

Maintaining Confidentiality of Assessment Materials Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction

Where confidentiality in the contents of the assessment materials, or information about the assessment is required, Gatehouse Awards (GA) is required to ensure that a qualification which it makes available, or proposes to make available, reflects an accurate measure of attainment. In order to ensure compliance with this requirement, GA must take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. In particular, the confidentiality of the content of assessments must be maintained where GA provides training or training materials in relation to such qualification. This policy also sets out what steps will be taken where any breach of such confidentiality occurs, or is alleged to have occurred.

2. Authority & Responsibility

This policy applies to all members of staff of both GA and its approved centres, including contracted staff, who are involved in the development of assessment materials, and who have access to such materials as part of their role, as well as centre staff involved in the delivery of examinations where confidential assessment materials are used.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with this policy on a day-to-day basis lies with the Quality Assurance Manager.

3. Definitions

Confidential Information – confidential information about an assessment (for example, secure examination papers) is information which, if disclosed, could compromise the ability of the assessment to provide an accurate measure of Candidate's attainment.

4. Determining if Information about Assessment is Confidential

GA will decide whether information is confidential at the qualification development stage.

The following factors will be given consideration:

- a) The knowledge, skills or understanding being assessed and the method of assessment
- b) Whether advanced knowledge of the information or assessment materials could provide an unfair advantage to the Candidate who has this information over a Candidate who does not
- c) Whether knowledge of the information could enable a Teacher or Candidate to anticipate the requirements of an assessment, to the extent that they would not need to fully complete the course of study

GA will assess the above factors in relation to the particular type of assessment, and decide the extent to which the information is confidential for each assessment to allow for accurate measure of a Candidate's attainment.

5. Ensuring Confidentiality of the Assessments and Relevant Information

In order to reduce the risk of disclosure of confidential information, GA will:

- a) Clearly mark assessment materials which have been determined to be confidential
- b) Restrict access to confidential material to people who need it
- c) Put in place appropriate contractual obligations with employees, contractors and third parties, to protect the confidentiality of the information for the time the information remains confidential. These will require individuals who have had access to confidential information to:
 - maintain confidentiality both during and after their term of employment or engagement
 - understand what may constitute a conflict of interest and declare any such interests
 - notify GA promptly where they are, or have been, involved in the preparation of any resources that relate to a qualification for which they hold confidential information
- d) Offer training for people with access to confidential assessment material on how to maintain confidentiality.
- e) Monitor the content of the training events (from planning, delivery and dissemination to evaluation) and to assure itself that confidential information about assessments is not shared.
- f) Assess any instances where staff who have access to confidential information regarding assessment might be involved in training events for Teachers

6. Dealing with Suspected Breaches of Confidential Information about Assessment

All allegations of breaches of confidentiality will be investigated, and as part of the investigation GA will:

- a) make a record of the allegation of the breach
- b) fully document the investigation process
- c) identify and manage the likely impact of the breach, for example by replacing the assessment materials where a breach of confidentiality could impact on the validity of the assessment
- d) where there is a potential adverse effect, inform the Regulator (or any other affected parties/stakeholders, where there is a clear benefit of doing so) of the breach
- e) take action against those who have breached the confidentiality, including the use of the GA Sanctions Policy, where applicable
- f) take any necessary steps to prevent reoccurrence

Depending on the nature of the breach, the GA Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure, and / or GA Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will be followed.

7. Designated reporting channels and timescales

Any organisation or individual reporting suspected breaches of confidentiality can contact GA directly by emailing info@gatehouseawards.org Any supporting evidence available should be shared with the initial report, such as screenshots, emails, or witness statements.

Where a GA employee, Representative, or member of centre staff discovers or suspects a breach in the security of confidential materials, suspected breaches must be reported within as soon as possible and at least within 24 hours of discovery. Any delays in reporting beyond the specified timeline must be justified and documented.

GA endeavours to maintain confidentiality during the reporting and investigation process to avoid further disclosure or compromise.

Individuals who report suspected breaches in good faith will be protected from retaliation or negative consequences.

GA also operates a whistleblowing policy, which may provide additional guidance for reporting confidentiality breaches or other ethical concerns.

Document Specification:	
Purpose:	To set out the policy and procedure to be followed by the staff, management, directors, contractors and other third parties engaged by GA to ensure that, wherever possible, confidentiality of assessment materials is maintained, and, where a breach has happened, what steps will be taken to manage it effectively.
Accountability:	GA Governing Body
Responsibility:	Quality Assurance Manager
Version:	4
Effective from:	June 2024
Indicative Review date:	June 2026
Links to Ofqual GCR	G4
Other relevant documents:	Maladministration and Malpractice Policy and Procedure Qualification Specifications Privacy, GDPR & Cookie Policy Internal Privacy Notice