



Qualification Specification

GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy (610/7442/1)

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

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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 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy (610/7442/1).

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 Title, Qualification Number and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy	610/7442/1	11/05/2026	May 2031

1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This is an introductory-level qualification only. Qualification users must note that this qualification does not qualify learners to practice as canine hydrotherapists, either independently or unsupervised. Learners who complete this qualification are not canine hydrotherapists. Further study, clinical experience, and additional qualifications are required before any independent practice.

The Level 3 Award in Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy has been developed to provide learners with foundational knowledge and practical skills to support canine hydrotherapy

within a supervised environment. It is intended as a first step for those considering a career in the field, and as such, it covers introductory concepts only.

Learners will develop an understanding of the key principles underpinning canine hydrotherapy, including the properties of water, the structure of hydrotherapy sessions, and the range of modalities used within the industry. They will also explore the benefits and limitations of hydrotherapy in supporting canine rehabilitation, conditioning, and performance, alongside the importance of veterinary referral and working within professional boundaries. In addition, learners will gain introductory knowledge of the clinical environment, including relevant anatomical terminology, health and safety requirements, hygiene practices, and effective communication with clients, canine owners, and veterinary professionals. Emphasis is placed on maintaining high standards of welfare and professionalism within a canine hydrotherapy setting.

A key feature of this qualification is the introduction of basic practical competencies under direct supervision. Learners will be introduced to safe handling techniques, the use of hydrotherapy equipment, and the ability to assist in hydrotherapy sessions. They are not expected or permitted to plan, lead, or deliver hydrotherapy sessions independently. Learners will also be encouraged to reflect on their own practice to support ongoing development.

This qualification provides an introductory pathway into canine hydrotherapy and supports progression into further study. It does not qualify learners to practice as canine hydrotherapists, and learners should not represent themselves as such upon completion.

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

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy (610/7442/1)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time
1. Principles of Canine Hydrotherapy	T/652/1605	3	2	15	5
2. Introduction to the Canine Hydrotherapy Clinical Environment	Y/652/1606	3	2	15	5
3. Practical Handling and Clinical Skills for Canine Hydrotherapy	A/652/1607	3	1	7	3
			Total Credits 5	Total GLH* 37	TQT** (GLH + ST) 50

*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 3 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 3 reflects the ability to identify and use factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas, and reflects an awareness of the nature of the area of study or work and different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.

1.5 Rules of Combination

In order to meet the rules of combination for the GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy, learners must achieve all 3 mandatory units and achieve 5 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

The Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy is designed for learners with an interest in canine health, welfare, and rehabilitation who wish to develop a foundational understanding of hydrotherapy principles. It is suitable for individuals working within, or aspiring to work within, the animal care sector, including roles such as veterinary support staff, canine carers, dog trainers, or those assisting in rehabilitation settings.

The qualification is also appropriate for individuals considering canine hydrotherapy as a future career direction and who wish to take a first step into the field. It provides an introduction to the clinical environment, safe handling practices, and the principles of hydrotherapy. It is not, however, a vocational qualification that prepares learners for independent practice, and it should not be regarded as sufficient training to work as a canine hydrotherapist.

No prior experience is required; however, a basic understanding of canine care and welfare would be beneficial. Learners should be aware that this qualification represents the beginning of a learning journey - further study, supervised clinical experience, and additional qualifications will be necessary before any independent practice within canine hydrotherapy.

This qualification serves as an entry point for further study and supports progression into more advanced and specialist training within canine rehabilitation and therapy. Completion of this award alone does not confer the knowledge, skills, or professional standing required to practice as a canine hydrotherapist.

1.7 Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is intended for learners aged 16 and above.

No formal experience of dog handling is required for entry onto this qualification. Learners will work under direct supervision throughout all practical elements and will not be expected to handle dogs independently. However, learners should be comfortable in the presence of dogs and have a basic confidence around them prior to starting the programme. Learners who have significant concerns about working in close proximity to dogs, or who have had no prior exposure to them, are encouraged to discuss this with their centre before enrolling, to ensure the qualification is the right fit for them.

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).

If English is not the learner's first language, an English language level of International English B2 (CEFR) is required.

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.

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

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

The GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy is designed as a foundational qualification and a first step for learners who wish to develop their understanding of canine hydrotherapy. To prepare for employment or self-employment as a canine hydrotherapist, learners will need to undertake further study and supervised practice and are therefore encouraged to progress onto:

- GA Level 4 Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy

This higher-level qualification builds on the foundational knowledge gained in this award and provides the more advanced clinical training required for those working towards practice in canine hydrotherapy settings.

Learners who develop an interest in animal rehabilitation and physical therapies more broadly and who may wish to explore pathways beyond canine hydrotherapy may wish to consider GA's wider suite of Animal Therapies qualifications, e.g.:

- GA Level 4 Award in the Principles of Animal Laser Therapies
- GA Level 4 Certificate in Animal Laser Applications
- GA Level 5 Diploma in Clinical Canine Massage Therapy

Learners with an interest in equine rehabilitation may also wish to explore the following qualification options:

- GA Level 4 Certificate in the Principles of Equine Hydrotherapy
- GA Level 4 Diploma in Applied Equine Hydrotherapy

Please note that each of these qualifications carries its own entry requirements, minimum age restrictions, and prerequisites. Full details are contained within the relevant Qualification Specification.

Learners may also wish to broaden their knowledge through GA's wider suite of canine, equine and animal care qualifications at Level 3, including:

- GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine)
- GA Level 3 Award in Canine Health and Welfare
- GA Level 3 Certificate in Canine Health, Care and Welfare
- GA Level 3 Diploma in Canine Welfare, Training and Behaviour Management
- GA Level 3 Diploma in Companion Animal Behaviour and Training
- GA Level 3 Award in Practical Animal Welfare
- GA Level 3 Award in Animal Care and Welfare Management
- GA Level 3 Certificate in Animal Care and Welfare Management
- GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Care and Welfare Management

Learners who do not yet hold a Level 2 qualification in animal care may also benefit from exploring GA's Level 2 suite, including the GA Level 2 Award in an Introduction to Canine Care and Welfare and the GA Level 2 Diploma in Canine Health, Welfare and Training, as preparatory or concurrent 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.

Further details and guidance on the content of teaching and learning for each unit can be accessed by the approved GA centre.

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.

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.

The Portfolio of assessed work will consist of the following components:

- **Component 1 – Portfolio:** A portfolio of work covering all knowledge content of the qualification.
- **Component 2 – Practical Assessment:** Practical assessment covering all skills content of the qualification.

Component 1 – Portfolio

This component comprises all theory content across all units in the qualification.

Evidence can be presented in various formats, allowing flexibility while ensuring thorough knowledge and understanding.

Various types of evidence may be used, for example:

1. essays/assignments
2. short questions and answers
3. professional discussions
4. workbooks
5. reflective accounts
6. records of questioning

Component 2 – Practical Assessment

This component requires learners to complete all the practical requirements within unit 3 of the qualification. Learners are required to demonstrate competence of the practical skills in a clinical setting, allowing learners to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world, practical environment.

All practical activities must be directly supervised, and the centre is responsible for ensuring suitable supervisor-to-learner ratios appropriate to their facility.

The facility where practical training takes place must meet the minimum equipment standards outlined below and maintain appropriate insurance for its activities.

2.4 Assessment Strategy

The table below indicated the methods of assessment for each of the units within the GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy.

Unit	Assessment Criteria	Assessment Method
1. Principles of Canine Hydrotherapy	ALL	Portfolio
2. Introduction to the Canine Hydrotherapy Clinical Environment	ALL	Portfolio
3. Practical Handling and Clinical Skills for Canine Hydrotherapy	ALL	Practical Assessment

2.5 Simulation and Use of Real Animals

Simulation is not permitted in the assessment of the practical unit within this qualification.

Where practical competencies are assessed, learners must demonstrate their skills in a real working environment with real dogs.

Assessors must confirm that at least one real dog was present and involved in each practical assessment.

The use of models, mannequins, or simulated animals does not meet the assessment requirements and will not be accepted as evidence of practical competence.

The welfare of the canine, whether an actual patient or acting as one for the purpose of the assessment, must be prioritised at all times.

2.6 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

2.7 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.

2.8 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 in order to formulate an appropriate Sampling Strategy.

2.9 Grading and Recording Achievement

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

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

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

2.10 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.

2.11 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.

2.12 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 one year. 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.

2.13 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.

2.14 Record Keeping

Records of learner details, their work and any records of Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and records containing learner's 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.

2.15 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.

2.16 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 a work environment.

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

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

All teachers must:

- hold a minimum of Level 4 Certificate or Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy, or be working towards obtaining one while already holding a Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Canine or Small Animal Hydrotherapy
- have demonstrable subject knowledge of canine hydrotherapy
- be actively working in the industry

AND

- hold, or be working towards, a recognised teaching or training qualification, e.g. Level 3 Award in Education and Training or recognised equivalent*

*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.

All assessors 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 Canine or Small Animal Hydrotherapy
- have demonstrable subject knowledge of canine hydrotherapy
- be actively working in the industry

AND

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

**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 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 4 Certificate or Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy, or be working towards obtaining one while already holding a Level 3 Certificate or Diploma in Canine or Small Animal Hydrotherapy
- have demonstrable subject knowledge of canine 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.

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 their CPD hours. There is no set minimum number of hours of CPD required; however, the CPD activities must reflect contemporary standards and developments in canine hydrotherapy and be directly relevant to maintaining competence in their specific role.

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

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

Teaching, learning and assessment 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.

Please note, any references to books, journals, websites or other third-party materials and publications are made in good faith only and GA does not accept responsibility for the content of such materials or any opinions expressed within them.

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

- ensure teaching and learning materials directly address the learning outcomes and sufficiently prepare learners for assessment.
- structure all 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/assessed.
- 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.

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 subject-specific literature
- IT facilities and systems to support research, presentations, and access to online learning materials
- case study materials or scenario-based resources relevant to the subject area
- 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

For delivery of this qualification, suitable venue/equipment should include:

- Plant equipment including aquatic treadmill and/or pool, as appropriate to the hydrotherapy facility, and ramps to ensure safe entry and exit to equipment
- Appropriate harnesses, leads and collars
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Showering facilities
- 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
- Suitable signage
- Fire extinguisher(s)
- Fire procedure
- Learner changing area

The centre must also maintain appropriate insurance cover for their facility.

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: Principles of Canine Hydrotherapy

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Principles of Canine Hydrotherapy	15	2	3	T/652/1605
<p>This unit provides learners with a foundational understanding of the principles underpinning canine hydrotherapy and its role in supporting rehabilitation, conditioning, and overall wellbeing. Learners will explore how hydrotherapy is applied within both clinical and non-clinical settings to promote canine health and welfare.</p> <p>The unit introduces the key physical properties of water, such as buoyancy, resistance, and hydrostatic pressure, and examines how these influence the canine body during treatment. Learners will also gain an understanding of how hydrotherapy sessions are structured, from initial preparation through to completion, as well as the different modalities used within practice, including pool and treadmill systems.</p> <p>In addition, learners will consider the benefits and limitations of hydrotherapy, including its application for a range of conditions, and the importance of recognising contraindications and precautions. The role of veterinary referral is also emphasised to ensure safe, appropriate, and professional practice.</p> <p>This unit provides the essential theoretical knowledge required to support further learning and practical application within a canine hydrotherapy environment.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
	1.1 Describe the role and purpose of canine hydrotherapy.

1. Understand the principles of canine hydrotherapy	1.2 Explain the basic physical properties of water and their effects on the canine body.
	1.3 Describe the stages of a hydrotherapy session from preparation through to completion.
	1.4 Outline the differences between hydrotherapy modalities, including pool and treadmill systems.
2. Understand the benefits and limitations of canine hydrotherapy	2.1 Identify common conditions that may benefit from hydrotherapy.
	2.2 Outline the potential benefits of hydrotherapy for rehabilitation and general wellbeing.
	2.3 Identify basic contraindications and precautions for hydrotherapy.
	2.4 Describe the importance of veterinary referral prior to treatment.

4.2 Unit 2: Introduction to the Canine Hydrotherapy Clinical Environment

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Introduction to the Canine Hydrotherapy Clinical Environment	15	2	3	Y/652/1606
<p>This unit provides learners with an understanding of the key requirements for working within a canine hydrotherapy clinical environment. It introduces the foundational knowledge needed to support safe, effective, and professional practice, including the use of basic anatomical and movement terminology to aid communication and understanding.</p> <p>Learners will explore the legal and professional responsibilities associated with hydrotherapy, with particular emphasis on the importance of veterinary referral and working within scope of practice. The unit also develops awareness of effective communication with clients and veterinary professionals, alongside safe and appropriate handling techniques to ensure the welfare of canine patients.</p> <p>In addition, the unit focuses on health, safety, and welfare considerations within the hydrotherapy setting. Learners will identify potential risks and hazards, understand procedures to maintain a safe environment, recognise signs of stress, pain, or fatigue in canine patients, and respond appropriately to emergency situations.</p> <p>This unit underpins safe working practices and supports the development of professional behaviours essential for working within a canine hydrotherapy environment.</p>					
Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content					
Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the requirements of a canine hydrotherapy clinical environment	1.1 Identify basic anatomical, directional, and movement terminology relevant to canines.
	1.2 Outline the legal and professional requirements relating to veterinary referral.

	1.3 Describe the principles of effective communication with clients and veterinary professionals.
	1.4 Explain safe and appropriate methods for handling canine patients.
	1.5 Describe basic hygiene and infection control procedures within a hydrotherapy setting.
2. Understand health, safety, and welfare in a hydrotherapy setting	2.1 Identify potential risks and hazards within a hydrotherapy environment.
	2.2 Outline procedures for maintaining health and safety for both patients and handlers.
	2.3 Describe signs of stress, pain, or fatigue in canine patients.
	2.4 Explain appropriate responses to emergency situations in a hydrotherapy setting.

4.3 Unit 3: Practical Handling and Clinical Skills for Canine Hydrotherapy

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Practical Handling and Clinical Skills for Canine Hydrotherapy	7	1	3	A/652/1607
<p>This unit develops the essential practical skills required to support canine hydrotherapy sessions within a supervised clinical environment. Learners will be supervised at all times by a suitably qualified and experienced canine hydrotherapist.</p> <p>Learners will apply their knowledge in practice, focusing on the safe handling of canine patients and the correct use of hydrotherapy equipment to ensure both safety and welfare are maintained at all times.</p> <p>The unit introduces basic therapeutic handling techniques and reinforces the importance of maintaining high standards of hygiene before, during, and after hydrotherapy sessions. Learners will also gain experience in assisting with patient movement, including safe entry and exit from hydrotherapy equipment, as well as supporting the preparation and organisation of the treatment environment.</p> <p>In addition, learners will develop their ability to work effectively under supervision, following instructions from qualified practitioners and demonstrating professional behaviour when interacting with clients and colleagues.</p> <p>A key element of this unit is reflective practice, encouraging learners to evaluate their own performance, respond to feedback, and identify areas for improvement. This supports the development of competence, confidence, and professionalism within a canine hydrotherapy setting.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Be able to apply basic practical skills in a	1.1 Demonstrate safe handling of a canine patient within a hydrotherapy environment.

canine hydrotherapy environment	1.2 Demonstrate basic therapeutic handling techniques under supervision.
	1.3 Demonstrate appropriate pre- and post-session hygiene procedures.
	1.4 Demonstrate the safe use of hydrotherapy equipment, including fitting and removal of harnesses and floatation devices.
	1.5 Assist safely in supporting canine patients during entry and exit from hydrotherapy equipment.
	1.6 Maintain hygiene standards within the hydrotherapy environment.
2. Be able to work under supervision in a hydrotherapy setting	2.1 Follow instructions from a qualified practitioner.
	2.2 Prepare the hydrotherapy environment for a session.
	2.3 Assist with basic session setup and pack-down procedures.
	2.4 Maintain professional behaviour when interacting with clients and colleagues.
3. Be able to reflect on own practice	3.1 Identify own strengths and areas for development in practical skills.
	3.2 Seek and respond to feedback from supervisors.
	3.3 Outline actions for improving future performance.

Document Specification:					
Purpose:	To detail the specification of the GA Level 3 Award in an Introduction to Canine Hydrotherapy (610/7442/1) qualification.				
Accountability:	GA Governance Committee	Responsibility:	GA Compliance Manager		
Version:	1	Effective From:	11/05/2026	Indicative Review Date:	May 2031
Links to Ofqual GCR:	E3; G6; G7; H2	Other relevant documents:	GA Centre Handbook GA Candidate Access Policy GA Malpractice & Maladministration Policy GA Syllabus, Assessment & Internal Moderation Handbook for the unit(s) within the qualification GA Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Revalidation for Centre Staff (Aesthetic Pathway). GA CASS Strategy and General Moderation Policy		