

Customer Service and Support Statement

1. Mission

Gatehouse Awards ('GA') supports learning and social integration by creating qualifications that support active citizenship and build stronger communities. Our vision is to be at the forefront of developing and delivering qualifications which promote social inclusion, and wider participation, and transform communities and individuals.

2. Customer Service & Support Statement

Making use of regular monitoring processes and customer feedback, we aim to provide consistently high levels of customer service. Our friendly and experienced staff will endeavour to deal with all communications promptly and efficiently.

3. Fees

Full details of our fees are published on our website and are also available on request. Our fees are monitored to ensure that they are cost effective and in line with those of other Awarding Organisations.

4. Performance Measures

4.1 Centre Approval & Applications

GA endeavours to:

- respond to any enquiries from centres seeking information concerning approval within 3 working days
- acknowledge receipt of applications within 2 working days
- either inform centres of an initial decision or request more information within 20 working days of receipt of the application
- upon receipt of all additional or outstanding information requested, reply to the centre with an initial decision (subject to a successful pre-approval visit, should it be deemed necessary) within a further 10 working days
- confirm Approval or, if the centre is required to make changes in order to meet the GA Approval Criteria, issue an Action Plan
- issue a Centre Approval certificate within 20 working days of full approval being granted.

4.2 General Enquiries

GA endeavours to:

- where possible, manage general telephone enquiries at the time of the call. In circumstances where information is not to hand, customers will be contacted within 1 working day
- all results enquiries made by centres must be submitted via email and addressed to the centre's dedicated Centre Administrator
- respond to email and written enquiries within 2 working days of receipt. Instances where enquiries require a more detailed response, an acknowledgement of the email will be sent within 2 working days, and the client will receive a full response within 5 working days of their initial enquiry

4.3 Qualification Administration

GA endeavours to:

- issue results within a maximum of 20 working days of receipt of a full set of completed assessment materials and any supporting submission documentation (externally-assessed qualifications and examinations)
- issue results within 10 working days of receipt of an External Moderation visit report form from the centre's EQA (centre-assessed qualifications) confirming results can be released
- issue replacement certificates within 5 working days of receipt of the request
- issue amended certificates within 5 working days of receipt of **both** the request and original certificate

4.4 External Quality Assurance

GA routinely requests documentary evidence from centres as part of its external quality assurance and external moderation processes, alongside the wider Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny strategy. Following requests for any documents and records, centres will have 20 working days to supply the relevant information, however, if the information requested is as part of an investigation into potential malpractice or maladministration then the timescales can be considerably shorter and will be communicated as part of the request. Once the documents are received, GA will:

- acknowledge the receipt of documents within 2 working days
- conduct a full review of the documents supplied and issue within 20 working days of receipt and issue:
 - a request for more information
 - Or
 - an action plan detailing any issues identified
 - Or
 - confirmation that no issues have been identified

If further information has been requested, GA will issue an action plan or confirmation that no issues have been identified within 10 working days of receipt of the additional information.

Following an external quality assurance and/or external moderation visit to a centre's premises, whether routine, required as the result of a report of suspected malpractice/ maladministration or a complaint, the External Quality Assurer (EQA) will submit a report of their findings to the relevant GA Assessment Manager within 5 working days of the visit.

The Assessment Manager will then:

- review the findings of the visit within 5 working days of receipt of the report.
- notify the Head of Centre in writing of the findings and any sanctions applicable and actions required to rectify any issues raised. GA will also include deadlines for any actions required.
- issue a copy of the final action plan to the EQA who undertook the visit.

4.5 Access to Assessment

GA is committed to equality of opportunity for all learners and maintain a *Candidate Access Policy*.

In the majority of cases, Requests for Reasonable Adjustment should be forwarded to GA within 10 working days of the assessment; in such case GA will inform the centre of its decision,

including appropriate advice as to how to deal with the request or any special versions of examination papers (e.g. large print, audio, etc.).

In circumstances where GA is not able to facilitate Requests for Reasonable Adjustment within those 10 working days, a revised timescale will be given, taking into account the necessity to avoid adverse effects and to preserve the integrity of the assessment and award of the qualification.

Full details of the GA policies regarding candidate access are contained in the *Candidate Access Policy*. For some qualifications there may be specific restrictions as to what is permissible for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations. Details of these are found in the *Qualification Specification* published for each qualification offered by GA, available to download from the GA website.

5. Appeals

GA has an *Appeals Policy and Procedure* in place for any individual wishing to raise an appeal. This policy is available on request and is published on the GA website.

Candidates wishing to appeal must initially do so via their centre.

6. Points of Contact

Each centre is provided with the contact details of their named Centre Administrator as part of their approval process. For all general enquiries, complaints, etc. GA can be contacted by telephone, email or post. Full contact details for GA can be found on our website.

7. Customer Complaints Procedure

GA has in place a full *Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy* which is available upon request. Please note that all complaints regarding any element of our service should be made in writing and addressed to the Assessment Manager who will then follow the process laid down in the published policy.

8. Language Policy

There is provision for GA qualifications, where it does not contravene any particular assessment criteria or requirement, to be offered in languages other than English. Information on whether a qualification can be made available in another language will be published in each *Qualification Specification* document.

Owing to particular assessment requirements and criteria, GA's English language qualifications, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), will **only** be offered in English.

9. Amendments to Our Service

Centres will be notified in writing immediately of any significant amendments or changes to our service, qualifications, assessments or policies. This information will also be published on our website. Any documents that are altered will display a new date and version number. Centres are required to inform their candidates of any changes that may affect them. For significant changes in policy, GA will provide a minimum of 30 days' notice of any changes wherever possible, before they take effect.

10. Feedback

GA will ask centres to complete a customer satisfaction survey from time to time. This survey will be emailed to the centre and request feedback on various aspects of the service.

We encourage additional or interim feedback from centres and candidates at any time. All feedback will be monitored and acted upon if required. GA will respond to feedback within 10 working days.

11. Monitoring, Evaluating and Reporting

Our customer service performance will be monitored internally by the Responsible Officer, through centre feedback, including compliments and complaints received, via the use of surveys and centre visits undertaken regularly.

Any changes to our customer service levels will be addressed in quarterly meetings of the Governing Body and, where necessary, actions agreed to mitigate any risks these changes may present. All such risks will also be included on the GA Risk Register.

Document Specification:	
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Accountability:	The Governing Body
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Links to Ofqual GCR:	G2, I1, I2
Other relevant documents:	Gatehouse Awards Centre Handbook Qualification Specifications (for each Qualification offered by Gatehouse Awards) Gatehouse Awards Terms and Conditions of Business