



Qualification Specification

GA Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners (610/5255/3)

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

Section 1: Qualifications 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 specification covers the GA Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners qualification (610/5255/3).

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 is 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 an existing qualification.

Upon award of this qualification, practitioners are entitled to use the post-nominals *Level 4 Cert C.Hydro*.

1.2 Institute of Registered Veterinary Animal Physiotherapists (IRVAP)



The GA Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for MSK Practitioners provides an excellent route for Veterinary Physiotherapists (Level 6 and above) and Manual Therapists (Level 5 and above) to add to their qualifications portfolio in canine hydrotherapy to be able to safely deliver current canine hydrotherapy. It also offers flexibility for MSK Practitioners to progress their hydrotherapy career pathway from a Level 3 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy. MSK Practitioners are provided with different options, including one to achieve the full Level 4 Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy in stages.

As the largest Professional Association in the UK for animal therapists, the Institute of Registered Veterinary Animal Physiotherapist diligently upholds a commitment on raising standards in

professionalism, canine hydrotherapy and clinical skills competencies. This is to ensure that each dog and owner receive the best therapeutic treatment available.

IRVAP - ICH fosters an inclusive and proactive forum, providing free CPD, multiple resources, mentoring, an annual Conference and ongoing representation for its highly valued members.

Operating under IRVAP, the ICH establishes benchmarks for clinical excellence in canine hydrotherapy and endorses courses that ensure therapists undergo rigorous training and adhere to the exacting standards set by the ICH requirements. This new professional qualification has been designed to meet current level 4 industry standards and advance practice in this sector, ensuring safe and effective practice is consistently delivered to dogs and the public.

- Institute of Registered Veterinary Animal Physiotherapist (IRVAP) Council.

1.3 Endorsed by the National Association of Registered Canine Hydrotherapists (NARCH)



This qualification is endorsed by the National Association of Registered Canine Hydrotherapists (NARCH).

Holders of this qualification may therefore be eligible for inclusion on the NARCH list of Registered Canine Hydrotherapists.

1.4 Qualification Title, Qualification Number and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners	610/5255/3	27/01/2025	Jan 2030

1.5 Qualification Aims and Objectives

In the GA Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners, learners will engage in reflective practice, enhance their clinical reasoning and critical thinking skills and understand the importance of working within their scope of practice. They will recognise the legal, ethical, and professional standards, obligations, and accountability required of a professional canine hydrotherapist.

Learners will gain knowledge of the optimum design of the hydrotherapy suite, sustainable practice models, and current health and safety standards in canine hydrotherapy.

Learners will also understand the contextual nature of canine behaviour, the ethical responsibility of working with consent, and the importance of Therapeutic Handling techniques in hydrotherapy. Additionally, learners will learn about canine functional anatomy and biomechanics,

Learners will demonstrate clinical risk assessment skills, risk rating, health monitoring, and emergency canine first aid, as well as assessment processes, clinical reasoning, and advanced hydrotherapy treatment techniques.

Finally, learners will develop skills in evaluating and analysing hydrotherapy water management.

1.6 Qualification Structure and Overview: Units, GLH, TQT, Level and Credit Value

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners (610/5255/3)				
Mandatory Units <i>Learners must achieve all mandatory units.</i>	Unit Reference	Credits	GLH*	GLH + Study Time**
1. Clinical Risk Assessment, Health Monitoring and First Aid	R/651/4323	4	14	40
2. Water Management and Sustainable Practice	T/651/4324	5	21	50
3. Canine Behaviour, Enrichment and Therapeutic Handling	F/651/4328	4	21	40
Optional Units <i>Learners must achieve one of the two following optional units:</i>				

4. Advanced Techniques in Aquatic Treadmill Therapy for Canine Hydrotherapists	Y/651/4588	6	25	60
5. Advanced Techniques in Hydrotherapy Pool Treatment for Canine Hydrotherapists	A/651/4589	6	25	60
		Total Credits 25	Total GLH* 106	TQT** 250

*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 this 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 is in line with guidance published by Ofqual on the allocation and expression of Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning Hours.

Level

The qualifications within this specification are designated at Level 4 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 this qualification is considered by GA to lead to the outcome as follows:

Achievement at Level 4 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine. It includes taking responsibility for overall courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within fairly broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.

1.7 Rules of Combination

This qualification consists of 3 mandatory units and 2 optional units.

The units within the qualification are detailed in Section 1.4 above. Learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria within the mandatory units and in a minimum of one optional unit.

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the units are provided in Section 4 below.

There are no further rules of combination.

1.8 Intended Audience, Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is suited to learners from diverse backgrounds with various personal and professional goals.

This qualification is intended for learners aged 19 and above.

This qualification is available to learners who have already achieved a qualification at Level 6 (or equivalent) in animal musculoskeletal therapies, for example in veterinary physiotherapy or osteopathy. Both regulated and non-regulated qualifications will be considered, provided they demonstrate equivalent learning outcomes and scope of practice. Non-regulated qualifications must be recognisable as industry standards of practice. Centres should verify that learners possess the necessary underpinning knowledge and practical skills in musculoskeletal assessment and treatment before enrolment.

There are no other formal entry requirements for this qualification; however, due to the nature of the qualification content, those undertaking the qualification must have a proficient level of spoken and written English (e.g. GCSE Grade C / Grade 4 or above or equivalent).

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.

1.9 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 Unit or Units 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). 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.

1.10 Relationship to Other Qualifications & Progression Opportunities

This Level 4 Certificate in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners provides experienced musculoskeletal practitioners with a specialist hydrotherapy qualification to complement their existing Level 6 practice.

The qualification enables the integration of hydrotherapy techniques into their current services or expansion into dedicated hydrotherapy facilities.

The qualification supports career development through specialisation in areas such as sport dog conditioning, post-operative rehabilitation, and geriatric care. Practitioners may choose to

combine their musculoskeletal practice and hydrotherapy skills in post-surgical rehabilitation, working dog fitness, or elderly care.

The qualification also provides a platform for those interested in research or teaching within the field of animal rehabilitation.

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 Grading

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

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

Learners who aren't successful can resubmit work within the registration period.

1.13 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available via GA Approved Centres 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 Model and Certification

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. Specialist staff, high quality learning materials and access to assessment opportunities are essential for all centres.

Further details and guidance on the content of teaching and learning for each unit can be found in the Unit Specifications in Section 4 below.

2.2 Assessment and Quality Assurance Model

This qualification is delivered in-centre, where learners' work is internally assessed and internally moderated by centre staff to clearly show where learners have achieved the learning outcomes and qualification requirements. There is no requirement for external assessment.

Assessment, internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and quality assurance conducted by GA. Centres delivering this qualification are subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny (CASS) and General Moderation Policy.

2.3 Registering Learners & Unique Learner Numbers

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 24 months. 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 learner is known, this should be provided at the point of registration in order for GA to issue updates to the Learner Record Service.

2.4 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.

2.5 Record Keeping

Records of learner's 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 related to 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, centres 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.

Section 3 – Centre Requirements: Assessment & Quality Assurance

Course providers offering this GA qualification must ensure that they have the following resources in place.

3.1 Staff

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.

The course provider 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:

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

The course provider must also ensure that they have the management and administrative arrangements in place which are suitable to support the registration of learners and the qualification delivery.

Requirements for Tutors and Assessors

Teaching staff ('Tutors') include those who deliver teaching and learning content for knowledge and understanding elements and those who are involved in teaching and learning of practical skills.

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 Tutors must:

- hold a minimum of Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Hydrotherapy
- be actively working in the industry
- hold, or be working towards, a recognised teaching or training qualification, e.g. Level 3 Award in Education and Training or equivalent*

All Assessors must:

- be occupationally competent and hold, or be working towards, a Level 4 Certificate or Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy
- hold a Level 3 Certificate or Diploma Hydrotherapy
- be actively working in the industry

Assessors must also:

- hold, or be working towards, a recognised assessor qualification or their recognised equivalent** e.g.,
 - Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
 - Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
 - A1 Assess Candidate Performance Using a Range of Methods
 - D32 Assess Candidate Performance and D33 Assess Candidate Using Differing Sources of Evidence.

*In the absence of a regulated teaching qualification, the Tutor must ensure that they are able to demonstrate that they have delivered a minimum of 30 hours of teaching or assessing. They are then required to agree to update their training to an Ofqual-regulated teaching qualification within 18 months of commencing their role in order to continue to deliver the qualification.

**Assessors may be working towards a relevant equivalent qualification in assessing under the guidance of a suitably qualified and experienced Assessor and their IQA. Trainee Assessors' decisions MUST be counter-signed by a suitably qualified, experienced Assessor.

All staff involved with the delivery and assessment of this qualification must also be able to demonstrate ongoing professional development relevant to the sector subject area.

Requirements for Internal Moderators (also referred to as an Internal Quality Assurers or IQA)

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.

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

Assessors may have one or several appointed Internal Moderators.

This qualification is assessed by an Assessor and internally moderated and quality assured by an Internal Moderator to ensure standardisation, reliability, validity and sufficiency of the Assessor's assessment decisions.

To be able to perform the internal moderation and quality assurance role, an Internal Moderator must:

- hold a Level 4 Certificate or Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy, or be working towards obtaining one while already holding a Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Hydrotherapy
- be actively working in the industry

AND

- Hold, or be working towards**, one of the following internal quality assurance qualifications or their recognised equivalent:
 - Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
 - Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
 - V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
 - D34 Internally verify the assessment process

**Internal Moderators may be working towards a relevant equivalent quality assurance qualification under the guidance of a suitably qualified and experienced Internal Moderator. Trainee Internal Moderator's decisions MUST be counter-signed by a suitably qualified, experienced Internal Moderator.

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

The Internal Moderator must have relevant occupational experience and hold relevant qualifications in the particular subject area being assessed. They must hold a regulated qualification at least at the level of the qualification they are assessing.

The knowledge and experience of Teachers, Assessors and Internal Moderators will be considered during the centre and qualification approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

External Moderation (also referred to as External Quality Assurance or EQA)

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

3.2 Assessment of Learners

The centre must ensure that Assessors meet the requirements listed in Section 3.1 above in order to make assessment decisions leading to the award of this GA qualification.

Learners are assessed on the evidence contained within their portfolio.

3.3 Assessment Strategy

The table below indicated the methods of assessment for each of the units within the GA Level 4 Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy.

Unit	Assessment Criteria	Assessment Method
1. Clinical Risk Assessment, Health Monitoring and First Aid	ALL	Portfolio
2. Water Management and Sustainable Practice	ALL	Portfolio
3. Canine Behaviour, Enrichment and Therapeutic Handling	ALL	Portfolio
4. Advanced Techniques in Aquatic Treadmill Therapy for Canine Hydrotherapists	ALL	Portfolio
5. Advanced Techniques in Hydrotherapy Pool Treatment for Canine Hydrotherapists	ALL	Portfolio

3.4 Practical Hours

This qualification requires a **minimum of 25 hours** of face-to-face practical training where learners undertake either Unit 5 or Unit 6.

Where learners undertake both optional units (Unit 5 and Unit 6) within this qualification, a **minimum of 35 hours** is required.

This training must take place in a hydrotherapy centre under the direct supervision of qualified Tutors and/or Assessors.

The practical hours must consist of hands-on practical experience of working in a canine hydrotherapy centre.

All practical hours must be directly supervised by qualified Tutors or Assessors, with the centre determining appropriate supervisor-to-learner ratios appropriate for within their facility.

Practical hours must be documented in a clinical skills Logbook devised by the training provider. The Logbook must map to the qualification's learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Evidence of practical hours should include images, videos, photos, and relevant documentation. The centre's qualified Assessor must sign off all completed hours.

The hydrotherapy centre must meet the minimum equipment requirements specified below and must maintain appropriate insurance cover for their facility.

The practical hours will be based on cases presented to the hydrotherapy centre, with learners practicing techniques specified in the Unit Specifications and indicative content.

Centres determine their own schedules and timeframes for completion of the practical hours. Learners must complete all required practical hours within the timescale of their registration.

Learners must complete all required practical hours within the timescale of their registration.

3.5 Portfolio Requirements

Learners are expected to build a portfolio of evidence, clearly demonstrating where they have met the learning outcomes and qualification requirements.

Various types of evidence may be used, for example:

- essays/assignments
- short questions and answers
- workbooks
- professional discussions
- observations of performance in the workplace
- product evidence
- reflective accounts
- witness testimony
- records of questioning

Evidence in the portfolio should be mapped against the learning outcomes, reflect the type of evidence supplied and indicate its location within the portfolio. By using portfolio reference numbers, it will enable the learner, assessor, IQA and EQA to quickly locate the evidence submitted.

All evidence must meet GA's CRAVES requirements.

3.6 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.

3.7 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 incorporates 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. A Guide is provided in Appendix 1 of this Qualification Specification.

3.8 External Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

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. These 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 qualifications, 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 qualifications
- 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 activity have been carried out by the centre
- confirming any claims for RPL, reasonable adjustments or special considerations

Through discussions with centre staff, examining learner's 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.

3.9 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.

Centres must ensure that all products and equipment used in the delivery and assessment of this qualification must be authorised by GA and 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 centres.

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 venue arrangements may include the learner having access to:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Aquatic Treadmill – needs to be large enough to contain dog and learner within it
- Pool – needs to be large enough to contain Tutor/Assessor, learner and dog
- Ramps – to ensure safe entry and exit in main equipment
- Showering facilities
- Plant equipment
- Appropriate harnesses, leads and collars
- Non-slip flooring
- Chemicalisation station and eyes wash station
- First Aid Kit – for canines and humans
- Emergency evacuation procedure
- Separate locked area for water treatment chemicals
- All appropriate health and safety policies and procedures
- Risk assessment complete for all activities carried out on site
- Fire safety
 - signs
 - appropriate fire extinguisher(s)
 - fire procedure
- Learner changing area

3.10 Teaching and Learning Resources

GA does not prescribe the use of set course books, workbooks or other materials but expects that centres providing such courses should use relevant and up-to-date, high-quality teaching and learning materials which allow learners to adequately prepare for assessment.

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

Please note, any references to books, journals, websites or other third-party materials and publications made by GA does not infer that GA's accepts responsibility for the content of such materials or any opinions expressed within them.

3.11 Results

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.

3.12 Certificates

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.

3.13 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claims Status is not available for this qualification.

3.14 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.

3.15 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 all 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 centres can be provided with the best level of support and guidance.

At the time of approval, centres are 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 GA Level 4 Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy for Musculoskeletal Practitioners (610/5255/3)

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
1	Clinical Risk Assessment, Health Monitoring and First Aid	14	4	R/651/4323
<p>This unit aims to equip learners with a thorough understanding of Clinical Risk Assessment (CRA), health monitoring, appropriate health checks, and canine emergency first aid to support the health and welfare of canine clients undergoing clinical hydrotherapy.</p> <p>Learners will develop the ability to conduct effective risk assessments, enhance safety within a canine hydrotherapy setting, and justify the use of hydrotherapy as a treatment modality. Additionally, learners will learn to identify and manage canine health issues and emergency first aid situations while adhering to their professional responsibility to operate within their scope of practice.</p>				
Assessment Requirements & Indicative Content				
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>				

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the principles and responsibilities of Clinical Risk Assessment (CRA) in canine hydrotherapy practice.	1.1 Explain the key principles of Clinical Risk Assessment (CRA) in canine hydrotherapy and how they contribute to safe practice.
	1.2 State the legal and ethical responsibilities of conducting a CRA in a hydrotherapy setting.
	1.3 Explain the procedure for risk rating a canine prior to hydrotherapy treatment.
2. Conduct a thorough Clinical Risk Assessment	2.1 Conduct risk rating of the canine in a hydrotherapy setting.

to ensure safe hydrotherapy practice.	2.2 Conduct a full Clinical Risk Assessment prior to a hydrotherapy session.
	2.3 Assess hazards and risks specific to hydrotherapy and propose appropriate control measures.
	2.4 Review and update CRAs to reflect changes in practice, equipment, or client needs.
3. Understand precautions and contraindications for safe canine hydrotherapy practice.	3.1 Evaluate precautions in canine hydrotherapy and explain appropriate modifications to treatment.
	3.2 Identify contraindications to canine hydrotherapy and explain why treatment is not suitable.
4. Understand the significance of continuous health and behavioural monitoring in a hydrotherapy setting.	4.1 Explain the importance of continuous monitoring of health and behaviour during hydrotherapy.
	4.2 Describe key physiological and behavioural indicators that must be monitored during hydrotherapy sessions
	4.3 Analyse how changes in health parameters or behaviour during treatment should inform decision-making
5. Monitor and assess canine health status and behaviour in a hydrotherapy setting.	5.1 Perform health monitoring checks.
	5.2 Demonstrate continuous monitoring of health and behaviour during hydrotherapy.
6. Understand essential canine first aid principles relevant to hydrotherapy practice.	6.1 Explain key first aid principles and how to apply them in a hydrotherapy setting.
	6.2 Analyse the legal and ethical responsibilities of a hydrotherapist in managing canine emergencies.
	6.3 Analyse the professional scope of practice and limitations of the canine hydrotherapist role in managing canine emergencies.
7. Understand canine emergency categories and	7.1 Examine categories of canine emergencies in hydrotherapy.

responses relevant to hydrotherapy practice.	7.2 Examine appropriate emergency response procedures and protocols for different types of hydrotherapy emergencies.
8. Know how to assess and respond to canine emergency situations.	8.1 Explain the sequence of actions required when responding to hydrotherapy emergencies.
	8.2 State the contents of a canine first aid kit.
	8.3 Discuss the management of a canine first aid kit.
9. Apply first aid in canine emergency situations.	9.1 Demonstrate the canine resuscitation procedure (CPR).
	9.2 Demonstrate a range of bandaging techniques.
	9.3 Demonstrate an emergency exit strategy out of the body of water.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
2	Water Management and Sustainable Practice	21	5	T/651/4324
<p>The unit aims to equip learners with the clinical skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for effective water testing and developing actionable solutions, which are essential for safe practice and fulfilling both professional and legal responsibilities.</p> <p>The unit will enable learners to address water management challenges within a canine hydrotherapy setting, supporting successful centre operations and the delivery of a high-quality professional service. Adhering to legal frameworks and implementing effective policies and protocols for safe, up-to-date practice is a fundamental requirement for all healthcare professionals.</p>				
Assessment Requirements & Indicative Content				
Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.				

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the legal and professional obligations for safe water management.	1.1 Describe the legal and professional obligations for safe water management.
	1.2 Evaluate professional duties to ensure the safe and efficient management of water.
2. Understand the essential principles of efficient plant design for canine hydrotherapy operations.	2.1 Describe effective filtration systems.
	2.2 Explain the backwash method used to improve and maintain water quality.
	2.3 Evaluate the key factors necessary for creating an effective and sustainable facility.
3. Understand the use of chemicals and products	3.1 Describe safe and effective use of chemicals in water treatment.

for effective water treatment and biosecurity.	3.2 Describe water testing protocols and their implementation for ensuring safe practice.
	3.3 Evaluate infection control and cleaning procedures for a canine hydrotherapy setting.
4. Implement plant maintenance and hygiene operations.	4.1 Demonstrate a back wash procedure.
	4.2 Demonstrate maintenance and hygiene operations of plant.
5. Carry out water testing.	5.1 Demonstrate water testing in hydrotherapy.
	5.2 Demonstrate appropriate actions following the analysis of water testing.
	5.3 Demonstrate safe and effective use of chemicals in water treatment.
6. Understand sustainable designs and protocols for canine hydrotherapy.	6.1 Evaluate sustainable strategies for the hydrotherapy setting.
	6.2 Evaluate sustainable strategies for hydrotherapy equipment and plant.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
3	Canine Behaviour, Enrichment and Therapeutic Handling	21	4	F/651/4328
<p>In this unit, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of canine behaviour within the context of a hydrotherapy environment. Learners will also develop the skills to assess and apply canine therapeutic handling techniques and clinic enrichment strategies.</p>				
Assessment Requirements and Indicative Content				
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>				

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand patterns of behaviour observed in canines in a hydrotherapy setting.	1.1 Describe communication and feedback signals in a hydrotherapy setting and how these may differ from the canine's usual behaviour patterns.
	1.2 Explain positive and negative influences on canine behaviour patterns in the hydrotherapy setting.
	1.3 Define scope of practice in relation to behaviour in a hydrotherapy setting.
2. Understand therapeutic handling techniques and enrichment.	2.1 Explain a range of clinic enrichment techniques to positively impact the canine's behaviour in clinic.
	2.2 Explain a range of therapeutic handling techniques to positively impact the canine's behaviour in clinic.
3. Apply therapeutic handling techniques and enrichment.	3.1 Demonstrate different therapeutic handling techniques for hydrotherapy practice.
	3.2. Demonstrate strategies and techniques to reduce stress and positively engage canines in the hydrotherapy environment.

4. Understand the effects of therapeutic handling and enrichment practices during a clinical session.	4.1 Evaluate the behavioural impact of clinical enrichment and therapeutic handling.
	4.2 Evaluate the impact of clinical enrichment and therapeutic handling on the canine musculoskeletal system.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
4	Advanced Techniques in Aquatic Treadmill Therapy for Canine Hydrotherapists	25	6	Y/651/4588
<p>In this unit, learners will develop their clinical competencies and proprioceptive treatment techniques when using an aquatic treadmill, with the goal of achieving positive outcomes for each canine client. Learners will apply their knowledge of canine assessment processes, behaviour, functional anatomy, breed biology, and the pathophysiology of underlying conditions to make informed decisions when selecting aquatic treatment techniques.</p> <p>Learners will combine clinical theory with practical application, ensuring that they are equipped to create tailored treatment plans that address the individual functional and mobility needs of each canine.</p>				
Assessment Requirements & Indicative Content				
<p>Due to the level of expertise required in some Assessment Criteria in the new Level 4 standard, Assessors holding the Level 3 and working towards Level 4 themselves when assessing learners must assess with oversight of a veterinary physiotherapist. These assessment criteria are highlighted in blue in the unit specification below to clearly identify where this supervision is necessary to ensure accurate and appropriate assessment of learner competence.</p> <p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>				

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Perform therapeutic preparation for canine cases.	1.1 Demonstrate the process of setting up the hydrotherapy environment to ensure safe hydrotherapy treatment.
	1.2 Demonstrate how to select and fit canine equipment to ensure the safe delivery of hydrotherapy treatment.
	1.3 Demonstrate therapeutic handling techniques for effective interaction and guidance of the canine patient within the hydrotherapy setting.

2. Understand how to perform therapeutic showering techniques.	2.1 Describe the application of therapeutic showering techniques as part of treatment for specific cases.
3. Perform therapeutic showering techniques.	3.1 Demonstrate the application of therapeutic showering techniques as part of treatment protocols for specific cases.
4. Know safe entry and exit techniques for hydrotherapy treadmill access.	4.1 Describe how to apply entry and exit techniques for hydrotherapy treadmill access for specific cases.
5. Perform safe entry and exit techniques for hydrotherapy treadmill access.	5.1 Demonstrate entry and exit techniques as part of hydrotherapy treatment.
6. Understand how to perform health monitoring during the application of hydrotherapy treatments.	6.1 Describe monitoring techniques and health assessment procedures for specific cases.
7. Perform health monitoring throughout the application of hydrotherapy treatments.	7.1 Demonstrate the application of monitoring techniques and health assessment procedures.
8. Understand how to perform manual therapeutic techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	8.1 Describe manual therapy techniques.
9. Perform manual therapeutic techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	9.1 Carry out a range of manual techniques.
10. Understand how to perform therapeutic movement shaping techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	10.1 Describe the application of therapeutic movement shaping techniques for specific cases.
11. Perform therapeutic movement shaping techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	11.1 Demonstrate therapeutic movement shaping techniques for specific cases.
12. Understand how to conduct therapeutic exercise for hydrotherapy treatments.	12.1 Describe static and dynamic therapeutic exercise techniques, to improving muscle function and joint mobility for specific cases.

13. Conduct therapeutic exercise for hydrotherapy treatments.	13.1 Demonstrate static and dynamic therapeutic exercise techniques for specific cases.
14. Understand how to provide aftercare following hydrotherapy treatments.	14.1 Explain aftercare following hydrotherapy treatment for specific cases.
15. Provide aftercare following hydrotherapy treatments.	15.1 Demonstrate aftercare following hydrotherapy treatment.
16. Understand how to review the effectiveness of hydrotherapy treatment.	16.1 Critically evaluate the rationale and effectiveness of the selected treatment techniques for individual cases.
	16.2 Analyse treatment outcomes using appropriate measurement tools and documentation.
	16.3 Evaluate how treatment techniques can be modified based on response and progress.
	16.4 Document and review treatment effectiveness including objective and subjective measures.
	16.5 Reflect on treatment sessions to inform future practice and technique selection.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
5	Advanced Techniques in Hydrotherapy Pool Treatment for Canine Hydrotherapists	25	6	A/651/4589
<p>In this unit, learners will advance their clinical competencies and proprioceptive treatment techniques in the use of a hydrotherapy pool, focusing on achieving optimal outcomes for each canine client. Learners will integrate their knowledge of canine assessment processes, behaviour, functional anatomy, breed biology, and the pathophysiology of underlying conditions to make clinically reasoned decisions when selecting aquatic treatment techniques.</p> <p>Learners will further develop both clinical and practical application skills, enabling them to develop tailored treatment plans that address the unique functional and mobility needs of each canine.</p>				
Assessment Requirements & Indicative Content				
<p>Due to the level of expertise required in some Assessment Criteria in the new Level 4 standard, Assessors holding the Level 3 and working towards Level 4 themselves when assessing learners must assess with oversight of a veterinary physiotherapist. These assessment criteria are highlighted in blue in the unit specification below to clearly identify where this supervision is necessary to ensure accurate and appropriate assessment of learner competence.</p> <p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>				

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Perform therapeutic preparation for canine cases.	1.1 Demonstrate the process of setting up the hydrotherapy environment to ensure safe hydrotherapy treatment.
	1.2 Demonstrate how to select and fit canine equipment to ensure the safe delivery of hydrotherapy treatment.
	1.3 Demonstrate therapeutic handling techniques for effective interaction and guidance of the canine patient within the hydrotherapy setting.

2. Understand how to perform therapeutic showering techniques.	2.1 Describe the application of therapeutic showering techniques as part of treatment for specific cases.
3. Perform therapeutic showering techniques.	3.1 Demonstrate the application of therapeutic showering techniques as part of treatment protocols for specific cases.
4. Know safe entry and exit techniques for hydrotherapy pool access.	4.1 Describe how to apply entry and exit techniques for hydrotherapy pool access for specific cases.
5. Perform safe entry and exit techniques for hydrotherapy pool access.	5.1 Demonstrate entry and exit techniques as part of hydrotherapy treatment.
6. Explain how to perform health monitoring during the application of hydrotherapy treatments.	6.1 Describe monitoring techniques and health assessment procedures for specific cases.
7. Perform health monitoring throughout the application of hydrotherapy treatments.	7.1 Demonstrate the application of monitoring techniques and health assessment procedures.
8. Understand how to perform manual therapeutic techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	8.1 Describe manual therapy techniques.
9. Perform manual therapeutic techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	9.1 Demonstrate a range of manual techniques for specific cases.
10. Understand how to perform therapeutic movement shaping techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	10.1 Describe the application of therapeutic movement shaping techniques for specific cases.
11. Perform therapeutic movement shaping techniques for hydrotherapy treatments.	11.1 Demonstrate therapeutic movement shaping techniques for specific cases.
12. Understand how to conduct therapeutic exercise for hydrotherapy treatments.	12.1 Describe static and dynamic therapeutic exercise techniques improving muscle function and joint mobility for specific cases.
13. Conduct therapeutic exercise for hydrotherapy treatments.	13.1 Demonstrate static and dynamic therapeutic exercise techniques for specific cases.

14. Understand how to provide appropriate aftercare following hydrotherapy treatments.	14.1 Explain aftercare following hydrotherapy treatment for specific cases.
15. Provide aftercare following hydrotherapy treatments.	15.1 Demonstrate aftercare following hydrotherapy treatment for specific cases.
16. Understand how to review the effectiveness of hydrotherapy treatment	16.1 Critically evaluate the rationale behind the selection of treatment techniques for individual cases.
	16.2 Analyse treatment outcomes using appropriate measurement tools and documentation.
	16.3 Evaluate how treatment techniques can be modified based on response and progress.
	16.4 Document and review treatment effectiveness including objective and subjective measures.
	16.5 Reflect on treatment sessions to inform future practice and technique selection.

Appendix 1: Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Regulations and Guidance

1.1 Introduction to Internal Moderation

Internal Moderation is a centre's internal system that ensures learner evidence is complete and genuinely meets all the required criteria by which the learner is judged to have met in order to be awarded a qualification. The process involves regularly sampling and evaluating the centre's assessment practices and decisions, and it is the Internal Moderator's responsibility to act on their findings to ensure consistency and fairness.

Ensuring quality standards are maintained and are consistent within and across a centre's provision is the responsibility of the head of centre, who must ensure that suitable staff are in place to act as Internal Moderator(s) and provide full support and standards scrutiny of the centre's Assessment decisions.

1.2 Internal Moderation Processes

Internal Moderation involves three key processes: co-ordination of the assessment process, standardisation of assessment practice, and sampling of assessed work.

These processes are conducted by one Internal Moderator or, if there is more than one, a team of Internal Moderators who are under the direction of a Lead Internal Moderator. Information about the experience and qualification requirements for Internal Moderators is provided in the *Qualification Specification*.

1.3. Co-ordination of the Assessment Process

Prior to delivery commencing, it is the Internal Moderator who will confirm that assessment tasks are appropriate. This may involve checking that proposed assessment activities, plans for practical assessments, or the briefs of any assignments or reports are fit for purpose. It may also include checking that internal tests or examination materials are fit for purpose.

In order to ensure that the planned assessment activities and materials are fit for purpose, the Internal Moderator will consider and judge whether the activities and materials provide inclusive opportunities for all learners to meet the assessment objectives and generate evidence which is current, reliable, authentic, valid, able to be evaluated and sufficient to meet the requirements of the qualification.

During delivery of assessment, Internal Moderators will work with the Assessment team, ensuring that assessment practices are being carried out correctly. This may involve observing assessment taking place.

1.4 Standardisation of Assessment

The standardisation process helps to ensure that all centre staff involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance are consistent and fair to all learners and interpret and follow the requirements of the qualification in the same way.

Internal Moderators are expected to ensure high levels of consistency across Assessors and centre delivery sites through sharing good practice and providing feedback and support, doing so accurately and in good time. The internal Moderator may highlight areas for further CPD or additional training as necessary.

1.5. Sampling Process

When planning and carrying out internal moderation activities, it is important that the Internal Moderator works to a sound sampling strategy to ensure that standardisation of assessment decisions can take place.

A centre's sampling strategy involves reviewing the quality of Assessor's judgements, which will include reviewing learner work.

The learner work may be sampled before the learner has completed the full qualification, for example by sampling one or two assignments, topic areas or units, as the learner completes them.

The Internal Moderator should check that planning and reviewing has taken place and feedback is given to learners by the Assessor. The Internal Moderator will also check and confirm the accuracy of the application of any mark schemes, guidance and overall assessment decisions.

The Internal Moderator will therefore be able to evaluate the quality and consistency of the Assessor's assessment decisions and be able to identify any problems at an early stage. It will highlight individual Assessor training and development needs, which in turn can inform the programme of CPD for the assessment team as a whole.

The Internal Moderator must plan their sampling activities as outlined below.

1.6 Establishing a Sampling Strategy

Sampling should enable the Internal Moderator to evaluate how Assessors have reached their decisions. They must be able to follow documentation which clearly shows that Assessors have checked that the evidence presented meets the rules of evidence.

Evidence must be confirmed by Assessors as 'CRAVES'

- **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 resulting in improvements in knowledge or competency leading to the award
- **Sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy.

1.7 Planning Sampling Activities

The Internal Moderator should consider the following when considering the volume of work that they should sample:

- the learners' ethnic origin, age and gender to ensure a representative range of learners are sampled
- the Assessors' experience and qualifications, workload and their occupational competence. For example, if Assessors are qualified and experienced it may not be necessary to look at everything in a learner's portfolio. If Assessors have less than 12 months' experience, are new to the centre or a particular qualification, or perhaps have not assessed for a length of time, the Internal Moderator will need to sample substantially more of their decisions for the first 6 - 12 months
- the full range of assessment methods used for any one qualification, for example observation, witness testimony, professional discussion, reflective accounts, questioning, assignments, products, RPL, simulation, etc and ensure a good, representative range of assessment evidence is sampled
- previous feedback to Assessors regarding good practice and/or involved highlighting development needs, for example If the Internal Moderator has a particular concern regarding the assessment decisions of a particular Assessor they should focus on increasing the volume of work from that Assessor to continue increased monitoring and evaluation of risk
- whether any changes have been implemented relating to the assessment of the qualification or its units, for example if there have been amendments to the qualification specification, or instances where industry practice or legislation has changed
- the range of locations where assessments have taken place
- the sampling process must not be determined by any rule of thumb such as '10%.'

1.8 Producing a Sampling Plan

The Internal Moderator must develop a sampling plan at the beginning of the learner's (or cohort's) programme and record, on the plan, which topic areas/assessment methods they plan to sample, and when.

Copies of sampling plans should be made available to other Internal Moderators and the assessment team, and sampling carried out according to the plan.

Where variations are made, these should be recorded on the plan.

1.9 Completing a Sample Record

The Internal Moderator should record the quality assurance sampling activities on a Sample Record. As a minimum, this record must indicate the Assessor's decision, the content of the sample, the Internal Moderator's decision and relevant feedback to the Assessor.

Where the Internal Moderator agrees with the assessment decisions, certification claims can go ahead.

Where the Internal Moderator does not agree with the assessment decisions, full feedback must be given to the Assessor, with action points agreed which relate to the Assessor's areas for improvement and instructions for how the learner can be supported to produce the required evidence of knowledge and skills.

Sampling must take place before any certification claims are made by the centre and all records, including those of standardisation meetings, feedback to Assessors and CPD activity should be made available to the GA-appointed External Moderator (also referred to as the EQA) upon request.

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