

Quality Endorsement Scheme (QES) Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction to the Quality Endorsement Scheme (QES)

Gatehouse Awards ('GA') recognises the benefits in taking a collaborative approach to working with clients and operates a Quality Endorsement Scheme (QES). The QES is available in the UK and internationally and provides an opportunity for providers to submit details and content of their training and education programmes for endorsement and backing from a leading Awarding Organisation. With the GA QES, providers can demonstrate the quality of their delivery to their own customers with externally issued and endorsed certificates.

Whether endorsement is required for one or multiple courses, the scheme can be tailored entirely to the needs of the provider, regardless of sector or industry.

GA will review all associated quality assurance arrangements as part of the QES. By approving the provider's systems, we will endorse the provision and providers may use the GA QES logo. On successful completion of the course, Candidates will be issued with an electronic Certificate of Achievement from GA, which can be checked by employers or other stakeholders via the GA Certificate Verification service.

2. QES Procedure

The QES Standard Submission procedures may differ depending on the products the provider wishes to apply for endorsement for. As a general rule:

- providers which are not already an approved GA centre must complete and submit a *Centre Approval Application Form* alongside the *GA QES Standard Submission Form*.
- providers which already hold current GA centre approval must complete and submit the *GA QES Standard Submission Form*.
- All providers must hold full GA centre approval before applying for QES endorsement. Providers without current GA centre approval must first complete the Centre Approval process before submitting a QES Standard Submission Form
- Providers with current full GA centre approval may complete and submit the GA QES Standard Submission Form

Endorsement is based on documentary evidence submitted by the provider and on desk-based checks carried out by GA to verify the information provided.

Providers should be aware that any endorsement is subject to verification of the information provided by them and additional visits and/or remote checks may be undertaken. Such measures may be subject to additional fees, which will be clearly communicated as part of the review process.

Unless otherwise advertised (or agreed in writing) fees for the QES are payable in advance and are non-refundable.

GA aims to advise the provider of the outcome of their application in writing within 20 working days of the receipt of the fee and a full and complete *QES Standard Submission Application* (and *Centre Approval Application Form*, where applicable).

3. Notification of Endorsement Decision

Following the review of the application for QES, there are three possible outcomes:

- **Endorsement Confirmed:** Successful providers will be issued with a notification from GA, the GA QES logos for use on their website and marketing material and any other documentation, policies or guidance they hold, including log-on details to access the Ark, the GA online learner management system (where the provider is a newly approved centre for QES purposes).
- **Endorsement Withheld:** The provider has been asked to take action in order to correct or improve practices, policies or facilities prior to endorsement being granted. Once the action has been implemented, the provider should contact GA with evidence to confirm that the actions have been completed, providing the required additional evidence. If necessary, a visit may be necessary before endorsement is granted. This visit is subject to an additional charge.
- **Endorsement Denied:** In some instances, a provider may not be able to meet the standards required by GA or there is sufficient cause to believe that a provider presents too high a risk to participate in the QES offered by GA. In such instances, the provider will be informed.

4. Proof of Endorsement and Use of Logo

Where endorsement is confirmed, the provider will be granted the right to include the GA QES logo compliant with the stipulations below:

- a) The GA QES logo must appear in a prominent place on the provider's website and/or course materials – e.g. on the front cover of physical and digital publications, or in the introduction to a video.
- b) The logo may also appear on the inside cover, introduction pages or credits of a published resource, as appropriate.
- c) The logo may be resized to reflect styling choices; however it must not be placed or sized in such a way that a user could reasonably assume that GA has published or produced the resource.
- d) The logo must not be changed or distorted in any way, except resizing compliant with point c), above.

5. Additional QES Applications

Providers may apply for approval for endorsement of further courses at any time by completing and submitting a subsequent *QES Standard Submission Application*. Submissions will follow the approval procedure outlined above.

6. Period of Endorsement

Once granted, endorsement is valid for one year from the date of approval.

Once granted, endorsement is valid for one year from the date of approval. Providers must renew their QES endorsement annually to maintain their endorsed status. GA will issue annual renewal invoices - usually 20 working days before the current endorsement expires.

Providers who do not wish to renew their endorsement should notify GA in writing before the renewal invoice is due.

The endorsement and its annual renewal are subject to the provider maintaining adherence to the GA Centre Approval Criteria, all GA terms and conditions, and successfully completing annual centre re-approval. Failure to pay the renewal invoice before the expiry date will result in automatic withdrawal of QES status.

Please note that all providers participating in the GA QES are subject to quality assurance visits at any time GA deems appropriate. GA reserves the right to visit providers without prior notice.

7. Annual QES Renewal Process

All QES endorsements must be renewed annually.

Providers should:

- Ensure they have successfully completed their Centre Re-Approval before the expiry date
- Pay the applicable renewal fee for Centre Re-Approval
- Pay the applicable renewal fee for their endorsed course(s)

GA will review renewal applications and notify providers of the outcome within 20 working days of receiving a complete application and fee payment.

As part of the annual renewal process, GA may require the centre to provide updated evidence of continued compliance where requested and demonstrate maintenance of quality standards and delivery.

8. Maintaining the QES

It is the provider's responsibility to maintain the course delivery and quality assurance arrangements associated with the endorsed courses. Providers must promptly inform GA of any changes and for changes to be agreed with the provider's GA contact.

Examples of changes providers should notify GA about:

- significant changes in operation and staffing, the course content, assessment requirements or Guided Learning Hours.
- a change to the method of delivery, i.e., introduction of a distance learning version of the course where the endorsement was granted for classroom learning provision.
- not entering a viable number of candidates over a 12-month period.
- the provider has been subject to a sanction due to malpractice or serious maladministration with regards to any course, qualification or endorsed provision, or has had approval or endorsement withdrawn, from GA or other Awarding Organisation.

9. Withdrawal and Suspension of Endorsement

GA may withdraw or suspend a provider's use of the QES in instances where:

- the provider has not complied with the *GA Terms and Conditions of Business* or any of GA's policies, regulations, requirements, procedures and guidelines.
- there are major deficiencies in the assessment process leading to actual or potential malpractice.
- the provider has not entered a viable number of candidates/has been inactive within the previous twelve months.
- payment for GA services has not been received in accordance with the payment terms.
- the provider becomes bankrupt, insolvent, ceases trading or goes into liquidation.
- there is a change in control of the provider which gives rise to a significant cause for concern as to the risk to the ongoing reputation of the provider and of GA by association.
- GA is in receipt of information regarding the provider from a third party (such as another Awarding Organisation, Regulator, or other official body) which indicates that

the provider poses a significant reputational, financial, or regulatory risk to GA, its candidates or the Regulators by association.

- there has been a failure to provide GA with details of any changes which may affect the provider's ability to maintain the QES effectively.
- the provider has failed to complete the annual re-approval process or pay the invoice for QES renewal before the endorsement expiry date.

GA may decide not to withdraw the approval immediately but to suspend the provider, or use of specific endorsed product(s), for a period of time needed to investigate and/or resolve issues. If GA withdraws approval, the earliest date on which the provider may reapply may be provided, however, in the case of withdrawal due to serious malpractice, the provider will not be allowed to reapply for QES at any time. In such instances it may also be deemed appropriate to preclude its directors or senior management from holding any further approvals with GA. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account any associated risks.

10. Data Protection Statement

GA will collect and hold all data in line with guidance issued by the Information Commissioner. The data will be used for the creation of monitoring statistics. The data will not be disclosed to any third parties or organisations, except where there is a statutory requirement to do so. Under the Data Protection Act 2018 providers must ensure that candidates are aware of how their personal data will be processed. As this includes sensitive personal data the candidate must give their consent to this prior to being registered on the Ark. A full GDPR, Privacy and Data Protection Policy is available from GA upon request.

11. Disclaimer

GA QES products/services requires the provider to publish the following text within their published course information and guidance:

'Whilst the organisation has taken all reasonable care in the preparation of this product, the organisation makes no representation, express or implied, regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this product. Neither the organisation nor Gatehouse Awards Ltd accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions from the product or the consequences thereof.'

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Other relevant documents:	GA Centre and Qualification Approval Criteria and Guidance GA Centre and Qualification Approval Policy and Procedure GA Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure GA QES Standard Submission Application Form