



Qualification Specification

GA Level 7 Diploma in Project Management (610/7114/6)

This qualification is subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny and General Moderation policy.

This GA qualification is delivered under an exclusivity agreement.

Contents

Section 1: Qualification Overview	4
1.1 Introduction: About this Qualification	4
1.2 Qualification Titles, Qualification Numbers and Important Dates.....	4
1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives	4
1.4 Qualification Structure and Overview: Units, GLH, TQT and Credit Value.....	5
1.5 Rules of Combination	7
1.6 Intended Audience	7
1.7 Age and Entry Requirements.....	7
1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer of Credits	8
1.9 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations	9
1.10 Relationship to Other Qualifications and Progression Opportunities.....	9
1.11 Language of Assessment.....	10
1.12 Qualification Availability	10
Section 2: Qualification Delivery: Assessment, Quality Assurance Model and Administration.....	11
2.1 Teaching and Learning Requirements	11
2.2 Assessment & Quality Assurance Model.....	11
2.3 Assessment of Learners and Portfolio Requirements	12
2.4 CRAVES Requirements	13
2.5 Resubmissions	13
2.6 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements	14
2.7 Grading and Recording Achievement.....	15
2.8 Unit and Portfolio Sign Off.....	15
2.9 External Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements	16
2.10 Registering Learners and Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)	16
2.11 ID Requirements.....	17
2.12 Record Keeping	17
2.13 Results and Certification	18
2.14 Direct Claims Status (DCS)	18
2.17 Appeals and Enquiries.....	18
Section 3: Staff and Resource Requirements for Centres.....	19

3.1 General Staff Requirements.....	19
3.2 Requirements for Teachers and Assessors	19
3.3 Requirements for IQA (Internal Quality Assurers, also referred to as Internal Moderators).....	20
3.4 CPD Requirements.....	21
3.5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Resources.....	21
3.6 Venue and Equipment Requirements.....	22
3.7 Ongoing Support	23
Section 4: Unit Specifications	24
4.1 Mandatory Unit 1: Project and Programme Governance	24
4.2 Mandatory Unit 2: Strategic Project Selection and Portfolio Management	30
4.3 Mandatory Unit 3: Risk, Uncertainty and Decision-Making in Projects.....	36
4.4 Mandatory Unit 4: Leadership, Stakeholders and Organisational Dynamics in Projects.....	42
4.5 Mandatory Unit 5: Innovation, Change and Transformation Delivery	48
4.6 Mandatory Unit 6: Applied Project Research, Evaluation and Impact	54

Section 1: Qualification Overview

1.1 Introduction: About this Qualification

Gatehouse Awards (GA) qualifications are designed to give learners the skills to be active in the modern labour market and progress in their career and/or into higher level study.

This Qualification Specification covers the GA Level 7 Diploma in Project Management (610/7114/6).

This document provides centre staff, learners and employers with an overview of the qualification content as well as the assessment and quality assurance requirements for this qualification.

This qualification is regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) in England and are part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

All versions of this qualification are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications which is operated by Ofqual at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

This qualification is not designed to replace any existing qualifications.

1.2 Qualification Titles, Qualification Numbers and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 7 Diploma in Project Management	610/7114/6	25/02/2026	Feb 2031

1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This qualification is designed to develop learners' understanding of project management as a strategic, organisational and governance function within complex environments. The qualification focuses on how projects and programmes are selected, governed, led and evaluated to support organisational objectives and long-term value creation.

Learners examine project management at portfolio, programme and organisational levels, exploring governance and accountability, strategic decision making, risk and uncertainty, leadership and stakeholder dynamics, and the role of projects in enabling innovation and

organisational transformation. Emphasis is placed on informed judgement, critical evaluation and the use of evidence to assess project impact.

The qualification supports learners to:

- apply governance, assurance and accountability principles to projects and programmes
- make informed strategic decisions about project selection, prioritisation and termination
- manage risk, uncertainty and complexity in dynamic project and programme contexts
- lead and influence diverse stakeholders without reliance on formal authority
- use projects as vehicles for innovation, change and organisational transformation
- undertake research-informed evaluation of project outcomes, organisational learning and long-term impact

1.4 Qualification Structure and Overview: Units, GLH, TQT and Credit Value

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 7 Diploma in Project Management (610/7114/6)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time
1. Project and Programme Governance	F/651/9701	7	20	60	140
2. Strategic Project Selection and Portfolio Management	H/651/9702	7	20	60	140
3. Risk, Uncertainty and Decision-Making in Projects	J/651/9703	7	20	60	140
4. Leadership, Stakeholders and Organisational Dynamics in Projects	K/651/9704	7	20	60	140
5. Innovation, Change and Transformation Delivery	L/651/9705	7	20	60	140
6. Applied Project Research, Evaluation and Impact	M/651/9706	7	20	60	140
			Total Credits 120	Total GLH* 360	TQT** (GLH + ST) 1200

*Guided Learning Hours (GLH): Definition

The activity of a learner in being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

**Total Qualification Time (TQT): Definition

The number of Guided Learning Hours assigned, plus an estimate of the number of study hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

The number of study hours a learner is expected to undertake in order to complete each unit is expressed in the '**Study Time**' above. This, including the GLH, provides the Total Qualification Time, or TQT, and represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

The estimates for Guided Learning Hours and Total Qualification Time above have been produced with due regard to information gathered from those with experience in education and training and are in line with guidance published by Ofqual on the allocation and expression of Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning Hours.

Level

The qualification within this specification is designated at Level 7 on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) according to the Level Descriptors for knowledge and understanding, which build on those used within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that the qualifications are considered by GA to lead to the outcome as follows:

Achievement at Level 7 reflects the ability to reformulate and use practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors, and critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and theories to produce modified conceptions. It reflects an ability to understand the wider contexts in which the area of study or work is located, current developments in the area of study or work and different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the area of study or work. It also reflects the ability to use specialised skills to conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve

many interacting factors, and to determine and use appropriate methodologies and approaches. The learner will also have the ability to design and undertake research, development or strategic activities to inform or produce change in the area of work or study, and critically evaluate actions, methods and results and their short- and long-term implications.

1.5 Rules of Combination

In order to meet the rules of combination for the GA Level 7 Diploma in Project Management a qualification, the learner must achieve all 6 mandatory units. The learner must achieve 120 credits.

Learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes and meet all qualification requirements in order to achieve the qualification.

There are no further rules of combination.

1.6 Intended Audience

This qualification is suitable for experienced project professionals, senior managers and leaders responsible for overseeing projects and programmes within complex or regulated environments, as well as individuals seeking professional development, those whose current role involves project or programme oversight, and those aspiring to build or advance a career in project, programme or portfolio management.

This qualification provides a robust foundation for progression to postgraduate study, senior professional practice, consultancy, or executive-level roles involving project, programme and portfolio oversight.

1.7 Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is intended for learners aged 21 and above.

Learners should hold

- a degree (undergraduate honours degree)

or

- a Level 6 qualification

Applicants who do not meet the formal qualification requirements may be considered on an individual basis where they can demonstrate substantial relevant professional experience at a senior level.

The centre must maintain a robust process for evaluating applicants entering via relevant professional experience. This may include:

- a detailed CV or professional portfolio evidencing senior-level experience (typically 3+ years in strategic or management roles)
- a formal interview or professional discussion to assess the learner's readiness for Level 7 study
- evidence of continuing professional development and reflective practice
- written references from appropriate professional sources (e.g., line managers, senior colleagues)
- completion of a diagnostic assessment or written task to demonstrate academic capability at Level 7

In addition to the above, if English is not the learner's first language, an English language level of minimum International English B2 (CEFR) is required.

Centre recruitment and enrolment processes must be carried out by suitably qualified and experienced centre staff.

It is recommended that prior to commencing a programme of study leading to this qualification, learners receive detailed advice and guidance from the training provider in order to ensure the programme and qualification will meet their needs.

1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer of Credits

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessing whether a learner's previous experience and achievements meet the standard requirements of a GA qualification, prior to the learner taking the assessment for the qualification, or part of the qualification, they are registered for.

Any prior learning must be relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and GA will subsequently amend the requirements which a learner must have satisfied before they are assessed as eligible to be awarded the qualification.

Where there is evidence that the learner's knowledge and skills are current, valid and sufficient, the use of RPL may be acceptable for recognising achievement of assessment

criteria, learning outcome or unit(s), as applicable. The requirement for RPL in such instances must also include a consideration of the currency of the knowledge gained by the learner at the time they undertook the prior learning.

RPL cannot be guaranteed in instances where industry practice or legislation has significantly changed in the time since the prior learning was undertaken / a previous award was issued.

All RPL decisions and processes are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) scrutiny and must be documented in line with GA's quality assurance requirements.

No transfer of credits is permitted.

1.9 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Assessment for this qualification is designed to be accessible and inclusive. The assessment methodology is appropriate and rigorous for individuals or groups of learners.

Please refer to the GA Candidate Access Policy, available on the GA website, which contains information about Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. This policy document provides centre staff with clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the qualification.

1.10 Relationship to Other Qualifications and Progression Opportunities

Learners typically progress to this qualification from Level 6 qualifications such as undergraduate degrees, professional diplomas, or advanced project or programme management qualifications. The qualification builds upon foundational knowledge in project management, business, or related disciplines acquired at undergraduate level.

Upon successful completion, learners may progress to:

- Full Master's degree programmes (MSc in Project Management, MSc in Programme Management, MBA with a project or operations focus, or related postgraduate awards), including Master's programmes with a dissertation or research component, subject to the receiving university's entry requirements and individual recognition decisions
- Senior project management, programme management, and portfolio leadership positions within their organisations

- Professional membership at senior practitioner or chartered levels with relevant professional bodies (such as APM, PMI, PRINCE2, CMI, or sector-specific bodies aligned to their chosen specialism)
- Level 8 professional qualifications or postgraduate doctorate level study

1.11 Language of Assessment

This qualification is offered in English.

Further information concerning the provision of qualification and assessment materials in other languages may be obtained from GA.

1.12 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available in the UK and internationally.

If you would like further information on offering this qualification, please contact us. Our contact details appear on our website, www.gatehouseawards.org

Section 2: Qualification Delivery: Assessment, Quality Assurance Model and Administration

2.1 Teaching and Learning Requirements

Courses leading to this qualification may consist of e-learning courses or classroom-based courses, or a blended option.

Learners can therefore undertake learning and assessment on a flexible basis.

Learners must have suitable access to teaching and assessment staff as well as technical support. It is essential that the centre provides specialist staff, high quality learning materials and access to assessment opportunities.

2.2 Assessment & Quality Assurance Model

This qualification is a centre-assessed qualification. This means that it is internally assessed and internally moderated by centre staff who must clearly show where learners have achieved the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and qualification requirements.

Detailed Assessment Instructions for each component unit of this qualification is provided in Section 4 *Unit Specifications* below.

Prior to use, assessment materials devised by the centre must be submitted to GA for 'sign-off' and authorisation. The centre must therefore also:

- review the materials carefully against the sign-off criteria before submission (refer to the *GA External Quality Assurance of Centre-Devised Materials* form).

The centre should contact their dedicated Centre Administrator for full instructions on how to submit their materials and the timescale required for sign-off.

Assessment, internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and quality assurance conducted by GA.

This qualification is subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny (CASS) and General Moderation Policy.

2.3 Assessment of Learners and Portfolio Requirements

All learners must complete assessment for all six mandatory units.

Assessment will enable learners to demonstrate advanced understanding, strategic judgement and research-informed evaluation capability across all units. Assessment will address governance, portfolio and programme decision making, leadership and stakeholder dynamics, risk and uncertainty, innovation and transformation, and the strategic role of projects within organisations.

Learners will be assessed through a range of written, analytical and evaluative assignments that require critical engagement with evidence and application of concepts to complex project, programme and organisational contexts.

The applied project research unit requires learners to undertake an independent research-based evaluation assignment, demonstrating the ability to formulate evaluative research questions, engage critically with relevant academic and professional literature, select and justify appropriate research and evaluation methods, analyse data, and develop evidence-based conclusions or recommendations relating to project or programme impact.

Learners are expected to build a portfolio of evidence, clearly demonstrating where they have met the learning outcomes and qualification requirements, typically via the successful completion of the centre-devised assessment materials.

To meet the assessment requirements, learners must:

- follow a suitable programme of learning.
- maintain and submit a portfolio of all coursework incorporating all materials related to assessment.

All evidence must be mapped against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, reflecting the type of evidence supplied and indicating its location. Using portfolio reference numbers will enable the learner, assessor, IQA and EQA to quickly locate the evidence submitted.

Suitable sources of evidence may include the following:

- essays/assignments
- short questions and answers
- professional discussions
- workbooks
- reflective accounts

- records of questioning
- case studies

The centre must ensure that the learner's work is authentic.

Assurances that learner work is authentic can be gained via:

1. oral questioning to confirm knowledge and understanding.
2. written questions answered under controlled supervised conditions to compare the learner's writing style against their other work.

All knowledge and understanding evidence must be marked and assessed by centre assessors in line with the GA CRAVES requirement, clearly indicating where the learner has achieved the requisite knowledge and understanding. Assessors are responsible for providing feedback and instructions for re-submission, where applicable.

All assessment decisions and internal moderation are externally quality assured by GA.

2.4 CRAVES Requirements

Assessors must ensure that all evidence within the learner's portfolio judged to meet GA's 'CRAVES' requirements is:

- **current:** the work is relevant at the time of the assessment
- **reliable:** the work is consistent with that produced by other learners
- **authentic:** the work is the learner's own work
- **valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **evaluated:** where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner
- **sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy

2.5 Resubmissions

GA recommends that the centre operates a policy of allowing learners to resubmit assessed work a maximum of two times. However, the acceptance and management of resubmissions of assessed work is at the discretion of the centre.

The decision regarding whether to permit a learner to resubmit work and/or attempt an assessment again will be based on an evaluation of how closely their previous attempts met

the passing criteria. This evaluation will consider the extent to which the learner's work demonstrated progress towards meeting the required standards.

Resubmitted work will be assessed with the same rigour and adherence to standards as the initial submission.

If a learner does not pass after three attempts at submitting assessed work, the centre must consider the following course of action:

- Additional support – consider whether the learner could benefit from additional support, remedial guidance, or additional resources to help them understand the material better. This could involve providing extra teaching sessions, study materials, or one-on-one tutoring to address specific areas of difficulty. Sometimes, extending deadlines or providing additional time can alleviate pressure and allow for better comprehension and performance.
- Review and feedback - consider whether sufficient detailed feedback, which highlights areas that need improvement and provides specific guidance on how the learner can enhance their work, has been provided after each attempt.
- Alternative assessment methods - consider whether an alternative assessment method, such as the use of professional discussion, may provide opportunities for the learner to demonstrate their understanding. The centre should refer to the GA Candidate Access Policy for further information.
- Reconsideration of participation - assess whether the learner might need to take a break from the programme or whether, despite supportive measures and multiple attempts, the learner's progress is not indicative that they will meet the qualification requirements. They may be issued with a final 'Fail' grade or withdraw from the programme.

The centre must ensure that their policies and procedures regarding learner dismissal or failure are communicated clearly to learners to maintain fairness and transparency.

2.6 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Internal Moderators (also known as Internal Quality Assurers or IQAs) ensure that assessors are assessing to the same standards, i.e., consistently and reliably, and that assessment decisions are correct. IQA activities will include:

- ensuring assessors are suitably experienced and qualified in line with the qualification requirements
- sampling assessments and assessment decisions
- ensuring that assessment decisions meet the GA 'CRAVES' requirements (Current, Reliable, Authentic, Valid, Evaluated and Sufficient)
- conducting standardisation and moderation of assessment decisions
- providing assessors with clear and constructive feedback
- supporting assessors and providing training and development where appropriate
- ensuring any stimulus or materials used for the purposes of assessment are fit for purpose.

Sampling of assessment will be planned and carried out in line with a clear IQA and moderation strategy, which takes into account the number of learners, number of assessors, and the experience and competency of assessors.

Centre IQAs may wish to refer to the guidance documents provided by GA to approved centres (available on the Ark) in order to formulate an appropriate Sampling Strategy.

2.7 Grading and Recording Achievement

All learning outcomes and assessment requirements must be met before a learner can be considered as having achieved the qualification.

This qualification is not graded on a scale. Learners are assessed as Pass or Fail.

The centre must ensure that regulations relating to the resubmission of work are adhered to.

2.8 Unit and Portfolio Sign Off

Upon completion, each unit must be signed off by the assessor and IQA to confirm the learner's achievement.

The content of the portfolio that contains all units the learners has achieved is subject to final portfolio sign off by the assessor and IQA to confirm that the specific qualification requirements and rules of combination have been met.

The learner is also required to sign an authenticity declaration, stating that the work contained in their portfolio is their own.

2.9 External Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Assessment and internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and wider scrutiny and centre controls as per GA's quality assurance arrangements for centre-assessed qualifications.

All GA Approved Centres are entitled to two EQA visits per year. Additional visits can be requested, for which there may be an additional charge.

EQA activities will focus on the centre's continuing adherence to and maintenance of the GA *Centre Approval Criteria* and the criteria and requirements for the specific qualifications for which it holds approval. This will include:

- checking that the management of the centre and the management arrangements relating to the qualification are sufficient
- checking that resources to support the delivery of the qualification, including physical resources and staffing, are in place and sufficient
- ensuring that the centre has appropriate policies and procedures in place relevant to the organisation and to the delivery and quality assurance of the qualification
- the use of assessment materials and the arrangements in place to ensure that evidence for assessment is 'CRAVES' (Current, Reliable, Authentic, Valid, Evaluated and Sufficient)
- sampling assessment decisions against the qualification requirements across the range of levels, number of assessors and assessment sites, according to the number of learners
- the internal moderation and quality assurance arrangements
- sampling internal moderation records against the qualification requirements across the range of levels, number of assessors and assessment sites, according to the number of learners
- administrative arrangements
- ensuring that any actions from moderation and wider quality assurance activities have been carried out by the centre
- confirming any claims for RPL, reasonable adjustments or special considerations

Through discussions with centre staff, examining learner work, moderation of assessment, talking to learners and reviewing documentation and systems, the GA EQA will provide the centre with full support, advice and guidance as necessary.

2.10 Registering Learners and Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)

Learners must be registered through the Ark, the GA online Learner Management System.

Owing to the Total Qualification Time of this qualification, the validity period of registrations made will be three years. Should a learner not have achieved in the timescale, a new registration is required.

Each approved GA centre is provided with a user account to allow approved staff access to the online system.

Where the Unique Learner Number (ULN) of a learners is known, this should be provided at the point of registration in order for GA to issue updates to the Learner Record Service.

2.11 ID Requirements

It is the responsibility of the centre to have systems in place to confirm each learner's identity.

Learners are required to declare that all work submitted for assessment is their own work.

2.12 Record Keeping

Records of learner details, their work and any records of Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and records containing learners' personal details must be kept by the centre in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (including GDPR and all relevant privacy regulations) for a minimum of 2 years.

The centre must operate a safe and effective system of care and comply with clinical and information governance requirements, with appropriate policies and procedures in place to maintain confidentiality, both related to patients and clients, staff and learners.

All records must be easily retrievable and made available to GA or the Regulator upon request.

Portfolios must be retained until the following External Quality Assurance visit to allow them to be sampled. Following external moderation and the award of a qualification by GA, the centre may return portfolios to learners.

Records of all internal quality assurance and moderation activity undertaken must be kept and made available to GA upon request.

2.13 Results and Certification

Centres may make claims for certification via the Ark when learners complete and the assessor and IQA have confirmed achievement. Claims for certification are subject to successful external quality assurance (EQA).

Following the EQA's confirmation of a learner's achievement, GA will authorise claims for the certification of learners, details of which will be visible to the centre in the centre's Ark account. Certificates are usually issued within 10 working days of the award of the qualification.

The qualification certificate will indicate both the title and the level at which the qualification is achieved.

The qualification certificate will also indicate the Pathway taken by the learner (i.e. the optional specialist unit completed).

Certificates will only be issued to learners who have achieved sufficient credits and met the rules of combination for the qualification they are registered for. If a learner has not achieved sufficient credits or failed to meet the rules of combination, the qualification certificate will not be issued.

Replacement certificates are available upon request.

Amendments to certificates are available upon request but may require the centre to provide evidence of the need for any amendment (e.g., learner proof of identification) and will involve the return of the original certificate. Replacements and amendments may incur an additional charge.

2.14 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claim Status is not available for this qualification.

2.17 Appeals and Enquiries

GA has an appeals procedure in accordance with the arrangements for regulated qualifications.

General enquiries can be made at any time and should be directed to a GA Centre Administrator.

Section 3: Staff and Resource Requirements for Centres

In order to deliver this qualification, the centre must ensure that they meet the following requirements for staff and physical resources.

3.1 General Staff Requirements

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery, assessment and internal quality assurance of this qualification are suitably qualified in line with the stipulations for teachers, assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) detailed below.

The centre must ensure that they hold up-to-date and detailed information about the staff involved with the delivery and quality assurance of this qualification and must make records available to GA upon request. The information GA expects the course provider to hold for each member of staff includes, as a minimum:

- a current up to date CV
- copies of relevant qualification certificates
- relevant and up to date CPD (Continuous Professional Development) records

Centre staff must be familiar with the qualification requirements prior to offering the qualification or unit and planning the centre's assessment and moderation strategy.

The centre must also ensure that they have the management and administrative staffing arrangements in place which are suitable to support the registration of learners and the receipt of results and certificates.

The knowledge and experience of all staff involved in the teaching, assessment and internal quality assurance of this qualification will be considered during the approval and re-approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

3.2 Requirements for Teachers and Assessors

Teaching staff include those who deliver teaching and learning content for knowledge and understanding elements and those who are involved in practical teaching and learning in the clinical environment.

The primary responsibility of an assessor is to assess a learner's performance and ensure that the evidence submitted by the learner meets the requirements of the qualification.

All teachers and assessors must be occupationally competent in project management and hold appropriate qualifications to make valid and reliable assessment decisions at Level 7.

It is the centre's responsibility to select and appoint suitably qualified and experienced teachers and assessors.

All teachers must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in project management, programme or portfolio management, or relevant professional practice

Teachers must also hold recognised teaching qualification or evidence of effective teaching practice at postgraduate level (desirable).

All assessors must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in project management, programme or portfolio management, or relevant professional practice

Assessors must also have an understanding of assessment principles and quality assurance processes appropriate to Level 7 study.

All teachers and assessors must also:

- be able to evidence relevant and up to date teaching/assessing experience.
- understand the qualification structure, unit learning outcomes and criteria related to the teaching and learning being delivered.
- have access to appropriate guidance and support.
- participate in continuing professional development in the specific subject they are teaching and/or assessing.

3.3 Requirements for IQA (Internal Quality Assurers, also referred to as Internal Moderators).

IQAs are responsible for internal moderation and quality assurance of the qualification to ensure standardisation, reliability, validity and sufficiency of the assessor's assessment decisions.

It is the centre's responsibility to select and appoint IQAs.

All IQAs must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in project management, programme or portfolio management, or relevant professional practice

IQAs must also have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as sufficient technical understanding related to the qualifications that they are internally quality assuring.

Each assessor may have one or several appointed IQAs.

Staff may undertake more than one role within the centre, e.g., teacher, assessor and IQA. However, members of staff must NOT IQA their own assessment decisions.

3.4 CPD Requirements

All staff must ensure their role and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and competence is current and therefore must keep up to date with sector changes and developments.

Participation in continuing professional development in order to evidence contemporaneous proficiency must take place regularly. Centre staff in teaching, assessment or IQA roles must ensure that they complete and document a minimum of 30 CPD hours per year.

Records of CPD activities (both planned and those that have taken place) must be made available to GA at EQA visits or upon request.

3.5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Resources

When devising teaching, learning and assessment materials for this qualification, the centre must:

- ensure teaching and learning materials directly address the learning outcomes and sufficiently prepare learners for assessment.
- structure materials to be accessible and engaging.
- use clear, unambiguous language appropriate for the level.
- align materials to the specific topics and content.
- pitch the level and depth of materials accurately based on the content to be delivered.

- ensure materials can be clearly attributed back to the centre.
- offer opportunities and resources for additional research and study, where appropriate.
- offer opportunity for learners to relate teaching and learning content to their own experience.
- ensure materials provide any relevant guidance to staff on consistent delivery.

Course programmes must be designed using the assessment requirements and unit specifications content below.

Teaching and learning resources must be relevant, up-to-date and of industry standard, in order to allow learners to adequately prepare for assessment. This will be considered at approval and during the on-going monitoring of the centre.

All delivery and assessment resources should be inclusive of the principles of equality and diversity and the safeguarding of learners.

3.6 Venue and Equipment Requirements

When training premises are used in the delivery of teaching and assessment of this qualification, centres should, wherever possible, provide suitable access in line with Disability Discrimination, Diversity & Equality law and regulations and any other regulations which apply.

The centre must ensure that all products and equipment used in the delivery and assessment of this qualification are confirmed as fit for purpose and compliant with current Health and Safety legislation and any other relevant regulations. This will be considered at approval and during the on-going monitoring of the centre.

Where specific products and equipment are required for the delivery and assessment of a GA qualification, the suitability of the products and equipment at the centre will be considered during the centre and qualification approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

For this qualification, suitable equipment includes:

- access to library resources, academic journals, and relevant business and management literature
- IT facilities and systems to support research, presentations, and access to online learning materials
- case study materials, business simulations, or scenario-based resources relevant to project management, programme delivery, and organisational contexts

- a suitable environment for assessment activities, including facilities for presentations, examinations, or viva voce assessments where applicable
- a virtual learning environment (VLE) or online platforms to support blended or distance learning delivery models

3.7 Ongoing Support

There are a number of documents on the GA website that centres and learners may find useful: www.gatehouseawards.org. The website is updated regularly with news, information about GA qualifications, sample materials, updates on regulations and other important notices.

Within the centre, a named Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring that all information and documents provided to centre staff and learners are correct and up to date.

GA must be kept up to date with contact details of all changes of personnel so the centre can be provided with the best level of support and guidance.

At the time of approval, the centre is assigned a designated Centre Administrator who is their primary point of contact for all aspects of service or support.

Learners should always speak to a member of staff at the centre for information relating to GA and our qualifications prior to approaching GA directly.

Contact details for GA can be found on the GA website www.gatehouseawards.org.

Section 4: Unit Specifications

4.1 Mandatory Unit 1: Project and Programme Governance

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Project and Programme Governance	60	20	7	F/651/9701
<p>In this unit, the learner will explore governance structures and accountability mechanisms that shape the oversight of projects and programmes in complex organisations.</p> <p>Learners will examine the roles of sponsors, boards and assurance functions, and analyse how governance supports strategic alignment, control and decision making.</p> <p>This unit emphasises responsibility, escalation and assurance.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</p>					
<p>There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand project and programme governance as a system of organisational oversight, control and accountability	<p>1.1 Critically examine the purpose of project and programme governance in providing oversight, legitimacy and strategic control</p> <p><i>IC: Purposes of project and programme governance in establishing legitimate authority, accountability and decision rights; governance as a mechanism for strategic oversight, control and assurance rather than delivery management; role of governance in aligning projects and programmes with organisational purpose, strategy and risk appetite; contribution of governance to transparency, escalation and defensible decision making; governance as a source of organisational legitimacy,</i></p>

	<p>stakeholder confidence and regulatory credibility; limits of governance in environments characterised by complexity, uncertainty and contested objectives.</p>
	<p>1.2 Analyse the relationship between corporate governance and governance at portfolio, programme and project levels</p>
	<p><i>IC: Relationship between corporate governance and portfolio, programme and project governance as nested and interdependent systems of oversight; alignment of strategic intent, risk appetite and accountability across governance levels; translation of board-level objectives and constraints into portfolio and programme governance expectations; role of portfolio governance in mediating between corporate priorities and project-level decision making; governance coherence as a condition for consistent assurance, escalation and decision authority across the project system.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Critically evaluate the consequences of weak, fragmented or unclear governance over projects and programmes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Consequences of weak, fragmented or unclear governance for accountability, authority and decision legitimacy; impacts on escalation, assurance and timely intervention in project and programme performance; increased exposure to unmanaged risk, cost overrun and value erosion; reinforcement of behavioural biases, diffusion of responsibility and avoidance of difficult decisions; effects on stakeholder confidence, trust and organisational reputation; long-term implications for organisational learning, governance credibility and strategic control.</i></p>
	<p>1.4 Assess how organisational context, regulatory expectations and risk appetite shape project and programme governance models</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of organisational context, regulatory expectations and risk appetite on the design and operation of project and programme governance models; variation in governance formality, assurance intensity and decision thresholds across sectors, organisational scale and maturity; impact of regulatory scrutiny, compliance obligations and external accountability on governance structures and behaviours; role of stated and implicit risk appetite in shaping escalation routes, tolerances and intervention points; tensions between consistency and contextual adaptation in governance model design; implications for governance credibility, proportionality and strategic control.</i></p>

2. Understand the distribution and exercise of authority within project and programme governance structures	2.1 Critically analyse the roles, responsibilities and decision rights of sponsors, boards and senior accountable owners
	<i>IC: Roles, responsibilities and decision rights of sponsors, boards and senior accountable owners within project and programme governance systems; distinctions between strategic sponsorship, executive accountability and collective board oversight; allocation of authority for direction setting, assurance, escalation and intervention; accountability for value, risk exposure and ethical conduct at senior levels; interdependencies and boundary tensions between governance roles; implications of role clarity and authority design for effective oversight and defensible decision making.</i>
	2.2 Evaluate how authority, accountability and escalation operate within project and programme governance arrangements
	<i>IC: Operation of authority, accountability and escalation within project and programme governance arrangements as interrelated governance mechanisms; clarity and coherence of escalation pathways in supporting timely oversight and intervention; alignment between formal authority and practical decision influence within governance structures; role of accountability in shaping judgement, responsibility taking and risk ownership; tensions between escalation, autonomy and responsiveness in complex project environments; implications for governance effectiveness, assurance and strategic control.</i>
	2.3 Critically assess the function and limitations of assurance, audit and independent challenge in project oversight
	<i>IC: Functions of assurance, audit and independent challenge in providing confidence over project and programme direction, performance and control; distinctions between internal assurance, external audit and independent challenge in governance systems; contribution of assurance mechanisms to transparency, risk visibility and decision quality; limitations of assurance arising from scope, timing, independence and information asymmetry; risks of over-reliance on formal assurance processes in complex or rapidly evolving projects; implications for balanced governance judgement and informed senior oversight.</i>
	2.4 Evaluate tensions between governance control, delivery autonomy and responsiveness in complex project environments

	<p><i>IC: Tensions between governance control, delivery autonomy and responsiveness as competing demands within complex project environments; trade-offs between standardisation and contextual discretion in governance expectations; effects of control intensity on pace of decision making, adaptability and accountability; risks of excessive autonomy for coherence, assurance and risk containment; risks of excessive control for agility, innovation and local problem solving; implications for proportional governance design that sustains strategic oversight while enabling responsive delivery.</i></p>
<p>3. Understand governance judgement in projects and programmes under uncertainty, failure and ethical tension</p>	<p>3.1 Critically evaluate how project and programme governance frameworks shape risk tolerance and escalation thresholds</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of project and programme governance frameworks on how risk tolerance is defined, interpreted and applied in decision making; governance shaping of escalation thresholds through delegated authority, tolerances and intervention triggers; interaction between organisational risk appetite and governance-level judgements on exposure, contingency and acceptability; variability in risk tolerance across portfolios, programmes and project types within the same organisation; behavioural and political influences on how thresholds are used in practice; implications for consistency, assurance and defensible governance decisions under uncertainty.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Analyse governance decision making in projects under uncertainty, ambiguity and incomplete or contested information</p>
	<p><i>IC: Governance decision making under conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity and incomplete or contested information; limits of predictive control and rational analysis in complex project contexts; use of judgement, experience and interpretation in senior governance decisions; influence of competing narratives, assumptions and stakeholder interests on decision framing; role of escalation, challenge and collective deliberation in mitigating information asymmetry; implications for decision legitimacy, accountability and risk exposure.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically assess governance responses to project distress, recovery, termination and sunk-cost dynamics</p>
<p><i>IC: Governance responses to project distress, recovery and termination as exercises of senior judgement under pressure; recognition and interpretation of early warning signals within governance systems; influence of sunk-cost dynamics, commitment escalation and reputational concern on governance decision making;</i></p>	

	<p><i>distinctions between recovery, pause and termination decisions at programme and portfolio levels; role of governance in authorising intervention, withdrawal or redirection of investment; implications for value protection, organisational learning and accountability.</i></p>
	<p>3.4 Evaluate ethical dilemmas, conflicts of interest, duty of care, wellbeing, fairness and inclusion risks in senior project and programme governance decisions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Ethical dilemmas arising in senior project and programme governance decisions involving competing interests, power asymmetries and value trade-offs; conflicts of interest affecting objectivity, independence and trust in governance judgement; duty of care responsibilities relating to wellbeing, psychological safety and workload in high-pressure project environments; fairness and inclusion risks associated with decision impacts, stakeholder representation and distribution of harm or benefit; governance accountability for ethical conduct under uncertainty and constraint; implications for legitimacy, reputational integrity and sustainable governance practice.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to critically assess how project and programme governance supports value, assurance and organisational learning</p>	<p>4.1 Critically assess the role of governance in benefits realisation, value assurance and investment decision making</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of project and programme governance in shaping benefits realisation, value assurance and investment decision making; governance oversight of value definitions, assumptions and success criteria across portfolios and programmes; alignment between governance judgement and strategic investment priorities; use of governance mechanisms to test value claims, challenge optimism and authorise continued investment; tensions between short-term performance signals and long-term value outcomes; implications for disciplined investment decisions and organisational value stewardship.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Analyse how governance mechanisms support strategic alignment and prioritisation across project portfolios</p>
	<p><i>IC: Governance mechanisms supporting strategic alignment and prioritisation across project portfolios; role of portfolio-level governance in translating organisational strategy into investment priorities and decision rules; use of governance forums to arbitrate between competing initiatives and strategic objectives; alignment of prioritisation decisions with risk appetite, capacity and long-term value considerations; governance influence on consistency, coherence and transparency of portfolio decision making; implications for</i></p>

	<p><i>strategic focus, opportunity cost management and sustained organisational performance.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Critically evaluate how assurance and post-project review contribute to organisational learning and capability building</p>
	<p><i>IC: Contribution of assurance and post-project review to organisational learning and capability building; role of assurance in identifying systemic weaknesses, recurring risks and governance blind spots; post-project review as a mechanism for reflective evaluation of outcomes, decisions and assumptions; limitations of review processes in capturing complex causality and unintended effects; translation of evaluative insight into governance improvement, capability development and future decision quality; implications for continuous learning within project governance systems.</i></p>
	<p>4.4 Assess the contribution of effective project and programme governance to long-term organisational resilience</p>
	<p><i>IC: Contribution of effective project and programme governance to long-term organisational resilience; role of governance in sustaining strategic coherence, disciplined decision making and adaptive capacity over time; governance support for balancing risk exposure, innovation and organisational stability; influence of consistent oversight and learning on organisational confidence in managing uncertainty and disruption; contribution of governance credibility to stakeholder trust and institutional robustness; implications for the organisation’s ability to absorb shocks, recover from failure and sustain long-term value creation.</i></p>

4.2 Mandatory Unit 2: Strategic Project Selection and Portfolio Management

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Strategic Project Selection and Portfolio Management	60	20	7	H/651/9702
<p>In this unit, the learner will focus on how organisations select, prioritise and manage portfolios of projects in line with strategic objectives.</p> <p>Learners will examine decision-making processes for initiating, continuing or terminating projects under constraint.</p> <p>This unit emphasises value realisation, prioritisation and strategic trade-offs.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</p>					
<p>There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand strategic project selection as an organisational investment decision	1.1 Critically examine how organisational strategy and objectives shape project and programme selection
	<i>IC: Relationship between organisational strategy, strategic objectives and decisions to initiate projects and programmes; selection as an investment choice reflecting strategic intent, priorities and desired future positioning; influence of organisational purpose, competitive strategy and transformation agendas on what is selected or excluded; role of strategic coherence in determining relevance, timing and sequencing of initiatives; tensions between stated strategic objectives and implicit priorities revealed through selection decisions; implications of strategic clarity or ambiguity for portfolio composition and long-term value creation.</i>

	<p>1.2 Analyse the criteria, assumptions and evidence used to justify initiation decisions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Criteria, assumptions and evidence used to justify project and programme initiation decisions; strategic, financial and non-financial rationales underpinning initiation cases; role of assumptions about benefits, feasibility, timing and interdependencies in shaping initiation judgements; use and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative evidence in supporting investment decisions; limitations of ex ante justification in complex and uncertain environments; implications of assumption quality and evidential robustness for decision credibility and downstream portfolio performance.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Critically evaluate the influence of bias, politics and power on selection outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of cognitive bias, organisational politics and power relations on project and programme selection outcomes; effects of optimism bias, anchoring and framing on initiation judgements; role of sponsorship, senior influence and informal networks in shaping selection decisions; political negotiation and agenda setting in competitive investment environments; marginalisation of weaker voices or less visible value propositions in selection processes; implications for fairness, strategic coherence and the credibility of portfolio investment decisions.</i></p>
	<p>1.4 Assess how selection decisions shape portfolio coherence, strategic fit and long-term exposure to risk</p>
	<p><i>IC: Effects of project and programme selection decisions on portfolio coherence, strategic fit and aggregate risk exposure; contribution of selection patterns to thematic alignment, redundancy or fragmentation within portfolios; influence of cumulative selection decisions on concentration of strategic, financial and operational risk; interaction between selection choices and portfolio diversity, optionality and resilience; role of selection discipline in shaping long-term exposure to uncertainty and volatility; implications for sustained strategic alignment and portfolio-level risk stewardship.</i></p>
	<p>1.5 Critically assess information quality, evidence reliability and decision assurance in project selection, including risks of automation bias, data limitations and AI-supported decision environments.</p>

	<p><i>IC: Quality and reliability of information used in project and programme selection decisions; limitations of data completeness, comparability and timeliness in supporting investment judgement; risks associated with automation bias, model opacity and overconfidence in data-driven or AI-supported decision environments; challenges of validating assumptions, forecasts and proxy measures of value; role of decision assurance in testing evidence credibility and exposing uncertainty; implications for governance confidence, selection legitimacy and strategic investment outcomes.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand portfolio prioritisation and resource allocation under constraint</p>	<p>2.1 Critically analyse approaches to portfolio prioritisation under financial, capacity and capability constraints</p>
	<p><i>IC: Approaches to portfolio prioritisation under conditions of financial, capacity and capability constraint; prioritisation as a strategic allocation of limited organisational attention and resources; use of strategic intent, value contribution and risk exposure as prioritisation lenses; challenges of balancing short-term demands against long-term strategic commitments; influence of constraint severity on prioritisation discipline and decision thresholds; implications for portfolio focus, coherence and value realisation.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate strategic trade-offs between competing priorities within constrained portfolios</p>
	<p><i>IC: Strategic trade-offs between competing priorities within constrained project portfolios; balancing value creation, risk exposure, timing and organisational capacity in prioritisation decisions; negotiation between growth, transformation, compliance and operational imperatives; consequences of prioritising certain initiatives over others for strategic momentum and opportunity cost; role of senior judgement in resolving conflicting priorities under constraint; implications for portfolio coherence, strategic intent and long-term organisational positioning.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Critically assess how resource allocation decisions affect portfolio balance, risk concentration and adaptability</p>
<p><i>IC: Effects of resource allocation decisions on portfolio balance, concentration of risk and organisational adaptability; relationship between resource distribution and exposure to delivery, financial and capability risk; impact of uneven allocation on portfolio diversity, optionality and resilience; tensions between efficiency-driven allocation and the need for strategic flexibility; influence of allocation</i></p>	

	<p><i>rigidity on the organisation’s ability to respond to change; implications for sustained portfolio adaptability and risk management.</i></p>
	<p>2.4 Analyse the impacts of overcommitment and resource dilution on delivery capacity and value realisation</p>
	<p><i>IC: Impacts of overcommitment and resource dilution on organisational delivery capacity and value realisation; erosion of focus, attention and decision quality arising from excessive portfolio load; effects of fragmented resourcing on coordination, pace and execution risk; relationship between overextension and delayed benefits, cost escalation and value leakage; behavioural and cultural consequences of sustained overcommitment on performance and confidence; implications for portfolio credibility, strategic discipline and long-term value outcomes.</i></p>
<p>3. Understand decisions to initiate, continue or terminate projects and programmes</p>	<p>3.1 Critically evaluate continuation, pause and termination decisions across the project and programme life cycle</p>
	<p><i>IC: Continuation, pause and termination decisions across the project and programme life cycle as strategic investment judgements; criteria used to reassess relevance, viability and value as initiatives progress; governance considerations in authorising continuation, suspension or cessation of investment; role of timing and decision thresholds in influencing outcomes; tensions between persistence and adaptability in managing long-running initiatives; implications for value protection, resource stewardship and portfolio integrity.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Analyse the effects of escalation of commitment, sunk-cost dynamics and optimism bias on decision making</p>
	<p><i>IC: Effects of escalation of commitment, sunk-cost dynamics and optimism bias on project and programme decision making; psychological and organisational drivers that reinforce continued investment despite weakening value propositions; interaction between prior investment, reputational exposure and senior sponsorship in shaping persistence; distortion of evidence interpretation and risk assessment under commitment pressure; challenges of reversing decisions in politically or symbolically significant initiatives; implications for value erosion, delayed termination and portfolio-level opportunity cost.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically assess strategic, financial, operational and reputational implications of termination decisions</p>

	<p><i>IC: Strategic, financial, operational and reputational implications of project and programme termination decisions; effects of termination on strategic momentum, capability deployment and future investment options; financial consequences including write-offs, opportunity cost and reallocation of resources; operational impacts on capacity, morale and organisational focus; reputational considerations with internal and external stakeholders; implications for organisational credibility, learning and long-term portfolio confidence.</i></p>
	<p>3.4 Evaluate how adaptive portfolio decision making responds to emerging information, uncertainty and external change</p>
	<p><i>IC: Adaptive portfolio decision making in response to emerging information, uncertainty and external change; use of ongoing evaluation and sensemaking to reassess priorities and investment assumptions; responsiveness of portfolio decisions to shifts in strategy, market conditions, regulation or risk exposure; balance between stability and flexibility in adapting portfolio composition over time; challenges of maintaining coherence while responding to disruption; implications for portfolio resilience, strategic relevance and sustained value realisation.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to evaluate portfolio performance in relation to value realisation and strategic outcomes</p>	<p>4.1 Critically assess portfolio performance against intended value, benefits and strategic contribution</p>
	<p><i>IC: Assessment of portfolio performance against intended value, realised benefits and strategic contribution; evaluation of alignment between expected and actual outcomes at portfolio level; consideration of cumulative value delivery across projects and programmes rather than isolated performance; challenges of attributing benefits and strategic impact within complex portfolios; role of judgement in interpreting performance signals and value claims; implications for investment confidence, accountability and strategic oversight.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Analyse alignment between portfolio composition and evolving organisational strategy</p>
	<p><i>IC: Alignment between portfolio composition and evolving organisational strategy; assessment of how the mix, scale and timing of initiatives reflect current and emerging strategic priorities; responsiveness of portfolio structure to strategic shifts, environmental change and organisational learning; identification of misalignment, redundancy or strategic drift within portfolios; role of portfolio review</i></p>

	<p><i>in maintaining strategic relevance over time; implications for sustained strategic coherence and effective use of investment capacity.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Critically evaluate unintended consequences, opportunity costs and displacement effects arising from portfolio decisions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Unintended consequences arising from portfolio decisions affecting organisational focus, capability development and strategic direction; opportunity costs associated with foregone initiatives, delayed investment or constrained strategic options; displacement effects where prioritised projects crowd out alternative sources of value or innovation; cumulative impacts of portfolio choices on capacity, risk exposure and organisational attention; challenges of anticipating second-order and system-wide effects in complex portfolios; implications for strategic judgement, value optimisation and long-term portfolio effectiveness.</i></p>
	<p>4.4 Assess how portfolio-level learning informs future selection, prioritisation and investment decision making</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of portfolio-level learning in informing future project and programme selection, prioritisation and investment decision making; synthesis of performance evidence, realised benefits and decision outcomes across portfolios; use of learning to refine selection criteria, prioritisation logic and investment assumptions; integration of evaluative insight into governance judgement and strategic oversight; challenges of capturing and applying learning in dynamic portfolio environments; implications for improved decision quality, adaptive investment strategy and sustained value realisation.</i></p>

4.3 Mandatory Unit 3: Risk, Uncertainty and Decision-Making in Projects

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Risk, Uncertainty and Decision-Making in Projects	60	20	7	J/651/9703
<p>In this unit, the learner will examine the nature of risk and uncertainty in projects operating within complex and dynamic environments.</p> <p>Learners will analyse how behavioural, organisational and systemic risks affect project outcomes.</p> <p>This unit focuses on judgement, resilience and adaptive decision making.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</p>					
<p>There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the nature of risk and uncertainty in complex project environments	1.1 Critically examine the distinction between risk, uncertainty, ambiguity and emergence in project contexts
	<i>IC: Distinction between risk, uncertainty, ambiguity and emergence as conceptually different conditions affecting project decision making; risk as exposure to known or estimable outcomes versus uncertainty arising from indeterminacy and incomplete knowledge; ambiguity resulting from multiple or contested interpretations of information; emergence as unpredictable outcomes arising from interaction within complex systems; implications of conflating these concepts for judgement, control and accountability in projects; relevance of conceptual clarity for senior decision making in complex project environments.</i>

	<p>1.2 Analyse how complexity, interdependence and change shape uncertainty within projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of complexity, interdependence and change on the nature and intensity of uncertainty within projects; effects of multiple interacting components, stakeholders and objectives on predictability and control; role of interdependencies across technical, organisational and external systems in amplifying uncertainty; impact of ongoing change in scope, context or assumptions on decision stability; challenges of anticipating outcomes in dynamic project environments; implications for judgement, coordination and risk awareness in complex projects.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Critically evaluate the limitations of linear and predictive assumptions in understanding project risk</p>
	<p><i>IC: Limitations of linear and predictive assumptions in understanding and managing project risk; inadequacy of cause-and-effect models in complex, adaptive project environments; overreliance on forecasting, baseline stability and controllability assumptions; failure of linear logic to account for interaction effects, feedback and emergent behaviour; risks of false confidence and misplaced assurance arising from predictive approaches; implications for senior judgement, risk interpretation and decision credibility in uncertain project contexts.</i></p>
	<p>1.4 Assess how differing interpretations of uncertainty influence project decision making</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of differing interpretations of uncertainty on project decision making; variation in how uncertainty is framed, tolerated or prioritised by senior leaders and governance bodies; effects of risk perception, confidence and experience on decision thresholds and responses; consequences of inconsistent or contested interpretations for alignment, escalation and coherence; role of shared understanding in supporting defensible and timely decisions; implications for accountability, decision quality and project direction in uncertain environments.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand behavioural and organisational influences on project</p>	<p>2.1 Critically analyse the influence of cognitive bias, heuristics and emotion on project judgement</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of cognitive bias, heuristics and emotion on judgement in uncertain project environments; effects of optimism bias, confirmation bias, anchoring and availability heuristics on risk</i></p>

decision making under uncertainty	<p><i>assessment and decision framing; role of emotion, stress and affective responses in shaping confidence, caution or risk-taking behaviour; interaction between individual judgement and organisational expectations in reinforcing bias; challenges of recognising and counteracting bias under time pressure and ambiguity; implications for decision quality, accountability and exposure to risk in projects.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate how organisational culture, incentives and norms shape risk perception and response</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of organisational culture, incentives and norms on how risk is perceived, interpreted and acted upon in projects; effects of performance pressures, reward structures and success narratives on risk tolerance and disclosure; role of cultural attitudes toward failure, learning and accountability in shaping responses to uncertainty; impact of informal norms on escalation, challenge and voice; alignment or misalignment between stated values and enacted behaviours in risk-related decisions; implications for consistency, transparency and resilience in project decision making.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Analyse the impact of power, confidence and group dynamics on decision quality in projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Impact of power, confidence and group dynamics on decision quality in project contexts; influence of hierarchical authority, expertise claims and senior confidence on whose views prevail in decision forums; effects of groupthink, conformity and deference on critical challenge and dissent; role of psychological safety in enabling questioning, escalation and alternative perspectives; interaction between power asymmetries and information flow in shaping judgement; implications for robustness, inclusivity and reliability of project decisions under uncertainty.</i></p>
<p>2.4 Critically assess how behavioural factors contribute to misjudgement, delay or overconfidence under uncertainty</p>	

	<p><i>IC: Contribution of behavioural factors to misjudgement, delay and overconfidence in conditions of uncertainty; interaction between bias, emotion and organisational pressure in distorting judgement over time; tendency to defer decisions, reinterpret evidence or normalise warning signals under ambiguity; reinforcement of overconfidence through success narratives, authority signals and prior commitment; cumulative effects of behavioural dynamics on delayed intervention and value erosion; implications for timely decision making, risk exposure and accountability in complex projects.</i></p>
<p>3. Understand systemic and emergent risks in complex project systems</p>	<p>3.1 Critically evaluate how interactions between technical, social and organisational elements generate emergent risk</p>
	<p><i>IC: Emergent risk arising from interactions between technical, social and organisational elements within complex project systems; interplay between technologies, processes, people and structures in producing non-linear and unpredictable outcomes; role of coordination, communication and dependency patterns in amplifying or dampening risk; generation of unintended effects through coupled decisions and actions across system components; challenges of attributing cause within emergent risk conditions; implications for senior awareness, oversight and system-level risk judgement in projects.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Analyse how feedback loops, non-linearity and unintended consequences affect project outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Effects of feedback loops, non-linearity and unintended consequences on project outcomes; reinforcing and balancing feedback processes that amplify or dampen project performance over time; non-linear relationships between actions, responses and outcomes in complex project systems; emergence of unintended consequences from local decisions with system-wide effects; difficulty of predicting outcome trajectories in the presence of delayed or indirect feedback; implications for interpretation of performance signals, intervention timing and outcome attribution in projects.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically assess the limitations of reductionist approaches to addressing systemic project risk</p>
<p><i>IC: Limitations of reductionist approaches to addressing systemic project risk; tendency to decompose complex problems into isolated components at the expense of system-wide understanding; failure of siloed analysis to capture interdependencies, interactions and emergent behaviour; risks of oversimplification in attributing causality</i></p>	

	<p><i>and responsibility; misalignment between component-level controls and system-level outcomes; implications for ineffective interventions, false assurance and persistent risk in complex project environments.</i></p>
	<p>3.4 Evaluate how systemic risk challenges traditional assumptions of control and predictability in projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Challenges posed by systemic risk to traditional assumptions of control, predictability and managerial authority in projects; erosion of confidence in linear planning, centralised control and deterministic forecasting in complex systems; limits of command-and-control approaches under conditions of emergence and interdependence; need for senior acceptance of partial control, bounded predictability and ongoing uncertainty; implications for governance expectations, accountability narratives and decision legitimacy; consequences for how project success, failure and responsibility are interpreted in complex environments.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to assess resilience and adaptive decision making in projects facing uncertainty and change</p>	<p>4.1 Critically assess the concept of resilience in projects operating within uncertain environments</p>
	<p><i>IC: Concept of resilience in projects operating within uncertain and dynamic environments; resilience as the capacity to absorb disruption, adapt to change and sustain purpose rather than merely resist risk; distinction between resilience at project, programme and organisational levels; relationship between resilience, redundancy, flexibility and adaptive capacity; limits of resilience in the face of systemic shocks and cumulative strain; implications for how senior leaders and governance bodies evaluate robustness and long-term project viability.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Analyse how adaptive decision-making responds to disruption, change and emerging information</p>
	<p><i>IC: Adaptive decision-making in response to disruption, change and emerging information within project environments; use of iterative judgement, reassessment and sensemaking to adjust direction under uncertainty; responsiveness to weak signals, evolving evidence and shifting contextual conditions; balance between timely action and reflective pause in adaptive responses; challenges of maintaining coherence and accountability while adapting decisions; implications for decision quality, risk exposure and sustained project relevance in dynamic contexts.</i></p>

	<p>4.3 Critically evaluate tensions between flexibility, commitment and coherence in adaptive project responses</p>
	<p><i>IC: Tensions between flexibility, commitment and coherence in adaptive project responses; risks of excessive flexibility undermining strategic intent, stability and stakeholder confidence; risks of over-commitment constraining adaptation and locking projects into weakening trajectories; challenges of maintaining coherence across objectives, decisions and actions while adapting to change; trade-offs between responsiveness and consistency in uncertain environments; role of senior judgement in balancing adaptability with responsibility and control; implications for project credibility, alignment and long-term outcomes.</i></p>
	<p>4.4 Assess how learning, reflection and sensemaking support sustained project viability</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of learning, reflection and sensemaking in supporting sustained project viability under conditions of uncertainty and change; use of reflective processes to interpret experience, reframe assumptions and update judgement; contribution of sensemaking to shared understanding, alignment and coordinated response in ambiguous situations; integration of learning from signals, outcomes and unintended effects into ongoing decision making; challenges of embedding learning in fast-moving or politically constrained project environments; implications for adaptability, resilience and long-term project sustainability.</i></p>

4.4 Mandatory Unit 4: Leadership, Stakeholders and Organisational Dynamics in Projects

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
4	Leadership, Stakeholders and Organisational Dynamics in Projects	60	20	7	K/651/9704
<p>In this unit, the learner will explore the human and political dimensions of project management.</p> <p>Learners will examine leadership without formal authority, stakeholder influence, conflict and negotiation.</p> <p>This unit focuses on power, communication and organisational dynamics that shape project success in complex environments.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</p>					
<p>There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Be able to critically evaluate leadership without formal authority in project and programme environments	<p>1.1 Critically examine the nature of leadership in projects where authority is distributed, temporary or contested</p> <p><i>IC: Nature of leadership in project and programme environments characterised by distributed, temporary or contested authority; distinction between formal authority, positional power and leadership influence; conditions under which leadership emerges independently of hierarchical role; impact of temporary structures and shifting accountabilities on leadership legitimacy; challenges of exercising leadership in matrixed, cross-boundary or multi-organisational project contexts; implications for responsibility, influence and coordination in complex project environments.</i></p>

	<p>1.2 Analyse how influence, credibility and expertise contribute to leadership effectiveness without formal power</p> <p><i>IC: Contribution of influence, credibility and expertise to leadership effectiveness in the absence of formal authority; role of professional competence, experience and judgement in establishing leader credibility; use of persuasion, sensemaking and relationship-building to shape direction and commitment; importance of trust and perceived legitimacy in sustaining influence across stakeholder groups; fragility of influence when credibility is contested or misaligned with organisational interests; implications for leadership effectiveness, decision influence and project cohesion in complex environments.</i></p> <p>1.3 Critically evaluate tensions between positional authority and informal leadership in project environments</p> <p><i>IC: Tensions between positional authority and informal leadership within project environments; conflicts arising when formal roles lack influence or informal leaders lack accountability; challenges of overlapping authority claims and ambiguous decision rights; impact of misalignment between hierarchical power and emergent leadership on coordination and trust; risks of undermining legitimacy, role clarity and decision coherence; implications for leadership effectiveness, accountability and project outcomes in complex organisational settings.</i></p> <p>1.4 Assess the implications of leading without formal authority for accountability, legitimacy and decision influence</p> <p><i>IC: Implications of leading without formal authority for accountability, legitimacy and decision influence in project and programme environments; challenges of assigning responsibility when influence is decoupled from formal role and authority; sources of legitimacy derived from expertise, trust and stakeholder recognition rather than position; constraints on decision influence where accountability exceeds formal power; risks of informal leadership operating without clear mandate or protection; implications for governance alignment, ethical responsibility and defensible decision making in complex projects.</i></p>
2. Understand stakeholder power,	2.1 Critically analyse how stakeholder power, interest and legitimacy shape project priorities and outcomes

<p>influence and legitimacy in complex project contexts</p>	<p><i>IC: Influence of stakeholder power, interest and legitimacy on the setting of project priorities and determination of outcomes; variation in stakeholder salience over time and across project phases; interaction between formal authority, resource control and social legitimacy in shaping influence; effects of dominant stakeholders on agenda setting, scope definition and success criteria; marginalisation of less powerful or less visible stakeholder interests; implications for decision balance, ethical judgement and project outcome credibility in complex project contexts.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate how formal and informal stakeholder networks influence decision making within projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of formal and informal stakeholder networks on decision making within project environments; role of organisational hierarchies, reporting lines and governance forums in structuring formal influence; impact of informal relationships, alliances and information flows on shaping judgement and outcomes; interaction between network position and access to resources, knowledge or authority; opacity and uneven visibility of informal influence in complex projects; implications for transparency, accountability and the reliability of project decisions.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Critically assess how competing stakeholder interests generate political complexity and tension</p>
	<p><i>IC: Political complexity and tension arising from competing stakeholder interests within projects; divergence between stakeholder goals, values and success criteria; use of power, negotiation and coalition-building to advance competing agendas; escalation of conflict where interests are incompatible or resources are constrained; strategic behaviour to protect influence, status or control; implications for decision stability, legitimacy and the management of political risk in complex project environments.</i></p>
	<p>2.4 Analyse the implications of stakeholder alignment and misalignment for project stability and progress</p> <p><i>IC: Implications of stakeholder alignment and misalignment for project stability and progress; effects of alignment on shared purpose, commitment and coordinated action; risks of misalignment for delay, conflict escalation and fragmentation of effort; impact of shifting stakeholder positions on momentum and decision continuity; challenges of maintaining alignment in dynamic and politically</i></p>

	<p><i>contested environments; implications for project predictability, resilience and sustained progress in complex contexts.</i></p>
<p>3. Understand conflict, negotiation and communication as political processes within projects</p>	<p>3.1 Critically examine sources of conflict arising from power, interests and resource competition in projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Sources of conflict arising from power asymmetries, divergent interests and competition for scarce resources within project environments; conflict generated by ambiguity over authority, roles and decision rights; tension between individual, functional and organisational priorities in project settings; influence of structural constraints and dependency relationships on conflict intensity; escalation of conflict where power is unevenly distributed or contested; implications for decision quality, collaboration and project stability in politically complex contexts.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Analyse negotiation as a process of managing competing agendas, influence and trade-offs</p>
	<p><i>IC: Negotiation as a process for managing competing agendas, influence and trade-offs within project environments; negotiation as an exercise of power, persuasion and exchange rather than purely rational agreement seeking; role of interests, priorities and perceived leverage in shaping negotiation positions; dynamics of compromise, concession and coalition-building under constraint; influence of context, timing and stakeholder relationships on negotiation outcomes; implications for decision legitimacy, resource allocation and project momentum in politically charged settings.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically evaluate the role of communication in shaping meaning, alignment and resistance within projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of communication in shaping meaning, alignment and resistance within project environments; communication as a political process that frames narratives, priorities and interpretations of change; influence of language, symbolism and messaging on stakeholder sensemaking and commitment; use of communication to legitimise decisions, manage expectations or suppress dissent; risks of miscommunication, ambiguity and selective disclosure in complex projects; implications for trust, alignment, resistance and the sustainability of project outcomes.</i></p>
<p>3.4 Assess how conflict and negotiation processes influence trust, cooperation and long-term project relationships</p>	

	<p><i>IC: Influence of conflict and negotiation processes on trust, cooperation and long-term project relationships; effects of how conflict is surfaced, managed or suppressed on perceptions of fairness and respect; role of negotiation behaviours in reinforcing or eroding relational trust between stakeholders; cumulative impact of repeated conflict episodes on willingness to cooperate and share information; legacy effects of adversarial or collaborative negotiation on future working relationships; implications for relational capital, project continuity and organisational reputation in complex project environments.</i></p>
<p>4. Understand how organisational dynamics shape leadership effectiveness and project outcomes</p>	<p>4.1 Critically analyse how organisational culture, structure and history influence leadership behaviour in projects</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of organisational culture, structure and history on leadership behaviour within project environments; effects of cultural values, norms and assumptions on acceptable leadership styles and decision making; impact of organisational structure, hierarchy and governance arrangements on leadership discretion and influence; role of organisational memory and past project experience in shaping expectations and behaviour; path dependencies that reinforce established practices or resistance to change; implications for leadership effectiveness, adaptability and project outcomes in complex organisational contexts.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Evaluate how informal norms, routines and power structures shape project interactions and decisions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of informal norms, routines and power structures on project interactions and decision making; role of unwritten rules, habitual practices and tacit expectations in shaping behaviour and influence; effects of informal authority and power networks on whose views are heard and acted upon; reinforcement of established routines that privilege certain actors or ways of working; divergence between formal structures and enacted practices in project settings; implications for transparency, equity and the reliability of project decisions over time.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Critically assess how organisational politics influence project momentum, legitimacy and success</p>
<p><i>IC: Influence of organisational politics on project momentum, legitimacy and success; political sponsorship and protection shaping project visibility, priority and continuity; use of political capital to</i></p>	

	<p><i>accelerate, delay or redirect project decisions; effects of political contestation on perceived legitimacy and stakeholder support; risks of projects becoming symbolic, politicised or disconnected from strategic value; implications for sustained momentum, credibility of outcomes and long-term project success in complex organisations.</i></p>
	<p>4.4 Assess the impact of organisational dynamics on leadership effectiveness and project outcomes over time</p>
	<p><i>IC: Impact of organisational dynamics on leadership effectiveness and project outcomes over time; cumulative effects of culture, power relations and informal practices on leadership influence and credibility; evolution of leadership roles and authority as organisational contexts shift; interaction between changing dynamics and sustained project performance or decline; path-dependent effects that reinforce success patterns or entrench failure trajectories; implications for long-term leadership effectiveness, project sustainability and organisational learning in complex environments.</i></p>
	<p>4.5 Evaluate how inclusive leadership and psychological safety influence stakeholder engagement, decision quality, conflict resolution and project outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of inclusive leadership and psychological safety on stakeholder engagement, decision quality, conflict resolution and project outcomes; creation of environments where diverse perspectives, challenge and dissent are encouraged and valued; effects of psychological safety on information sharing, error reporting and early escalation of concerns; role of inclusive practices in mitigating power asymmetries and marginalisation in decision processes; impact of inclusive leadership on constructive conflict management and collaborative problem solving; implications for decision robustness, stakeholder trust and sustained project performance in complex organisational contexts.</i></p>

4.5 Mandatory Unit 5: Innovation, Change and Transformation Delivery

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
5	Innovation, Change and Transformation Delivery	60	20	7	L/651/9705
<p>In this unit, the learner will examine projects as vehicles for innovation and organisational change.</p> <p>Learners will explore how projects enable transformation, the challenges of organisational readiness and change absorption, and the risks of change fatigue.</p> <p>This unit focuses on sustaining outcomes beyond project closure.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</p>					
<p>There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the role of projects in enabling innovation and organisational transformation	<p>1.1 Critically examine how projects function as mechanisms for innovation and organisational change</p> <p><i>IC: Role of projects as structured mechanisms for introducing innovation and enabling organisational change; projects as temporary interventions designed to disrupt existing practices, systems or capabilities; relationship between project-based work and experimentation, learning and novelty; use of projects to mobilise resources, attention and authority around change objectives; limitations of projects as vehicles for deep or sustained transformation; implications for how organisations design, position and evaluate project-enabled innovation and change.</i></p>

	<p>1.2 Analyse the relationship between project-based initiatives and broader organisational transformation agendas</p>
	<p><i>IC: Relationship between project-based initiatives and broader organisational transformation agendas; alignment between individual projects, programmes and overarching strategic change objectives; role of projects in translating abstract transformation intent into concrete interventions; risks of fragmentation where project activity is disconnected from wider transformation narratives; interaction between project sequencing, interdependencies and cumulative transformational impact; implications for coherence, strategic direction and the realisation of organisation-wide change.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Critically evaluate tensions between innovation objectives and organisational stability</p>
	<p><i>IC: Tensions between innovation objectives and the need for organisational stability within transformation initiatives; disruption of established processes, roles and controls in pursuit of innovation; risks to operational continuity, performance and assurance arising from rapid or radical change; organisational responses that prioritise stability at the expense of innovation momentum; trade-offs between experimentation, risk taking and reliability; implications for leadership judgement, sequencing of change and sustainable transformation outcomes.</i></p>
	<p>1.4 Assess the implications of using projects as primary vehicles for transformation within complex organisations</p>
	<p><i>IC: Implications of using projects as primary vehicles for organisational transformation within complex environments; reliance on temporary structures to deliver sustained change across enduring systems and cultures; challenges of coordination, ownership and accountability once projects conclude; risks of treating transformation as discrete initiatives rather than ongoing organisational processes; cumulative strain created by multiple project-led change efforts; implications for transformation coherence, long-term capability development and organisational resilience.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand organisational readiness, capacity and change absorption in</p>	<p>2.1 Critically analyse factors influencing organisational readiness for innovation and change</p>
	<p><i>IC: Factors influencing organisational readiness for innovation and change within transformation initiatives; alignment between strategic</i></p>

<p>transformation initiatives</p>	<p><i>intent, leadership commitment and organisational understanding of change purpose; availability of skills, capabilities and enabling conditions to support change adoption; role of organisational culture, trust and prior change experience in shaping readiness; influence of timing, change history and external pressures on receptiveness to innovation; implications for the feasibility, pace and sustainability of project-enabled transformation.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate how organisational capacity, capability and resource constraints affect change absorption</p>
	<p><i>IC: Effects of organisational capacity, capability and resource constraints on the absorption of change arising from transformation initiatives; limits imposed by competing priorities, workload saturation and finite managerial attention; influence of skills gaps, capability maturity and learning capacity on effective adoption of change; interaction between resource scarcity and resistance, delay or superficial compliance; risks of change implementation outpacing organisational ability to absorb and stabilise new ways of working; implications for pacing, sequencing and sustainability of project-led transformation.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Analyse the role of organisational culture, systems and routines in enabling or constraining transformation</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of organisational culture, systems and routines in enabling or constraining transformation; influence of shared values, beliefs and norms on acceptance or rejection of change; alignment or misalignment between formal systems, processes and transformation objectives; impact of entrenched routines and habitual practices on flexibility and adaptation; reinforcement of existing power structures and behaviours through legacy systems; implications for depth, consistency and durability of project-enabled transformation.</i></p>
	<p>2.4 Critically assess how misalignment between project ambition and organisational readiness affects transformation outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Effects of misalignment between project ambition and organisational readiness on transformation outcomes; risks of over-scoped or accelerated initiatives exceeding absorptive capacity; emergence of resistance, fatigue or superficial compliance where readiness is overstated; distortion of performance signals when ambition masks underlying capability gaps; erosion of trust and credibility following repeated delivery shortfalls; implications for</i></p>

	<i>transformation effectiveness, sustainability and organisational confidence in project-led change.</i>
3. Understand risks associated with innovation, change fatigue and transformation overload	3.1 Critically evaluate risks arising from multiple, overlapping or sustained change initiatives
	<i>IC: Risks arising from multiple, overlapping or sustained change initiatives within organisations; cumulative strain on capacity, attention and leadership bandwidth created by concurrent projects; increased coordination complexity and interdependency risk across change efforts; dilution of strategic focus and prioritisation clarity; heightened exposure to inconsistency, contradiction or initiative fatigue; implications for delivery effectiveness, employee engagement and overall transformation coherence.</i>
	3.2 Analyse how change fatigue and resistance develop within project-driven transformation contexts
	<i>IC: Development of change fatigue and resistance within project-driven transformation contexts; accumulation of cognitive, emotional and operational load arising from repeated or poorly sequenced change; erosion of motivation and commitment where change benefits are unclear or unrealised; normalisation of scepticism and disengagement following prior change failure or overload; interaction between fatigue, resistance behaviours and declining trust in leadership or change narratives; implications for adoption, performance and the credibility of future transformation initiatives.</i>
	3.3 Critically assess the impact of transformation overload on performance, wellbeing and organisational resilience
	<i>IC: Impact of transformation overload on organisational performance, wellbeing and resilience; degradation of operational effectiveness and decision quality under sustained change pressure; effects of overload on employee wellbeing, stress, burnout and psychological safety; weakening of organisational resilience through depletion of adaptive capacity and recovery time; reinforcement of short-term coping behaviours at the expense of long-term capability building; implications for sustained performance, workforce stability and the organisation's ability to absorb future change.</i>
3.4 Evaluate how organisations recognise, prioritise and respond to risks associated with excessive or poorly sequenced change	

	<p><i>IC: How organisations recognise, prioritise and respond to risks associated with excessive or poorly sequenced change; use of oversight, sensing mechanisms and leadership judgement to identify cumulative change strain; prioritisation of change initiatives in response to capacity limits, fatigue indicators and strategic risk exposure; responses including deferral, reprioritisation or re-scoping of initiatives to protect organisational stability; challenges of acknowledging overload in politically charged or performance-driven environments; implications for responsible change leadership, organisational resilience and sustainable transformation outcomes.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to critically assess how transformation outcomes are sustained beyond project closure</p>	<p>4.1 Critically assess the conditions required to embed innovation and change outcomes within organisational practice</p>
	<p><i>IC: Conditions required to embed innovation and change outcomes within organisational practice beyond project closure; alignment between transformed processes, roles and behaviours and ongoing organisational strategy and operating models; ownership and accountability for sustaining change once project structures dissolve; integration of new practices into everyday systems, routines and performance expectations; reinforcement of change through leadership commitment and organisational support mechanisms; implications for durability, consistency and long-term value realisation of project-enabled transformation.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Analyse how governance, leadership and organisational systems support the sustainability of transformation outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of governance, leadership and organisational systems in supporting the sustainability of transformation outcomes; governance oversight in maintaining strategic intent, accountability and value focus beyond project closure; leadership behaviours that reinforce commitment, role modelling and prioritisation of transformed ways of working; alignment of organisational systems, structures and incentives with sustained change objectives; interaction between formal controls and informal practices in stabilising transformation outcomes; implications for continuity, legitimacy and long-term embedding of project-enabled change.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Critically evaluate the role of learning, reinforcement and adaptation in sustaining change over time</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of learning, reinforcement and adaptation in sustaining organisational change over time; use of reflective learning to assess</i></p>

	<p><i>what has been adopted, adapted or resisted following project closure; reinforcement mechanisms that stabilise new behaviours, practices and norms within everyday operations; adaptation of change outcomes in response to evolving context, feedback and unintended effects; risks of rigidly preserving project outputs without ongoing learning and adjustment; implications for long-term change viability, organisational capability development and sustained transformation impact.</i></p>
	<p>4.4 Assess the long-term organisational consequences of failing to sustain project-enabled transformation</p>
	<p><i>IC: Long-term organisational consequences of failing to sustain project-enabled transformation; erosion of expected value, benefits and strategic impact following project closure; normalisation of change failure and cynicism toward future initiatives; loss of credibility in leadership, governance and transformation capability; waste of investment through reversion to prior practices or partial adoption; weakening of organisational learning and adaptive capacity over time; implications for resilience, competitive positioning and confidence in project-led change as a strategic mechanism.</i></p>

4.6 Mandatory Unit 6: Applied Project Research, Evaluation and Impact

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
6	Applied Project Research, Evaluation and Impact	60	20	7	M/651/9706

In this unit, the learner will demonstrate their ability to undertake applied research and evaluation to assess the impact, effectiveness and outcomes of projects and programmes within complex organisational environments.

Learners will examine how research-informed evaluation supports strategic decision-making, accountability and long-term value realisation in project and programme contexts.

The unit explores key principles of project-focussed research design, including the formulation of research questions, critical engagement with academic and professional literature, and consideration of appropriate qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Learners will consider how data can be used to assess project performance, benefits realisation, unintended consequences and organisational learning and examine issues relating to data quality, ethics and validity.

Emphasis is placed on applying research and evaluation methods to real or realistic project environments. Learners will analyse findings to evaluate project impact, draw evidence-based conclusions and develop justified recommendations to inform future project, programme or portfolio decisions.

This unit positions research as a core skill, supporting effective project and programme management.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Assessment for this unit requires learners to produce an applied research and evaluation assignment focused on a project or programme operating within a complex organisational context.

The assessment should evidence the learner's ability to design and conduct evaluative enquiry that informs understanding of project impact, effectiveness and value realisation.

Learners will demonstrate research and evaluation capability through the development of clear evaluative aims or questions, critical engagement with relevant academic and

professional literature, and justified selection of appropriate research and evaluation methods. The assessment should include analysis and interpretation of data relating to project outcomes, benefits, risks or unintended consequences.

Learners are expected to evaluate findings to assess project or programme impact and organisational learning, and to develop evidence-based conclusions or recommendations to inform future project, programme or portfolio decision making. Reflection on ethical considerations, methodological limitations and the implications of evaluation findings for project governance and practice should also be included.

Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the role of applied research and evaluation as a strategic capability in project and programme contexts	1.1 Critically examine the purposes for which applied research and evaluation are used to support project and programme decision making
	<i>IC: Purposes of applied research and evaluation in supporting informed decision making across project, programme and portfolio contexts; use of evaluation to test assumptions, challenge value claims and inform continuation, adaptation or termination decisions; role of research-informed insight in reducing uncertainty and strengthening strategic judgement; application of evaluation to assess effectiveness, impact and unintended consequences of project interventions; distinction between evaluative enquiry for learning versus justification or assurance; implications for decision quality, accountability and responsible investment in complex organisational environments.</i>
	1.2 Critically analyse how research-informed evaluation supports accountability, governance and strategic oversight
	<i>IC: Contribution of research-informed evaluation to accountability, governance and strategic oversight in project and programme contexts; use of evaluation evidence to support transparent justification of decisions, resource use and outcomes; role of evaluative insight in strengthening governance challenge, assurance and scrutiny; integration of evaluation findings into senior oversight, escalation and investment review processes; limitations of evaluation</i>

	<p><i>as a substitute for judgement or accountability; implications for legitimacy, trust and defensible decision making in complex organisational environments.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Evaluate the role of applied research in assessing project impact, effectiveness and value realisation</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of applied research in assessing project impact, effectiveness and value realisation; use of research to examine whether intended outcomes and benefits have been achieved; assessment of causal contribution versus correlation in evaluating project effects; evaluation of value realisation across financial, operational, strategic and societal dimensions; identification of unintended or distributional impacts arising from project interventions; implications for evidence-based judgement, learning and future investment decisions.</i></p>
	<p>1.4 Critically examine limitations and challenges associated with evaluating projects and programmes in complex organisational contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Limitations and challenges associated with evaluating projects and programmes in complex organisational contexts; difficulty of isolating causal impact within interconnected systems and concurrent initiatives; constraints arising from data availability, quality and access; influence of organisational politics, power and vested interests on evaluative scope and interpretation; temporal challenges in capturing long-term outcomes and value realisation; ethical considerations and trade-offs in evaluative design; implications for confidence, credibility and use of evaluation findings in strategic decision making.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand how evaluative research aims, questions and literature are developed to investigate project impact and effectiveness</p>	<p>2.1 Critically examine how evaluative research aims or questions are formulated in relation to project or programme impact</p>
	<p><i>IC: Formulation of evaluative research aims or questions in relation to project or programme impact and effectiveness; framing aims to address value, outcomes, contribution and learning rather than operational performance alone; translation of strategic decision needs and stakeholder concerns into evaluative enquiry; scope and focus of aims in relation to scale, context and complexity of projects and programmes; challenges of balancing specificity with relevance in evaluative questions; implications for the usefulness, rigour and decision value of applied project evaluation.</i></p>

	<p>2.2 Analyse the role of academic and professional literature in shaping evaluative focus and conceptual framing</p>
	<p><i>IC: Role of academic and professional literature in shaping evaluative focus and conceptual framing of project and programme research; use of literature to inform definitions of impact, effectiveness and value; contribution of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies to framing assumptions and evaluative lenses; critical engagement with competing viewpoints, models and evidence bases; limitations of applying generic literature to context-specific project environments; implications for conceptual rigour, interpretive depth and credibility of evaluative enquiry.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Evaluate the suitability of qualitative and quantitative approaches for different types of project and programme evaluation</p>
	<p><i>IC: Suitability of qualitative and quantitative approaches for different types of project and programme evaluation; strengths and limitations of qualitative approaches in exploring experience, meaning, context and unintended effects; strengths and limitations of quantitative approaches in measuring outcomes, patterns and comparative performance; appropriateness of different approaches in relation to evaluative aims, data availability and complexity of context; challenges of attribution, generalisability and interpretation across methodological approaches; implications for methodological judgement, evidence credibility and decision relevance in applied project evaluation.</i></p>
	<p>2.4 Critically consider how alignment between research aims, literature and methodological approach influences evaluation quality</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of alignment between research aims, literature and methodological approach on the quality of applied project and programme evaluation; coherence between evaluative questions, conceptual framing and evidence generation in producing credible insight; risks of misalignment leading to superficial findings, weak inference or irrelevant conclusions; importance of methodological fit with evaluative purpose, context and complexity; role of alignment in supporting transparency, rigour and defensible interpretation; implications for the reliability, usefulness and decision value of evaluation findings.</i></p>

<p>3. Be able to design and conduct applied research and evaluation within a project or programme context</p>	<p>3.1 Develop a coherent applied research and evaluation design aligned to stated aims or questions</p>
	<p><i>IC: Development of a coherent applied research and evaluation design aligned to stated aims or questions; articulation of evaluative focus, scope and boundaries in relation to project or programme context; integration of conceptual framing, evidence requirements and practical constraints into a unified design; consideration of feasibility, access and ethical responsibility in shaping evaluative design choices; balance between rigour and practicality in applied project research; implications for the credibility, relevance and usability of evaluation outcomes.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Justify the selection of research and evaluation methods with reference to ethical considerations, data quality and validity</p>
	<p><i>IC: Justification of research and evaluation method selection with reference to ethical considerations, data quality and validity; assessment of ethical risks relating to consent, confidentiality, power and potential harm in project evaluation contexts; evaluation of data sources for reliability, completeness and relevance to evaluative aims; consideration of validity, bias and limitations associated with chosen methods; trade-offs between methodological robustness and practical constraints in applied settings; implications for the trustworthiness, integrity and acceptance of evaluation findings.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Implement appropriate data collection procedures in line with the stated research design and ethical requirements</p>
	<p><i>IC: Implementation of data collection procedures consistent with the stated research and evaluation design and ethical requirements; alignment of data collection activity with evaluative aims, methodological choices and conceptual framing; adherence to ethical principles relating to consent, confidentiality, transparency and responsible data handling; challenges of accessing reliable and relevant data within live project and organisational environments; influence of organisational context, power dynamics and participation on data quality; implications for the integrity, completeness and interpretive value of evaluation evidence.</i></p>
<p>3.4 Critically examine how methodological choices and limitations affect the credibility and reliability of evaluation findings</p>	

	<p><i>IC: Effects of methodological choices and limitations on the credibility and reliability of applied project and programme evaluation findings; influence of design decisions, data sources and analytical approaches on strength of inference and confidence in conclusions; impact of sampling, access constraints and measurement limitations on evidential robustness; risks of bias, partial visibility and over-interpretation in complex organisational contexts; transparency in acknowledging limitations as a component of evaluative integrity; implications for the defensibility, use and strategic influence of evaluation findings.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to analyse and synthesise research findings to inform project, programme or portfolio decision making</p>	<p>4.1 Analyse research findings in relation to stated research aims, questions and project context</p>
	<p><i>IC: Analysis of research findings in relation to stated research aims, questions and the specific project or programme context; interpretation of findings with reference to evaluative purpose, scope and underlying assumptions; consideration of contextual factors influencing outcomes and observed effects; differentiation between evidence of impact, association and contextual influence; challenges of drawing conclusions from partial, contested or complex data; implications for accurate interpretation and responsible use of evaluation evidence in decision making.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Synthesise evidence from data analysis and relevant literature to develop evaluative insights</p>
	<p><i>IC: Synthesis of evidence from data analysis and relevant academic and professional literature to develop evaluative insights; integration of empirical findings with conceptual frameworks and existing evidence bases; identification of patterns, convergence and divergence between observed outcomes and established knowledge; use of synthesis to move beyond description toward explanation and interpretation; challenges of reconciling conflicting evidence or perspectives in complex evaluations; implications for the depth, coherence and strategic relevance of evaluative insight.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Develop evidence-based conclusions or recommendations to inform future project, programme or portfolio decisions</p>
<p><i>IC: Development of evidence-based conclusions or recommendations to inform future project, programme or portfolio decisions; translation of evaluative findings into judgements about effectiveness, value and improvement opportunities; consideration of feasibility, risk and</i></p>	

	<p><i>strategic alignment when framing recommendations; differentiation between recommendations for adaptation, continuation, scaling or termination; acknowledgement of uncertainty and limitations in shaping proportionate conclusions; implications for informed decision making, learning and responsible investment in complex project environments.</i></p>
	<p>4.4 Critically evaluate the implications of evaluation findings for governance, organisational learning and future project practice</p>
	<p><i>IC: Implications of evaluation findings for governance, organisational learning and future project practice; use of evaluative insight to inform governance judgement, assurance and accountability processes; contribution of findings to organisational learning, capability development and improvement of decision frameworks; influence of evaluation outcomes on future project design, prioritisation and delivery assumptions; challenges of translating evaluative insight into sustained practice change within political or constrained environments; implications for strengthening evidence-informed governance and long-term project effectiveness.</i></p>

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