



Qualification Specification

GA Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Leadership and Management (610/6989/9)

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

This GA qualification is delivered exclusively in partnership with an approved GA centre, Global Silver Light.

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Section 1: Qualification Overview

1.1 Introduction: About this Qualification

Gatehouse Awards (GA) qualifications are designed to give candidates 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 Strategic Leadership and Management (610/6989/9).

This document provides centre staff, candidates 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 Strategic Leadership and Management	610/6989/9	02/02/2026	Feb 2031

1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This qualification is designed to enhance the learner's career prospects and provide the underpinning knowledge and skills for successful leadership roles in strategic management positions across diverse organisational contexts.

The qualification covers both theoretical frameworks and practical competencies needed to lead organisations effectively in complex and dynamic environments.

The aim of the GA Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Leadership and Management qualification is to prepare learners to demonstrate the highest standards of strategic thinking, ethical leadership, and organisational effectiveness whilst driving sustainable performance and positive change.

Learners will adhere to the principles of ethical leadership, evidence-based decision-making, and stakeholder engagement at all times, with competencies underpinned by contemporary leadership theory, strategic analysis, and reflective practice.

The qualification provides an understanding of strategic planning, organisational transformation, financial management, innovation, and the legal, ethical, and governance requirements related to leading organisations in the 21st century.

The qualification will equip learners with the skills to lead strategically, manage complex change initiatives, and develop high-performing teams and organisational cultures. The qualification will also encourage critical engagement and support progression to senior leadership roles in the workplace and/or onto full Master's degree level study.

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 Strategic Leadership and Management (610/6989/9)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time
1. Strategic Marketing Management	J/651/9136	7	20	50	150
2. Strategic People Management	K/651/9137	7	20	50	150
3. Financial Decision Making	L/651/9138	7	20	50	150
4. Governance and the Global Business Environment	M/651/9139	7	20	50	150
5. Sustainable Strategic Management	Y/651/9140	7	20	50	150
6. Advanced Business Research Methods	A/651/9141	7	20	50	150
			Total Credits 120	Total GLH* 240	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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 Strategic Leadership and Management qualification, learners must achieve all 6 mandatory units and achieve 120 credits.

Learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all the 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 intended for aspiring and established leaders who wish to develop their strategic leadership capabilities and advance into senior management positions. It is suitable for managers seeking progression to executive roles, professionals transitioning into strategic leadership responsibilities, and senior leaders who wish to formalise and enhance their strategic management expertise.

The qualification is designed for individuals working across public, private, and third sector organisations who are responsible for, or aspiring to roles involving, strategic planning, organisational development, and leading transformational change.

It is also an ideal qualification for learners who wish to advance onto full Master's level programmes in business, management, or related disciplines.

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, candidates 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 candidate's previous experience and achievements meet the standard requirements of a GA qualification, prior to the candidate 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 candidate must have satisfied before they are assessed as eligible to be awarded the qualification.

Where there is evidence that the candidate'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 candidate 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 management qualifications. The qualification builds upon foundational knowledge in business, management, or related disciplines acquired at undergraduate level.

Upon successful completion, learners may progress to:

- Full Master's degree programmes (MBA, MSc in Management, MA in Leadership, or related postgraduate awards)
- Senior leadership and executive management positions within their organisations
- Professional membership at senior practitioner or chartered levels with relevant professional bodies
- 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 Teaching 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

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 candidate 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 candidate's work, moderation of assessment, talking to candidates and reviewing documentation and systems, the GA EQA will provide the centre with full support, advice and guidance as necessary.

2.10 Registering Candidates and Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)

Candidates 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 candidate's identity.

Candidates 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 candidates' 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 Internal Moderator have confirmed achievement. Such claims for certification are subject to successful external moderation (EQA).

Following the External Moderator'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.

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 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 candidates 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 candidate's performance and ensure that the evidence submitted by the candidate meets the requirements of the qualification.

All teachers and assessors must be occupationally competent in strategic leadership and 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 strategic leadership, senior 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 strategic leadership, senior 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 strategic leadership, senior 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 and learning materials for this qualification, the centre must:

- ensure 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 candidates.

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 strategic leadership 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 candidates 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 candidates 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.

Candidates 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 Unit 1: Strategic Marketing Management

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Strategic Marketing Management	50	20	7	J/651/9136
<p>In this unit the learner will critically evaluate advanced strategic marketing management principles within complex and dynamic organisational contexts.</p> <p>Learners will develop the ability to analyse markets, evaluate strategic marketing options, and design evidence-based marketing strategies that support organisational objectives, competitive positioning and long-term sustainability.</p> <p>The unit emphasises strategic integration, critical analysis and decision making at senior management level, requiring learners to synthesise theory, research and practice to address contemporary marketing challenge.</p>					
Assessment Instructions and Guidance					
<p>Learners may be assessed through assignments, strategic marketing analysis reports, case-based evaluations and the development of a strategic marketing plan.</p> <p>Evidence may be based on real organisations, published data, sector reports or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with theory, application to organisational contexts and the ability to justify strategic marketing decisions using appropriate evidence and analysis.</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 marketing concepts and their role in organisational strategy	1.1 Critically evaluate the role of strategic marketing in achieving organisational objectives
	<i>IC: Strategic marketing as a driver of organisational value and competitive advantage; distinction between operational marketing and strategic marketing; alignment of marketing strategy with organisational mission, vision and corporate strategy; contribution of marketing to value creation, brand equity and stakeholder engagement; marketing as a cross-functional and integrative organisational activity; relationship between marketing strategy and financial, people and operational strategies; strategic marketing decision making in complex and competitive environments; ethical and responsible marketing practice at strategic level.</i>
	1.2 Synthesise key strategic marketing theories, models and frameworks
	<i>IC: Classical and contemporary strategic marketing theories; market orientation and customer value theory; segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) at strategic level; competitive strategy models including Porter, resource-based view and dynamic capabilities; strategic brand management frameworks; relationship marketing and stakeholder theory; digital and platform-based marketing models; synthesis of multiple frameworks to inform strategic marketing decisions; critical evaluation of theoretical strengths, limitations and contextual relevance.</i>
	1.3 Critically assess the contribution of strategic marketing to organisational competitiveness and long-term sustainability
	<i>IC: Strategic marketing as a source of sustainable competitive advantage; differentiation, cost leadership and focus strategies; brand strategy and reputation management; customer experience and lifetime value; innovation and market-driven growth; sustainability and ethical considerations in strategic marketing; environmental, social and governance (ESG) influences on marketing strategy, and their implications for market positioning and brand value.</i>
2. Understand how market and	2.1 Critically analyse strategic organisational conditions influencing strategic marketing decisions

environmental factors influence strategic marketing decisions	IC: Organisational resources and capabilities relevant to marketing strategy; marketing capabilities and competencies; organisational culture, structure and leadership influence on marketing effectiveness; integration between marketing and other functional areas; internal data, analytics and marketing intelligence; brand assets and intellectual capital; evaluating strategic fit between organisational capability and marketing ambition.
	2.2 Critically evaluate external market and environmental factors affecting strategic marketing management
	IC: Macro-environmental analysis including political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors; market structure and competitive dynamics; consumer behaviour trends and changing expectations; globalisation and international market considerations; digital disruption and technological change; regulatory, ethical and sustainability pressures; analysing opportunities, threats and strategic uncertainty in marketing environments.
	2.3 Evaluate how organisations adapt strategic marketing decisions in response to complex and dynamic environments
	IC: Strategic agility and adaptive marketing; responding to volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA); scenario planning and market foresight; managing risk and uncertainty in marketing strategy; balancing short-term responsiveness with long-term strategic positioning; leadership judgement and strategic decision making in marketing contexts.
3. Be able to apply advanced analytical approaches to evaluate strategic marketing performance	3.1 Critically interpret marketing performance measures to evaluate strategic effectiveness
	IC: Strategic marketing metrics and KPIs; financial and non-financial performance measures; brand equity, market share, customer lifetime value and retention; digital analytics and data-driven decision making; interpreting dashboards and performance reports; limitations of marketing metrics; linking marketing performance to organisational strategy and outcomes.
	3.2 Utilise analytical tools to assess market position and competitive performance
	IC: Market and competitive analysis tools including competitor benchmarking, strategic group analysis and value curve analysis; customer and market segmentation analysis; portfolio analysis

	<i>models; evaluating competitive positioning and strategic alignment; integrating qualitative and quantitative data; synthesising analysis to inform strategic marketing decisions.</i>
	3.3 Critically evaluate the effectiveness of strategic marketing communications and stakeholder engagement
	<i>IC: Strategic marketing communications frameworks; integrated marketing communications at strategic level; stakeholder identification and engagement; digital and omnichannel communication strategies; brand narrative and reputation management; evaluating communication effectiveness using evidence-based measures; alignment between communication strategy and organisational objectives.</i>
4. Be able to formulate strategic marketing plans that support organisational objectives	4.1 Develop a comprehensive strategic marketing plan aligned with organisational objectives and market conditions
	<i>IC: Strategic marketing planning processes; setting strategic marketing objectives; market and capability analysis; strategic option evaluation; segmentation, targeting and positioning decisions; resource allocation and budgeting; risk assessment and mitigation; alignment with organisational strategy, ethics and sustainability goals; development of coherent, evidence-based strategic marketing plans.</i>
	4.2 Justify strategic marketing choices using theory, research and organisational evidence
	<i>IC: Evaluation of strategic alternatives; evidence-based decision making; justification of positioning, branding and growth strategies; application of theoretical frameworks to practice; consideration of feasibility, acceptability and suitability; integration of stakeholder expectations; ethical and sustainable marketing considerations; critical reflection on strategic trade-offs.</i>
	4.3 Critically evaluate potential risks and implementation challenges associated with strategic marketing plans
	<i>IC: Strategic and operational marketing risks; market uncertainty and competitive response; reputational and ethical risks; digital and data-related risks; resource and capability constraints; governance and accountability in marketing implementation; monitoring, review and performance control mechanisms; adaptive management and continuous improvement.</i>

4.2 Unit 2: Strategic People Management

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Strategic People Management	50	20	7	K/651/9137
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate how strategic people management contributes to organisational capability, resilience and long-term performance.</p> <p>Learners will explore how leadership decisions, workforce systems and organisational culture shape the effective management of people in complex and evolving contexts.</p> <p>The unit develops the ability to analyse workforce challenges, evaluate people-related risks and opportunities, and design strategic people management approaches</p>					
Assessment Instructions and Guidance					
<p>Learners may be assessed through assignments, analytical reports, applied evaluations and the development of a strategic people management plan.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from case studies, publicly available organisational information, sector reports or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with theory, evidence-based analysis and strategic judgement.</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 how strategic people management creates organisational capability and value	1.1 Critically evaluate people as a source of organisational capability and strategic advantage
	<i>IC: Human capital, social capital and relational capital as strategic resources; workforce knowledge, skills, behaviours and networks as</i>

	sources of value creation; strategic distinction between people management as an administrative function and as a capability-building system; contribution of people capability to innovation, productivity and competitive advantage; alignment between organisational purpose, leadership intent and people strategy; evaluating how people-related decisions shape organisational performance and adaptability across different sectors and organisational forms.
	1.2 Synthesise theoretical perspectives that explain how people management influences organisational effectiveness
	IC: Human capital theory; resource-based view and dynamic capabilities; high-performance work systems (HPWS); organisational behaviour and motivation theories; learning organisation theory; psychological contract; systems thinking in people management; synthesising theoretical perspectives to explain relationships between leadership, people practices, organisational culture and performance outcomes; critical evaluation of theoretical limitations and contextual relevance.
	1.3 Critically assess how people management contributes to organisational sustainability and long-term resilience
2. Understand how leadership decision-making and governance structures shape strategic people management	IC: Workforce sustainability and capability renewal; retention and talent continuity; wellbeing, engagement and burnout as strategic risks; succession planning and leadership pipeline development; diversity, equity and inclusion as enablers of organisational resilience; ethical people management and social responsibility; balancing performance demands with long-term workforce health and organisational legitimacy.
	2.1 Critically analyse the influence of leadership and governance on people management strategy
	IC: Leadership accountability for people outcomes; board and senior management oversight of workforce strategy; governance frameworks relating to people, culture and ethics; alignment between leadership values, decision making and people practices; role of ethical leadership in shaping trust, psychological safety and organisational culture; evaluating how governance failures or strengths influence workforce outcomes and organisational performance.

	2.2 Evaluate how organisational context shapes strategic people management choices
	<i>IC: Impact of organisational size, structure and lifecycle stage on people strategy; sector-specific workforce challenges across private, public and third sectors; professional standards and regulatory expectations; resource constraints and strategic trade-offs; organisational purpose and stakeholder expectations; cultural, institutional and national contexts influencing people management priorities and approaches.</i>
	2.3 Critically assess the impact of external forces on strategic workforce decisions
	<i>IC: Labour market dynamics and skills availability; demographic change and workforce diversity; technological change, automation and digital transformation; employment legislation and regulatory compliance; societal expectations of work, flexibility and wellbeing; strategic implications of global uncertainty, disruption and changing employment models.</i>
3. Be able to evaluate workforce capability, risk and performance using strategic analysis	3.1 Critically analyse workforce capability and capacity using qualitative and quantitative evidence
	<i>IC: Workforce profiling and segmentation; skills audits and capability mapping; analysis of workforce capacity and demand; interpretation of workforce data and people analytics; identifying capability gaps and development priorities; limitations, bias and ethical considerations in the use of people data; triangulation of qualitative insight and quantitative metrics to inform strategic judgement.</i>
	3.2 Critically evaluate people-related risks and their strategic implications
	<i>IC: Capability, succession and leadership continuity risks; engagement, wellbeing and burnout risks; turnover and retention risk; compliance, ethical and reputational risk; cultural misalignment and change resistance; interdependencies between people risks and organisational strategy; prioritisation and mitigation of people risk at strategic level.</i>
	3.3 Evaluate the effectiveness of people systems in supporting organisational performance
	<i>IC: Recruitment and selection systems; learning, development and capability-building approaches; performance management and reward frameworks; employee voice and engagement mechanisms;</i>

	<i>coherence and alignment between people systems and organisational strategy; unintended consequences of people policies; evaluating effectiveness using evidence and performance indicators.</i>
4. Be able to design strategic people management responses to organisational challenges	4.1 Design a strategic people management approach to address identified organisational challenges
	<i>IC: Diagnosis of people-related strategic challenges; prioritisation of interventions; workforce planning and capability development; culture, engagement and inclusion initiatives; alignment with organisational strategy, values and governance; ethical and sustainable design considerations.</i>
	4.2 Critically justify strategic people management proposals using theory and evidence
	<i>IC: Evaluation of alternative strategic responses; evidence-based justification drawing on theory, research and data; feasibility, acceptability and sustainability considerations; impact on stakeholders; balancing organisational constraints and long-term workforce outcomes.</i>
	4.3 Evaluate implementation challenges and propose mechanisms for monitoring and review
	<i>IC: Leadership capability and ownership; resource and capacity constraints; cultural resistance and change fatigue; ethical risks and unintended consequences; monitoring frameworks and performance indicators; feedback, learning and continuous improvement mechanisms.</i>

4.3 Unit 3: Financial Decision Making

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Financial Decision Making	50	20	7	L/651/9138

In this unit, the learner will demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate financial information and apply advanced financial decision-making techniques to support strategic management and organisational sustainability.

Learners will explore how financial analysis, investment appraisal, risk assessment and financial governance inform strategic choices in complex and uncertain environments.

The unit emphasises critical interpretation rather than technical accounting competence, enabling learners to analyse financial performance, evaluate strategic financial options and justify evidence-based decisions.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through assignments, analytical financial reports, case-based evaluations and the development of strategic financial recommendations.

Evidence may be based on publicly available financial statements, sector benchmarks, organisational case studies or realistic simulated data.

Assessment must demonstrate critical analysis, strategic judgement and the ability to communicate financial implications to non-financial stakeholders.

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 strategic role of	1.1 Critically evaluate the role of financial decision making in achieving organisational objectives

financial decision making in organisational performance	<i>IC: Finance as a strategic enabler rather than a control function; relationship between financial decision making and organisational purpose, strategy and value creation; short-term financial performance versus long-term value generation; alignment between financial priorities and marketing, people and operational strategies; financial trade-offs and opportunity cost; ethical and responsible financial decision making; role of financial judgement in complex, ambiguous and uncertain strategic environments.</i>
	1.2 Synthesise theoretical perspectives that underpin strategic financial decision making
	<i>IC: Shareholder value theory and stakeholder theory; agency theory and governance implications; value-based management; risk-return trade-off; capital structure theory; behavioural finance and bounded rationality; limitations of purely rational financial models; synthesis of theoretical perspectives to explain real-world financial behaviour and strategic financial choices in organisations.</i>
	1.3 Critically assess the contribution of financial management to organisational sustainability and resilience
2. Understand how financial information and context influence strategic decision making	<i>IC: Financial sustainability and long-term viability; liquidity, solvency and cash flow resilience; investment in capability, innovation and growth; balancing profitability, growth and financial risk; financial governance, accountability and transparency; ethical finance and ESG considerations; role of finance in organisational resilience during economic uncertainty and disruption.</i>
	2.1 Critically analyse how financial information is used to support strategic decision making
	<i>IC: Purpose, structure and limitations of financial statements; interpretation of income statements, balance sheets and cash flow statements for strategic insight; use of financial ratios and trend analysis; reliability, comparability and bias in financial data; accounting judgements and assumptions; use of financial information for forecasting and strategic planning; communicating financial insight to non-financial stakeholders.</i>
	2.2 Evaluate how internal organisational factors influence financial decision making
	<i>IC: Organisational objectives and strategic priorities; leadership attitudes to risk, investment and growth; governance structures and</i>

	<i>financial control mechanisms; budgeting, forecasting and capital allocation processes; organisational culture and financial behaviour; integration of financial planning with wider strategic decision making.</i>
	2.3 Critically assess the impact of external factors on strategic financial decisions
	<i>IC: Macroeconomic conditions and business cycles; interest rates, inflation and currency volatility; regulatory and taxation environments; investor and stakeholder expectations; global financial markets and capital availability; sustainability, ESG and ethical pressures; financial uncertainty, scenario planning and stress testing.</i>
3. Be able to apply financial analysis techniques to evaluate organisational performance and strategic options	3.1 Critically evaluate financial performance measures to inform strategic judgement
	<i>IC: Profitability, liquidity, efficiency and solvency ratios; trend and comparative analysis; benchmarking against sector and industry norms; interpretation of financial health and performance over time; limitations of ratio analysis and contextual influences; triangulating financial and non-financial indicators to support strategic evaluation.</i>
	3.2 Synthesise investment appraisal and evaluation techniques to assess strategic options
	<i>IC: Capital investment decision making; application of net present value (NPV), internal rate of return (IRR), payback and discounted cash flow techniques; strengths, limitations and assumptions of appraisal methods; sensitivity, scenario and break-even analysis; evaluating strategic investments under uncertainty; consideration of non-financial and strategic factors in investment decisions.</i>
	3.3 Critically evaluate financial risk and uncertainty associated with strategic decisions
	<i>IC: Types of financial risk including market, operational, credit and liquidity risk; identification and assessment of financial risk exposure; risk appetite and tolerance; trade-offs between risk and return; use of scenario modelling and stress testing; governance and oversight of financial risk; integration of risk management into strategic decision making.</i>
4. Be able to formulate evidence-based	4.1 Develop strategic financial recommendations that support strategic objectives

financial recommendations to support strategic objectives	<i>IC: Diagnosis of financial challenges and opportunities; integration of financial analysis with strategic objectives; evaluation and prioritisation of financial options; resource allocation and capital planning; alignment with organisational values, governance and sustainability goals; consideration of uncertainty and long-term implications.</i>
	4.2 Justify financial decisions using theory, evidence and strategic reasoning
	<i>IC: Evaluation of alternative financial strategies; evidence-based justification drawing on theory, analysis and contextual data; feasibility, acceptability and risk considerations; impact on stakeholders and organisational performance; ethical implications of financial decision making; articulation of trade-offs and assumptions.</i>
	4.3 Evaluate implementation challenges to propose mechanisms for monitoring financial performance and risk
	<i>IC: Financial governance and accountability structures; budgeting, control and reporting mechanisms; performance monitoring and variance analysis; risk monitoring and mitigation strategies; review and adaptation of financial decisions; learning from financial outcomes to inform future strategic planning.</i>

4.4 Unit 4: Governance and the Global Business Environment

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
4	Governance and the Global Business Environment	50	20	7	M/651/9139
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate how governance frameworks and the global business environment shape, constrain and enable strategic decision making in organisations.</p> <p>Learners will examine how regulatory systems, institutional structures, ethical expectations and global forces influence organisational strategy, risk exposure and legitimacy.</p> <p>The unit adopts a strategic and systems-level perspective, focusing on governance and regulation as external constraints and enablers rather than leadership behaviour or people management practice.</p> <p>Learners will develop the ability to analyse complex global environments, evaluate governance arrangements across jurisdictions, and assess their strategic implications for organisations operating in uncertain and interconnected contexts.</p>					
Assessment Instructions and Guidance					
<p>Learners may be assessed through analytical reports, evaluative assignments and case-based analysis.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from real organisations, published sources, sector-level data or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical evaluation, synthesis of theory and strategic judgement appropriate to Level 7.</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 how governance frameworks shape strategic decision making in organisations	1.1 Critically evaluate the purpose and role of governance in organisational strategy
	<i>IC: Purpose of governance as oversight, accountability and control; governance as a strategic constraint and enabler; relationship between governance, risk and strategic choice; governance beyond compliance; strategic implications of weak or ineffective governance; governance and organisational legitimacy; tension between strategic flexibility and governance control.</i>
	1.2 Analyse governance structures and accountability mechanisms across different organisational contexts
	<i>IC: Boards and senior oversight structures; roles of shareholders, regulators and stakeholders; public, private and third-sector governance arrangements; differences between unitary and dual board structures; accountability, transparency and reporting requirements; governance in multinational and cross-border organisations; strategic implications of governance complexity.</i>
	1.3 Critically assess the impact of governance failures on organisational performance and legitimacy
2. Understand how the global business environment influences organisational strategy	<i>Governance failure and systemic risk; ethical lapses, regulatory breaches and strategic collapse; reputational damage and loss of stakeholder trust; governance failure as a strategic risk; learning from governance failures; implications for long-term organisational sustainability and resilience.</i>
	2.1 Critically analyse global political, economic and institutional forces affecting organisations
	<i>IC: Political and economic systems; global power dynamics; international institutions and regulatory bodies; trade policy, protectionism and geopolitical risk; macroeconomic volatility; institutional environments and strategic uncertainty; implications for organisational strategy and risk management.</i>
	2.2 Evaluate the strategic implications of operating across different legal and regulatory environments

	<i>IC: Variation in legal systems and regulatory regimes; compliance across jurisdictions; regulatory arbitrage and strategic risk; international standards and harmonisation; data protection, competition law and cross-border regulation; balancing compliance with strategic agility.</i>
	2.3 Critically assess how globalisation and deglobalisation trends reshape strategic decision making
	<i>IC: Global integration versus localisation; supply chain complexity and fragility; reshoring, nearshoring and strategic decoupling; global risk exposure; impact of global crises and systemic shocks; long-term strategic implications of changing globalisation patterns.</i>
3. Understand ethical, social and institutional pressures as strategic constraints	3.1 Critically evaluate ethical and social expectations placed on organisations at global level
	<i>IC: Ethical expectations as external pressures; societal norms, public trust and legitimacy; corporate responsibility beyond compliance; ethical risk as a strategic consideration; stakeholder scrutiny and activism; ethical dilemmas arising from global operations.</i>
	3.2 Analyse the strategic implications of environmental, social and governance frameworks
	<i>IC: Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks as a strategic constraint and signalling mechanism; regulatory and investor-driven ESG expectations; ESG reporting frameworks; trade-offs between performance, compliance and legitimacy; greenwashing risk; strategic consequences of ESG misalignment.</i>
	3.3 Assess how organisations respond strategically to ethical and institutional pressures
	<i>IC: Strategic responses to ethical scrutiny; compliance-led versus values-led approaches; risk mitigation strategies; institutional conformity and strategic differentiation; long-term implications for organisational credibility and strategic freedom.</i>
4. Be able to apply governance and global environment analysis to strategic evaluation	4.1 Apply governance and global environment analysis to evaluate strategic options
	<i>IC: Integrating governance and global analysis into strategic evaluation; identifying constraints and enablers; assessing feasibility under regulatory and institutional conditions; strategic option screening; risk-adjusted decision making.</i>

	4.2 Justify strategic judgements using governance, regulatory and global context analysis
	<i>IC: Evidence-based justification of strategic choices; balancing compliance, risk and opportunity; integrating governance considerations with financial and market analysis; trade-offs between growth, control and legitimacy; strategic reasoning under uncertainty.</i>
	4.3 Evaluate implementation challenges and monitoring requirements arising from governance and global complexity
	<i>IC: Implementation risk in complex governance environments; monitoring regulatory change; compliance systems and controls; strategic agility under constraint; governance oversight and review mechanisms; learning and adaptation in dynamic global contexts.</i>

4.5 Unit 5: Sustainable Strategic Management

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
5	Sustainable Strategic Management	50	20	7	Y/651/9140
<p>In this unit, the learner will demonstrate their ability to critically evaluate and formulate sustainable strategic approaches that enable organisations to achieve long-term success in complex, uncertain and dynamic environments.</p> <p>Learners will explore how strategic management integrates economic performance, ethical responsibility, environmental sustainability and stakeholder value creation.</p> <p>The unit emphasises systems thinking, strategic judgement and long-term orientation, requiring learners to synthesise insights from leadership, people management and financial decision making to design strategies that support organisational resilience, legitimacy and sustainable value creation.</p>					
Assessment Instructions and Guidance					
<p>Learners may be assessed through assignments, strategic analysis reports, integrative case-based evaluations and the development of a sustainable strategic management proposal.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from real organisations, publicly available data, sector reports or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate advanced critical analysis, synthesis of multiple perspectives and strategic reasoning at Level 7.</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 principles and purpose of sustainable strategic management	1.1 Critically evaluate the purpose of strategy in enabling long-term organisational sustainability and value creation
	<i>IC: Strategy as a long-term, integrative and future-oriented process; distinction between short-term performance optimisation and sustainable value creation; economic, social and environmental dimensions of organisational success; stakeholder versus shareholder perspectives; legitimacy, reputation and trust as strategic assets; alignment between organisational purpose, mission, values and strategy; analysis of purely profit-driven strategic models.</i>
	1.2 Synthesise theories and frameworks underpinning sustainable strategic management
	<i>IC: Classical and contemporary strategy theories; systems thinking and complexity theory; stakeholder theory; resource-based view and dynamic capabilities; triple bottom line and shared value frameworks; corporate sustainability and ESG models; critique of theoretical assumptions and contextual applicability; synthesising multiple frameworks to interpret complex strategic challenges.</i>
2. Understand how internal and external forces shape sustainable strategic choices	1.3 Critically assess how sustainability considerations reshape strategic decision making at an organisational level
	<i>IC: Integration of sustainability into corporate and business strategy; environmental, social and governance considerations in strategic choices; ethical leadership and responsible governance as strategic constraints and enablers of organisational legitimacy; long-term risk and opportunity identification; balancing competing stakeholder interests; strategic trade-offs between growth, impact and resilience.</i>
	2.1 Critically analyse internal organisational factors that influence sustainable strategy formulation
	<i>IC: Leadership values and strategic intent; organisational culture and ethical climate; governance structures and accountability; resource allocation and capability constraints; integration of people, financial and operational strategies; organisational learning and adaptive capacity; internal alignment and strategic coherence.</i>

	2.2 Evaluate external environmental drivers of sustainable strategic management
	<i>IC: Political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental forces; climate change and environmental risk; regulatory and policy frameworks; societal expectations and legitimacy pressures; globalisation and supply chain complexity; technological disruption; stakeholder activism and reputational considerations.</i>
	2.3 Critically assess how organisations can respond strategically to complexity, uncertainty and systemic risk
	<i>IC: Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA); scenario planning and strategic foresight; resilience and adaptive strategy; managing systemic and interconnected risks; balancing flexibility with strategic direction; long-term planning under uncertainty.</i>
3. Be able to evaluate strategic performance and sustainability outcomes	3.1 Critically evaluate strategic performance using financial and non-financial indicators
	<i>IC: Limitations of traditional financial performance measures; integration of financial and non-financial metrics; sustainability KPIs; ESG reporting frameworks; balanced scorecard and strategic dashboards; assessing alignment between strategy, performance and impact; interpreting trade-offs and tensions between outcomes.</i>
	3.2 Analyse how strategic decisions affect organisational resilience and long-term viability
	<i>IC: Resilience as a strategic capability; investment in people, innovation and systems; financial and operational robustness; reputational capital; risk exposure and mitigation; learning from failure and disruption; evaluating long-term consequences of strategic choices.</i>
	3.3 Critically assess potential ethical implications and unintended consequences of strategic decisions
	<i>IC: Ethical risk and moral hazard; stakeholder harm and benefit; environmental and social externalities; governance failures and accountability; ethical dilemmas in strategic trade-offs; long-term societal impact; evaluating strategy through ethical and values-based lenses.</i>

4. Be able to develop sustainable strategic management approaches	4.1 Develop a plan for a sustainable strategic management approach
	<i>IC: Strategic diagnosis and problem framing; integration of sustainability into strategic objectives; alignment of people, financial and operational strategies; stakeholder engagement and prioritisation; governance and accountability mechanisms; articulation of long-term strategic direction.</i>
	4.2 Justify sustainable strategic choices using theory, evidence and systems-level reasoning
	<i>IC: Evaluation of alternative strategic pathways; evidence-based justification; systems thinking and interdependencies; feasibility, acceptability and long-term impact; balancing competing priorities; ethical and sustainability considerations; strategic trade-offs and assumptions.</i>
	4.3 Evaluate implementation challenges and propose mechanisms for monitoring, review and adaptation
	<i>IC: Implementation risk and complexity; cultural resistance and leadership capability; governance and control systems; performance and impact monitoring; feedback loops and strategic learning; continuous review and adaptive strategy; responding to emerging risks and opportunities.</i>

4.6 Unit 6: Advanced Business Research Methods

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
6	Advanced Business Research Methods	50	20	7	A/651/9141
<p>In this unit, the learner will demonstrate their ability to design, evaluate and justify advanced business research.</p> <p>Learners will critically examine research philosophies, methodological approaches and ethical considerations, and apply these to the development of a robust, feasible research proposal aligned to strategic business and management contexts.</p> <p>The unit focuses on research as a strategic capability, enabling learners to frame complex research problems, evaluate appropriate research designs and justify methodological choices in conditions of uncertainty.</p> <p>This unit prepares learners for independent research activity, including dissertation or thesis-level study, without requiring the completion of primary research.</p>					
Assessment Instructions and Guidance					
<p>Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments and the development of a research proposal or equivalent scholarly submission.</p> <p>Evidence may draw on academic literature, published research, secondary datasets or realistic simulated research scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical evaluation, methodological justification and academic judgement appropriate to Level 7.</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 research in business and management decision making	1.1 Critically evaluate the purpose of research in strategic business and management contexts
	<i>IC: Research as a source of evidence for strategic decision making; distinction between academic research, consultancy research and managerial inquiry; research as a means of reducing uncertainty; limits of research in complex organisational environments; relationship between research, theory and practice; research-informed judgement at senior and strategic levels.</i>
	1.2 Analyse different types of business and management research and their applications
	<i>IC: Exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research; theory-building and theory-testing research; applied versus conceptual research; qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches; strengths, limitations and appropriateness of different research types in business contexts.</i>
2. Understand research philosophies, approaches and design choices	2.1 Critically evaluate research philosophies and their implications for business research
	<i>IC: Ontology and epistemology in business research; positivist, interpretivist and critical perspectives; pragmatism and pluralism; implications of philosophical stance for research questions, data collection and analysis; limitations and critiques of dominant paradigms; aligning philosophy with research purpose.</i>
	2.2 Analyse research approaches and strategies used in business and management research
	<i>IC: Deductive, inductive and abductive approaches; case study, survey, archival, longitudinal and comparative research strategies; use of secondary data and documentary sources; digital and data-driven research approaches; methodological coherence and alignment.</i>
	2.3 Critically assess the strengths, limitations and risks associated with different research designs
	<i>IC: Validity, reliability and credibility; bias and researcher positionality; access, feasibility and ethical risk; generalisability and transferability;</i>

	managing uncertainty and complexity in research design; evaluating methodological trade-offs.
3. Be able to evaluate data sources, methods and analytical techniques	3.1 Critically evaluate data sources used in business and management research
	<i>IC: Primary versus secondary data; use of published datasets, organisational data and public sources; data quality, completeness and bias; ethical and legal considerations in data use; data access and governance; limitations of secondary data.</i>
	3.2 Analyse qualitative and quantitative data collection methods
	<i>IC: Interviews, focus groups, surveys and observational methods; documentary and content analysis; sampling strategies; strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods; digital data collection; methodological rigor and ethical considerations.</i>
	3.3 Evaluate analytical techniques used to interpret business research data
	<i>IC: Thematic and content analysis; statistical analysis and interpretation; use of analytical software; integrating qualitative and quantitative findings; limits of analysis and interpretation; ensuring transparency and robustness in analytical claims.</i>
4. Be able to design and justify a business research proposal	4.1 Formulate a coherent and researchable business or management research question
	<i>IC: Identifying research problems from theory and practice; narrowing and scoping research questions; alignment with strategic business themes; feasibility and ethical considerations; contribution to knowledge or practice.</i>
	4.2 Develop a structured research proposal aligned to research aims and methodology
	<i>IC: Research aims and objectives; literature positioning and conceptual framing; justification of research approach and methods; data sources and analysis plan; ethical considerations; project planning and timescales.</i>
	4.3 Justify methodological and ethical choices within the research proposal

	<p><i>IC: Justification of philosophical stance and research design; evaluation of alternative methodological options; ethical approval considerations; risk management and limitations; demonstrating reflexivity and academic judgement; readiness for independent research.</i></p>
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