning needs and a copy of this must be provided to Gatehouse Awards with the request.

\*The use of a scribe for a writing test is only allowable in specific cases, such as where a Candidate can only write in Braille, but it would be unreasonable to expect a centre to have a braille writer available. Specific safeguards are in place for the use of a scribe. See below.

#### 4.2. Exemptions and Reasonable Adjustments requiring prior approval from Gatehouse Awards

In all cases of Reasonable Adjustment requiring prior approval, Centres must complete the form *Request for a Reasonable Adjustment or Exemption* (Appendix 1.) and forward it to Gatehouse Awards together with relevant evidence as soon as possible, but **no later than 10 working days** (except for requests for Braille) prior to the scheduled assessment date. Gatehouse Awards will provide a decision **within 5 working days** of the receipt of the request.

In the rare circumstances where Gatehouse Awards will not be able to provide a decision or facilitate the necessary Reasonable Adjustment within the timescales below, the Centre will be notified of the new timescale as soon as possible.

The learning outcomes of some Gatehouse Awards qualifications may require Candidates to demonstrate competence. This may limit access for some Candidates, for instance a Candidate who has a severe hearing impairment would not be allowed to use a British Sign Language interpreter or signer during an assessment of their English speaking or listening abilities and therefore would not be able to gain the full qualification.

**\*NOTE: ALL requests for Exemptions must be submitted in advance to Gatehouse Awards.**

**\*NOTE: Requests for Braille versions of examination papers must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the date of the examination. We do not hold stocks of Braille assessment materials due to the fact that we change our assessment materials on a regular basis and Braille is requested very infrequently. We therefore only obtain a Braille version of an assessment paper at the time of receipt of a request. This is regardless of which qualification is being taken.**

### 4.3. Controlled Conditions for Use of a Reader

There are some instances where the use of a specially trained 'Reader' is necessary. This may be because of visual impairment or, in some cases, severe dyslexia, etc. However, a Reader should not normally be used as part of a language assessment that is assessing the candidate's ability to read text, as then the outcome would not be the candidate's own work.

It is imperative that Readers adhere to some specific requirements to ensure that the use of the Reader does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate using their services, including:

- The Reader **must** have undergone training in how to be a Reader, including how to deliver an assessment as a Reader
- The Reader **must not** have any personal or business connection with the candidate
- Readers **must not** provide additional information to candidates other than what is written on the assessment papers
- Readers **must not** paraphrase or explain the meaning of words or phrases contained in the assessment papers
- Readers **must not** assist the candidate in any way whilst they are answering the questions contained in the assessment materials
- All candidates who are assigned a reader **must** be assessed in a separate room from any other candidates taking the assessment to ensure the Reader does not disturb them
- If there are multiple candidates requiring a reader for the same assessment, they may be assessed together, however, there **should** be a separate invigilator present as the Reader will not be able to see the candidates' conduct whilst reading from the assessment materials
- Readers **should** not write anything down for a candidate unless it has been agreed that they will also act as a Scribe and have received permission from Gatehouse Awards to do so
- If a Reader is also acting as the invigilator (only allowable to a single student) they **must** ensure that the invigilation is carried out compliantly and in accordance with the guidance provided by Gatehouse Awards. This includes, but is not limited to, things such as:
  - Removal of mobile phones prior to the assessment starting

- Removal of dictionaries unless specifically allowed in the assessment instructions
- Ensuring that no candidates have access to the internet; e.g. via wi-fi enabled watches, tablets, PCs or any other device that can connect to the internet.

#### 4.4. Controlled Conditions for Use of a Scribe

A 'Scribe' is someone who writes down a Candidate's answers during an examination because the Candidate is unable to. This is usually because the Candidate has an injury or is disabled in a way that would severely affect their ability to write their answers, for instance, total, or near total, blindness, or the candidate has had an accident that has disabled their writing hand and they are unable to write.

The use of a scribe can be a very high-risk reasonable adjustment to make. There are sometimes alternatives available, such as voice activated software that will produce a text version of what the candidate has said. However, this would still need to be invigilated and for the text to be printed off immediately following the end of the examination to ensure that the candidate, or someone on their behalf, cannot alter the content before submission.

Where a scribe is used, the following procedures and safety guards should be observed:

- The Scribe **must** have undergone training in how to be a Scribe
- The Scribe **must not** have any personal or business connection with the candidate
- A candidate who is to make use of a Scribe **must** be in a separate room from any other candidates taking the assessment to ensure that they do not disturb other candidates
- A Scribe can only scribe for one candidate at a time. They **cannot** be scribe to multiple candidates taking the same assessment at the same time
- A scribe **must not** read any portion of the assessment papers to the candidate unless they have also been given permission by Gatehouse Awards to act as a Reader as well as a Scribe
- A scribe **must not** assist the candidate in any way during the examination (over and above making a written record of what they say) including answering any questions from the candidate about the meaning of a word or phrase, etc.
- A scribe **must** take down exactly what the candidate says as their answer; they **must not** amend any words, phrases or answers given
- A scribe is allowed to repeat back to the candidate what they have taken down and make amendments requested by the candidate. Where they are asked to make an amendment, they must score through the original word or phrase and insert the amended word or phrase
- A scribe will usually also act as the invigilator to the candidate they are scribing for. As such they **must** ensure that the invigilation is carried out compliantly and in accordance with the guidance provided by Gatehouse Awards. This includes, but is not limited to, things such as:
  - Removal of mobile phones prior to the assessment starting
  - Removal of dictionaries unless specifically allowed in the assessment instructions
  - Ensuring that no candidates have access to the internet; e.g. via wi-fi enabled watches, tablets, PCs or any other device that can connect to the internet

## 5. Special Considerations

Special Consideration is given to events or circumstances beyond the Candidate's control, which lead to a Candidate being unable to complete or attend their assessment or, where applicable, examination. Examples of events that may attract Special Consideration would be:

- Temporary illness which is evident at the time of the assessment
- An injury which has manifested itself at the time of the assessment
- Recent bereavement of a close family member
- Fire or similar emergency during the examination
- Building work/loud noise at the examination Centre
- Failure of equipment during the examination
- Failure of the Centre to implement a requested Reasonable Adjustment, or the Reasonable Adjustment(s) put in place are impractical or incorrect
- Other accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper or CD, failure of materials to arrive on time
- Maladministration and / or malpractice.

Examples of events that **will not** attract Special Consideration:

- domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays
- minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate
- the consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations
- the consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs
- misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions
- misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place

In most circumstances relating to noise disturbance or evacuation of a building during a controlled examination, alternative rooms or premises may be sourced and the examination can continue with extra time allowed for the disruption. If it is not possible for Candidate(s) to attend or complete their examination, new dates will be agreed. The Special Consideration arrangements should allow the Candidate(s) to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of for the unit(s) in question.

In the event of maladministration or malpractice leading to production of unauthentic work, Gatehouse Awards may adjust the application of the mark scheme to reflect the fact that a proportion of the work presented is not the candidate's own.

Special Consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of marks to each component affected within a specification. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune. The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the

total raw marks available in the component concerned, including controlled assessment/coursework/non-examination assessment.

The decision made by the awarding organisation will be based on various factors which may vary from one subject to another. The factors taken into consideration will include:

- the severity of the circumstances
- the date of the examination in relation to the circumstances
- the nature of the assessment

### 5.1. Lost or damaged work

If a candidate's work has been lost within the examination centre and despite every effort it cannot be found, or it has been accidentally destroyed, the circumstances should be reported immediately to Gatehouse Awards.

Gatehouse Awards will consider whether it is appropriate to accept a mark for which there is no available evidence of attainment. This may occur in the following circumstances:

- The centre must be able to verify that the work was done and that it was monitored whilst it was in progress
- The loss is not the consequence of negligence on the part of the candidate
- If only part of the work is lost and part of the work is available, further guidance must be sought from the awarding organisation.

## 6. Exemptions

An Exemption may only be granted as a very last resort, where any other Reasonable Adjustment cannot be granted for a Candidate with a disability.

The Exemption must be agreed by GA before the examination and permits a disabled Candidate to miss a component or components.

The grounds for granting an Exemption are:

- the exemption must not undermine the integrity of the qualification
- it must only apply to a whole component where the candidate cannot demonstrate any of the required skills within that component due to disability
- it must make up no more than 40% of the overall qualification.

When an Exemption is granted, an indication will be placed on the Candidate's qualification certificate to show that not all of the assessment objectives were accessible.

A certificate indication is a small '+' next to the component. This '+' is explained on the back of the certificate. The explanation simply states that the Candidate was exempt from part of the assessment. It does not make reference to any of the particulars of the exemption.



## 7. Recording Reasonable Adjustments, Exemptions & Special Considerations

Centres must complete the *Record of Reasonable Adjustments / Special Considerations Form* (Appendix 2) in order to record the decisions made by its staff, a copy of the form should be provided to Gatehouse Awards with the assessment materials. The Centre should retain copies for audit purposes.

## 8. Video Recording – Arrangements for Cultural/Religious Objections

Gatehouse Awards is aware that some Candidates may have cultural or religious reasons for not wanting to show their face on camera, particularly if the video may be seen by a person of another gender.

Gatehouse Awards is keen to ensure that no Candidate is disadvantaged due to their cultural or religious beliefs; however, where applicable, it is also necessary to ensure that all Candidates are subject to the same level of scrutiny in respect of confirming their identification. For this reason, Gatehouse Awards have put the following arrangements in place with respect to examinations for qualifications which may require Centres to make video recordings:

- **ALL** Candidates must show their full face to the video camera at least once during the examination, preferably at the start of the examination.
- Once their face has been shown, the Candidate can resume the video wearing any form of face covering they feel comfortable in or is required by their religious or cultural beliefs.
- The video must **NOT** be stopped during any part of the examination after it has begun so that it can be confirmed that the person who showed their face to the camera is the person who sat the examination.
- The Candidate must still take the examination in such a position where their hands can be seen in front of them and their head and upper body is in the frame – recordings of the back of the Candidate are not acceptable.
- The Interlocutor / Invigilator should then ensure that it is noted on the *Examination Report Form* that a Candidate does not wish for their face to be shown to a member of another gender.
- Gatehouse Awards can guarantee that the video is not viewed by any person of another gender for marking, moderation or investigative purposes within Gatehouse Awards.
- All Candidates must be aware that any video recording may be shared with the Regulator and/or other Government-appointed agencies, should it be requested. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that the Candidate's requirements are adhered to, Gatehouse Awards cannot be held responsible for other agencies' policies or procedures in such matters.
- If a Candidate is not prepared to have their examination recorded in this way, it can be arranged for a member of Gatehouse Awards staff of an appropriate gender to be physically present at the examination sessions. The Candidate will be required to show their face to this member of staff in order to verify their identity. The rest of the examination will be

recorded as normal. In order to facilitate this Readjustment, additional fees would be applicable of up to £150 per day plus travel expenses.

- If a Candidate refuses all of the above, they will **NOT** be allowed to sit the Gatehouse Awards examination.

A statement to be provided to Candidates has been included below for Centres to use in the event that a Candidate objects to video recording on the grounds that it is contrary to their religious or cultural beliefs.

#### Notice to Candidates – Video Recording

Please be advised that:

- In order to confirm your identity, your Gatehouse Awards IESOL speaking examination will be video recorded by the Centre staff.
- You will be requested to show your full face to the camera at least once during the examination. This is so that Gatehouse Awards can confirm that you are the person shown on your ID documents.

**If you have any particular cultural or religious reason for not wanting a person of the opposite gender to view your video, please ask the Centre to tell us by using the Examination Report Form.**

This will enable Gatehouse Awards to make sure that the video will only be viewed by a person of the same gender.

In line with our 'Candidate Access Policy' and Data Protection legislation, Gatehouse Awards would like to assure you that your privacy is fully protected. As such, once it is submitted by the Centre to Gatehouse Awards the video recording of your examination will not be shared with anyone other than Gatehouse Awards staff (and if necessary, to any government appointed authority such as UK Visa & Immigration, the Regulator(s) or the police, should they request it) without your express permission. In cases where a video is provided to a government authority, Gatehouse Awards will also pass on your request regarding the gender of any viewers; however, their compliance cannot be guaranteed by Gatehouse Awards.

If you refuse to show your face to the camera, you will not be allowed to take the examination with Centre staff. In order to ensure we can confirm your identity without a video, Gatehouse Awards staff will have to observe your examination. This means that you may have additional fees to pay.

Please refer to our website, email us ([info@Gatehouseawards.org](mailto:info@Gatehouseawards.org)) or ask the Centre staff if you need any more information about the examination process.

## 9. Monitoring the Candidate Access Policy and Procedure

Gatehouse Awards will ensure that:

- Reports are made to the Governing Body and Quality Panel as part of the Self-Evaluation procedure

- Guidance from the regulators is reviewed and the policy is updated to comply with best practice
- Information from monitoring activities is made available to the Regulator(s) as part of the Awarding Organisation’s self-evaluation procedure and on request
- This policy is reviewed at least annually or earlier as required

Document Specification:	
Accountability:	Gatehouse Awards Governing Body
Responsibility:	Quality & Compliance Manager
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Links to Ofqual GCR	G6 and G7
Other relevant documents:	Gatehouse Awards Regulations for Conducting Controlled Examinations Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny (CASS) Record of Reasonable Adjustment/Special Consideration Form Request for Reasonable Adjustment and Exemption Form Qualification Specifications Gatehouse Awards Centre Handbook Gatehouse Awards Appeals Policy and Procedures

## Appendix A Request for a Reasonable Adjustment or Exemption

This form is to be used to make request for a Reasonable Adjustment or Exemption for a Candidate in order to provide them with access to assessment as detailed in the Gatehouse Awards *Candidate Access Policy*. Please keep a copy for your records which must be made available for auditing purposes.

Please submit this form to Gatehouse Awards at least 10 days before the examination.  
The head of centre must support an application for it to be accepted.

### Centre Details

Centre Name		Centre Number	
Contact Name		Position	
Centre Address			
Telephone No		Email	

### Details of Candidate & Qualification

Qualification Title		Proposed Date of Assessment	DD / MM / YYYY
Candidate Name			

This application is for a disability related exemption which is part of the candidate's individual learning plan. An exemption is being applied for in the form of a reasonable adjustment as a last resort, as no other access arrangement is available.

#### We understand that an exemption:

- is an agreement reached with Gatehouse Awards before the examination
- must not undermine the integrity of the qualification
- must only apply where the candidate cannot demonstrate any of the required skills

When an exemption is granted, an indication will be placed on the candidate's certificate to show that not all of the assessment objectives were accessible.

This will be indicated on the certificate.

The explanation simply states that the candidate was exempt from part of the assessment. **It does not refer to any of the particulars of the exemption.**

Details of Reasonable Adjustment or Exemption required and any supporting documentation. Please detail the Reasonable Adjustment or Exemption required and why it is necessary; at supporting documentation (please continue on a separate sheet if required).

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Supporting documentation attached? Yes  No

I confirm that I have verified the need for this request and that the supporting documentation is authentic.	
Head of Centre Name & Position:	
Signed:	
Dated:	DD / MM / YYYY
Candidate/Parent/Carer Name	
Signed:	
Dated:	DD / MM / YYYY

**Appendix B**  
**Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Record**



This form is to be used to record any decisions made by a Centre with regard to Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration in line with the Gatehouse Awards *Candidate Access Policy*. Please forward a copy of this form to GA, retaining a copy with your records for auditing purposes.

**Centre Details**

Centre Name		Centre Number	
Contact Name		Position	
Centre Address			
Telephone No		Email	

**Details of Candidate (s) & Qualification**

Qualification Title		Candidate (s)' ULN (if applicable)	
Total Number of Candidates		Was whole cohort affected?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> (If Yes, attach candidate register)

**What Action Was/Is Needed?**

Reasonable Adjustment Made? (complete statement below)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Consideration? (complete statement below)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Examination to be re-sat? (in full or in part)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If Yes, date of re-sit	
Other (please give details)			

**Details of Incident/ Issue Leading to Reasonable Adjustment/ Special Consideration**

Please give full details of the facts behind any Reasonable Adjustment or the occurrence which prompted a Special Consideration, together with any further details of action taken. Please continue on a separate sheet if required and attach any supporting documentation.

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Supporting documentation attached? Yes  No

I confirm that I have verified the need for this request and that the supporting documentation is authentic.	
Name & Position:	
Signed:	
Dated:	DD / MM / YYYY

Centre Name		Centre Number	
Contact Name		Position	
Centre Address			
Telephone No		Email	

Candidate Name		Candidate Number	
Details of Qualification where Scribe was used (title, unit / component)			

For the examiner to apply the correct mark allocation it is essential that the following information is provided. Please indicate in the appropriate box which accurately reflects how the approved application for a scribe was used. If this information is not provided we cannot guarantee that the script will be marked.

1. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology but did not dictate spellings (letter by letter) and punctuation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology and dictated punctuation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology and dictated spellings letter by letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The candidate used a scribe/speech recognition technology and dictated punctuation and spellings letter by letter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The candidate used a word processor with the spell check enabled (switched on).	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The candidate used a word processor with the spell check and grammar check enabled (switched on).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other comments (if appropriate)	
Were diagrams/graphs completed by the candidate or the scribe?	



The attached script/work of the above-named candidate was produced by a scribe during the examination/assessment period in accordance with Gatehouse Awards regulations

Scribe Print Name	
Signed:	
Dated:	DD / MM / YYYY

Head of Centre or Exams Officer Name	
Signed:	
Dated:	DD / MM / YYYY

To be completed by the examiner or moderator

Name and confirmation	I _____ can confirm I have read the scribe cover sheet and I have marked the script/moderated the candidates work in accordance with the instructions given by Gatehouse Awards.
Signed:	
Dated:	DD / MM / YYYY