Qualification Specification

GA Level 5 Diploma in
Business Management and Innovation
(610/7203/5)

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

Contents

Section 1: Qualification Overview

1.1 Introduction: About this Qualification

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

This Qualification Specification covers the GA Level 5 Diploma in Business Management and Innovation (610/7203/5).

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

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

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

This qualification is not designed to replace any existing qualifications.

1.2 Qualification Titles, Qualification Numbers and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 5 Diploma in Business Management and Innovation	610/7203/5	13/03/2026	March 2031

1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This qualification is designed to develop learners' understanding of business management and innovation as strategic, interconnected functions within organisations operating in complex and changing environments. The qualification builds on knowledge of how organisations work, shifting focus to how decisions are made, governed, resourced and evaluated, and how innovation and ethical leadership contribute to long-term direction and sustainability.

Learners are expected to explore environmental analysis and competitive positioning, management and governance, financial decision-making and investment, innovation as a driver

of organisational change, and the role of judgement and ethical principles in shaping sustainable organisational outcomes.

The qualification supports learners to:

- analyse the business environment to inform strategic decision making, manage risk and support long-term organisational planning
- evaluate how organisations determine strategic direction, set objectives and maintain governance and accountability over strategic decisions
- assess strategic financial decisions, including investment and funding choices, risk and return trade-offs, and financial performance over time
- evaluate innovation as a strategic function, including how organisations make, prioritise and assess innovation decisions in the context of organisational change
- apply ethical principles to organisational decision making and evaluate the tensions that arise when ethical considerations conflict with strategic or commercial objectives
- understand sustainability as both an ethical responsibility and a strategic consideration, and assess how leadership and ethical decision-making shape long-term organisational outcomes

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

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 5 Diploma in Business Management & Innovation (610/7203/5)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time
1. Analysis of the Business Environment	Y/652/0094	5	24	120	120
2. Strategic Management and Organisational Direction	A/652/0095	5	24	120	120
3. Financial Decision Making	D/652/0096	5	24	120	120
4. Innovation and Organisational Change	F/652/0097	5	24	120	120
5. Leadership, Ethics and Sustainable Business Practice	H/652/0098	5	24	120	120
			Total Credits 120	Total GLH* 600	TQT** (GLH + ST) 1200

*Guided Learning Hours (GLH): Definition

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

**Total Qualification Time (TQT): Definition

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

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

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

Level

The qualification within this specification is designated at Level 5 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 5 reflects the ability to use practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts and analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas. It reflects an awareness of the nature and scope of the area of study or work and an understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them. It also reflects the ability to determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly defined, complex problems, use relevant research or development to inform actions and evaluate actions, methods and results.

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1.5 Rules of Combination

In order to meet the rules of combination for the GA Level 5 Diploma in Business Management and Innovation qualification, the learner must achieve all 5 mandatory units. The learner must achieve 120 credits.

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

There are no further rules of combination.

1.6 Intended Audience

This qualification is suitable for individuals who have an existing foundation in business management, either through prior study at Level 4 or through substantial experience in a management, supervisory or business development role. It is appropriate for those who are operating at, or preparing to move into, a management or operational leadership position and who wish to develop a more strategic understanding of how organisations are directed, governed and sustained.

The qualification is also well suited to those with responsibility for, or a significant interest in, innovation, organisational change or business development, including individuals who are involved in shaping how their organisation adapts and grows. It assumes familiarity with core business management concepts and the ability to engage analytically with organisational issues.

For those on an academic pathway, it provides a strong foundation for progression to Level 6 study in business management, strategic management, innovation or related disciplines, and supports longer-term development towards senior management, leadership and business strategy roles.

1.7 Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is intended for learners aged 18 and above.

Learners should hold

- a minimum of a full Level 4 qualification, for example vocational qualifications, A-levels, or equivalent

or

- work experience of a minimum of two years' experience in a role encompassing leadership and management in any business or organisational content

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

- a CV or evidencing junior management or team leading work experience
- an interview or professional discussion to assess the learner's readiness for Level 5 study
- a written reference from an appropriate professional source (e.g., line manager or other senior colleague)
- completion of a diagnostic assessment or written task to demonstrate academic capability at Level 5

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

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

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

1.8 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer of Credits

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

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

Where there is evidence that the learner's knowledge and skills are current, valid and sufficient, the use of RPL may be acceptable for recognising achievement of assessment criteria, learning outcome or unit(s), as applicable. The requirement for RPL in such instances

must also include a consideration of the currency of the knowledge gained by the learner at the time they undertook the prior learning.

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

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

No transfer of credits is permitted.

1.9 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

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

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

1.10 Relationship to Other Qualifications and Progression Opportunities

Learners typically progress to this qualification from Level 4 qualifications in business management, business studies, or related disciplines, including the GA Level 4 Diploma in Business Management and Innovation qualification. This qualification may also be appropriate for individuals progressing from other Level 4 awards or from the workplace, where they can demonstrate sufficient management experience and readiness for Level 5 study.

Upon successful completion, learners may progress to:

- Level 6 qualifications including undergraduate degrees in business management, strategic management, innovation, leadership or related fields, subject to the receiving institution's entry requirements and individual recognition decisions

- other Level 6 professional diplomas or senior management qualifications

- employed roles or advancement into senior management, strategic leadership, business development or organisational change positions

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1.11 Language of Assessment

This qualification is offered in English.

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

1.12 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available in the UK and internationally.

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

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

2.1 Teaching and Learning Requirements

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

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

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

2.2 Assessment & Quality Assurance Model

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3 Assessment of Learners and Portfolio Requirements

All learners must complete assessment for all five mandatory units.

Assessment will enable learners to demonstrate evaluative understanding and strategic judgement across all units. Assessment will address business environment analysis and strategic decision making, governance and organisational direction, strategic financial decision making and investment, innovation as a driver of strategic change, and the role of ethical leadership and sustainability in shaping long-term organisational outcomes.

Learners will be assessed through written assignments that require evaluation of strategic management concepts and their application to complex or realistic organisational contexts.

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

To meet the assessment requirements, learners must:

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

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

Suitable sources of evidence may include the following:

- essays/assignments
- short questions and answers
- professional discussions
- workbooks
- reflective accounts
- records of questioning
- case studies

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

Assurances that learner work is authentic can be gained via:

1. oral questioning to confirm knowledge and understanding.

2. written questions answered under controlled supervised conditions to compare the learner's writing style against their other work.

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

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

2.4 CRAVES Requirements

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

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

2.5 Resubmissions

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

The decision regarding whether to permit a learner to resubmit work and/or attempt an assessment again will be based on an evaluation of how closely their previous attempts met the passing criteria. This evaluation will consider the extent to which the learner's work demonstrated progress towards meeting the required standards.

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

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

- Additional support – consider whether the learner could benefit from additional support, remedial guidance, or additional resources to help them understand the material better. This could involve providing extra teaching sessions, study materials, or one-on-one tutoring to address specific areas of difficulty. Sometimes, extending deadlines or providing additional time can alleviate pressure and allow for better comprehension and performance.

- Review and feedback - consider whether sufficient detailed feedback, which highlights areas that need improvement and provides specific guidance on how the learner can enhance their work, has been provided after each attempt.

- Alternative assessment methods - consider whether an alternative assessment method, such as the use of professional discussion, may provide opportunities for the learner to demonstrate their understanding. The centre should refer to the GA Candidate Access Policy for further information.

- Reconsideration of participation - assess whether the learner might need to take a break from the programme or whether, despite supportive measures and multiple attempts, the learner's progress is not indicative that they will meet the qualification requirements. They may be issued with a final 'Fail' grade or withdraw from the programme.

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

2.6 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

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

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

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

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

2.7 Grading and Recording Achievement

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

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

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

2.8 Unit and Portfolio Sign Off

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

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

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

2.9 External Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

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

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

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

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

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

2.10 Registering Learners and Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)

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

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

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

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

2.11 ID Requirements

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

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

2.12 Record Keeping

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

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

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

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

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

2.13 Results and Certification

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

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

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

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

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

Replacement certificates are available upon request.

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

2.14 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claim Status is not available for this qualification.

2.15 Appeals and Enquiries

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

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

Section 3: Staff and Resource Requirements for Centres

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

3.1 General Staff Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.2 Requirements for Teachers and Assessors

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

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

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

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

All teachers must:

- hold an appropriate qualification in a business management/innovation related subject at Level 5 or above

AND

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

*In the absence of a regulated teaching qualification, the teacher 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 two years of commencing their role in order to continue to deliver the qualification. Trainee teachers MUST be mentored by a suitable qualified teacher.

All assessors must:

- hold an appropriate qualification in a business management/innovation related subject at Level 5 or above

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
  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.

Further information about supporting staff members working towards required qualifications, including requirements for mentoring, counter-signatories and record-keeping, along with expectations for participation in centre-led standardisation activities and instructions for increased sampling and internal moderation activities are also detailed in the Centre Handbook.

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.

- hold an appropriate qualification in a business management/innovation related subject at Level 4 or above

AND

- hold, or be working towards***, one of the following internal quality assurance qualifications or their recognised equivalent:
  o Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
  o Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
  o V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
  o 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 IQA. Trainee IQA's decisions MUST be counter-signed by a suitably qualified, experienced IQA.

IQAs must 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.

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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. There is no set minimum number of hours of CPD required; however, the CPD activities must reflect contemporary standards and developments in the subject matter and content being delivered.

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

3.5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Resources

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

- ensure teaching and learning materials directly address the learning outcomes and sufficiently prepare learners for assessment.
- structure materials to be accessible and engaging.
- use clear, unambiguous language appropriate for the level.
- align materials to the specific topics and content.
- pitch the level and depth of materials accurately based on the content to be delivered.
- ensure materials can be clearly attributed back to the centre.
- offer opportunities and resources for additional research and study, where appropriate.
- offer opportunity for learners to relate teaching and learning content to their own experience.
- ensure materials provide any relevant guidance to staff on consistent delivery.

Course programmes must be designed using the assessment requirements and unit specifications content in Section 4 below.

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

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

3.6 Venue and Equipment Requirements

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

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

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

For this qualification, suitable equipment includes:

- access to library resources, academic journals, and relevant literature
- IT facilities and systems to support research, presentations, and access to online learning materials
- relevant case study materials or scenario-based resources and operations and business organisational contexts
- a suitable environment for assessment activities, including facilities for presentations, examinations, or viva voce assessments where applicable
- a virtual learning environment (VLE) or online platforms to support blended or distance learning delivery models

3.7 Ongoing Support

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 4: Unit Specifications

4.1 Mandatory Unit 1: Analysis of the Business Environment

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Analysis of the Business Environment	120	24	5	Y/652/0094

In this unit, learners will analyse how organisations use business environment analysis to inform strategic decision making. Learners will understand how internal and external factors influence strategic priorities, risk and long-term direction.

Learners will be able to evaluate the impact of external change and competitive conditions on organisational strategy, and analyse how internal resources, capabilities and constraints affect strategic potential. They will also assess the risks that arise when strategy is not aligned with internal capacity or external conditions.

The unit enables learners to analyse how organisations plan for uncertainty and change and evaluate how strategic coherence and long-term intent can be maintained while responding to a dynamic business environment.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.

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

Learning Outcomes The learner will	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the importance of organisations analysing the business environment	1.1 Analyse the reasons organisations use business environment analysis to inform strategic decision making
	IC: Use of business environment analysis to support informed and structured strategic decision making; understanding external pressures and internal conditions that influence organisational choices; role of analysis in identifying strategic risks, constraints and

	potential areas of opportunity; supporting proactive rather than reactive strategic responses; contribution of environmental insight to improving the credibility, coherence and defensibility of strategic decisions; importance of analysis in supporting longer-term organisational planning under conditions of uncertainty and change.
	1.2 Evaluate how business environment analysis supports strategic judgement and prioritisation when organisations face competing demands
	IC: Role of business environment analysis in supporting strategic judgement when organisations face competing demands and limited resources; use of environmental insight to prioritise issues, risks and opportunities; contribution of analysis to assessing relative importance, urgency and impact of strategic considerations; role of environmental understanding in supporting reasoned choices between alternative strategic directions; limitations of prioritisation when environmental information is incomplete or uncertain.
	1.3 Analyse the role of business environment analysis in managing risk, uncertainty and constraint in strategic decisions
	IC: Contribution of business environment analysis to recognising and interpreting uncertainty within strategic contexts; role of analysis in identifying sources of strategic risk and constraint arising from external volatility or internal limitations; use of environmental insight to assess likelihood, impact and exposure rather than eliminate uncertainty; supporting informed risk awareness and tolerance in strategic decision making; role of analysis in helping organisations operate within constraints while still pursuing strategic objectives.
	1.4 Evaluate the consequences for organisations of failing to use business environment analysis in strategic planning
	IC: Potential consequences of limited or absent business environment analysis for strategic planning; increased likelihood of poorly informed or misaligned strategic decisions; exposure to avoidable risk and strategic blind spots; risk of reactive, short-term or inconsistent strategic direction; impact on organisational resilience, competitiveness and long-term viability when decisions are not grounded in environmental understanding.
	2.1 Analyse how changes in the external environment influence strategic priorities and direction

	IC: Influence of changes in economic, political, regulatory, technological and social conditions on organisational strategic priorities; impact of external change on long-term goals, focus areas and organisational direction; role of environmental shifts in prompting reassessment of existing strategies; influence of emerging trends on decisions about growth, stability or retrenchment; strategic implications of operating in stable versus rapidly changing external environments.
2. Understand how external factors affect organisational strategy	2.2 Evaluate how organisations respond strategically to external pressures and constraints
	IC: Strategic responses organisations adopt when facing external pressures such as regulation, market conditions or resource availability; evaluation of alternative strategic responses including adaptation, repositioning or withdrawal; role of organisational judgement in balancing external demands with internal capability; limitations on strategic choice created by external constraints; effectiveness of different strategic responses in maintaining organisational purpose and direction.
	2.3 Analyse how external conditions shape strategic risk and opportunity
	IC: Relationship between external conditions and exposure to strategic risk; influence of environmental volatility on uncertainty and decision making; role of external change in creating new opportunities alongside increased risk; assessment of how external factors affect likelihood, impact and scale of strategic outcomes; strategic implications of misjudging risk or opportunity arising from the external environment.
	2.4 Evaluate the challenges organisations face when aligning strategy with changing external conditions
	IC: Challenges associated with maintaining strategic alignment during periods of external change; difficulty of balancing long-term strategy with short-term external pressures; impact of timing, speed and unpredictability of change on strategic alignment; constraints arising from organisational commitments, resources or legacy decisions; risk of strategic drift when organisations fail to adjust effectively to evolving external conditions.

	3.1 Analyse how competitive conditions influence organisational strategic choices
	IC: *Influence of competitive intensity on organisational strategic choices; impact of competitor behaviour, market saturation and rivalry on decisions relating to growth, differentiation or consolidation; role of competitive conditions in shaping strategic scope and direction; influence of market entry and exit dynamics on organisational choices; relationship between competitive conditions and the range of viable strategic options available to organisations.*
	3.2 Evaluate how organisations position themselves strategically in response to competitors
3. Understand how competition affects organisational decisions	IC: *Strategic positioning as a response to competitor presence and behaviour; evaluation of how organisations seek relative advantage through differentiation, focus or cost positioning; role of perception, reputation and comparative value in strategic positioning decisions; consideration of how positioning choices reflect competitive context and organisational intent; limitations and risks associated with chosen positioning approaches.*
	3.3 Analyse how competitive pressure affects organisational priorities and trade-offs
	IC: *Effect of competitive pressure on organisational prioritisation of resources, activities and strategic objectives; influence of competition on trade-offs between cost, quality, innovation and speed; impact of rivalry on decisions about investment, focus and risk tolerance; tensions created by competing demands in highly competitive markets; implications of competitive pressure for internal alignment and strategic consistency.*
	3.4 Evaluate the risks and consequences of strategic decisions made in highly competitive environments
	IC: *Risks associated with strategic decision making in highly competitive environments; potential consequences of misjudging competitor actions or market responses; exposure to strategic failure, reduced margins or loss of position; impact of aggressive competition on organisational resilience and sustainability; long-term implications of competitive strategic decisions for organisational performance and viability.*

4. Understand how internal factors affect strategic potential	4.1 Analyse how internal resources and capabilities influence an organisation's strategic potential
	IC: Role of internal resources and capabilities in shaping what organisations are realistically able to achieve strategically; influence of skills, knowledge, assets and organisational experience on strategic scope; relationship between capability strength or weakness and strategic opportunity; importance of understanding internal capacity when assessing strategic feasibility; strategic implications of overestimating or underutilising organisational capabilities.
	4.2 Evaluate how organisational structure, culture and systems affect the ability to pursue strategic aims
	IC: Influence of organisational structure on communication, coordination and decision making; impact of organisational culture on strategic alignment, risk tolerance and openness to change; role of formal systems and processes in enabling or constraining strategic activity; interaction between structure, culture and systems in supporting or limiting strategic intent; evaluation of how internal organisational arrangements affect the execution of strategic aims.
	4.3 Analyse how internal constraints shape strategic choices and prioritisation
	IC: Nature of internal constraints such as limited resources, capacity, skills or organisational readiness; influence of constraints on strategic prioritisation and sequencing of initiatives; trade-offs required when strategic ambition exceeds internal capability; role of constraint awareness in shaping realistic and sustainable strategic choices; implications of internal limitations for strategic focus and timing.
	4.4 Evaluate the risks of misalignment between internal factors and strategic ambition
	IC: Risks arising when strategic ambition is not matched by internal resources, structures or systems; potential consequences such as strategic failure, inefficiency or organisational strain; impact of misalignment on credibility, morale and performance; long-term implications for organisational resilience and sustainability; importance of aligning internal conditions with strategic intent to support effective implementation.
5. Understand how uncertainty and change affect long-term planning	5.1 Analyse how uncertainty influences long-term strategic planning and decision making
	IC: Influence of uncertainty on long-term strategic planning where outcomes, conditions or future events cannot be predicted with

	confidence; impact of incomplete or ambiguous information on strategic assumptions and planning horizons; role of uncertainty in shaping cautious, staged or adaptive planning approaches; implications of uncertainty for confidence in long-term decisions; challenges of committing resources and direction in uncertain strategic contexts.
	5.2 Evaluate how organisations anticipate and respond to change when planning for the long term
	IC: Ways organisations seek to anticipate change through awareness of trends, signals and emerging developments; evaluation of organisational responses to anticipated change when shaping long-term plans; role of judgement in deciding when to adapt plans and when to maintain direction; limitations of foresight and anticipation in dynamic environments; effectiveness of different approaches to planning for change over extended timeframes.
	5.3 Analyse the impact of rapid or unpredictable change on strategic coherence and continuity
	IC: Impact of rapid or unpredictable change on the consistency and stability of long-term strategy; risk of fragmented or reactive decision making when change outpaces planning assumptions; challenges of maintaining strategic coherence during periods of disruption; tension between responding to immediate change and preserving overall strategic direction; implications of discontinuity for organisational focus and performance.
	5.4 Evaluate the challenges organisations face in balancing flexibility with long-term strategic intent
	IC: Challenges associated with maintaining flexibility while preserving long-term strategic intent; risk of excessive rigidity or excessive adaptation in response to change; judgement required to balance responsiveness with commitment to strategic direction; influence of organisational culture, governance and planning processes on this balance; implications of poor balance for strategic effectiveness and long-term organisational sustainability.

4.2 Mandatory Unit 2: Strategic Management and Organisational Direction

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Strategic Management and Organisational Direction	120	24	5	A/652/0095

In this unit, the learner will analyse the role of strategic management in providing clear organisational direction and coherence. Learners will understand how strategic management supports alignment between purpose, priorities, resources and activity, and how organisations balance short-term pressures with long-term objectives.

Learners will be able to analyse how organisational purpose, mission and values shape strategic direction, and evaluate how strategic objectives are established, prioritised and communicated. They will also assess the challenges organisations face when translating broad strategic direction into clear and achievable objectives.

The unit enables learners to analyse the role of governance, accountability and oversight in strategic decision making, and evaluate the consequences of weak or ineffective governance. Learners will also be able to analyse how strategic decisions are implemented, monitored and reviewed, and evaluate the challenges of maintaining strategic alignment over time.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.

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

Learning Outcomes The learner will	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the purpose of strategic management within organisations	1.1 Analyse the purpose of strategic management in providing organisational direction and coherence
	IC: *Role of strategic management in establishing clear organisational direction and long-term intent; importance of aligning organisational mission, values and strategic priorities; contribution of strategic management to ensuring consistency between goals, decisions and*

	organisational activity; role of strategic management in coordinating effort and reducing conflicting priorities; importance of strategic management in maintaining coherence during change or uncertainty.
	1.2 Evaluate how strategic management supports coordination between organisational goals, resources and activities
	IC: Role of strategic management in coordinating organisational goals with available resources and operational activity; evaluation of how strategic priorities influence allocation of financial, human and physical resources; importance of sequencing and prioritisation in aligning activities with strategic objectives; role of strategic management in managing trade-offs between competing demands and limited resources; limitations and challenges of achieving effective coordination across functions, teams or business units.
	1.3 Analyse the role of strategic management in balancing short-term pressures with long-term priorities
	IC: Influence of immediate operational, financial or external pressures on organisational decision making; importance of maintaining a long-term strategic perspective while responding to short-term demands; role of strategic frameworks and priorities in guiding decisions under pressure; contribution of strategic management to protecting long-term objectives from short-term disruption; risks to organisational stability, sustainability and direction when short-term considerations consistently override longer-term priorities.
	1.4 Evaluate the consequences for organisations of weak or ineffective strategic management
	IC: Impact of unclear or inconsistent strategic direction on organisational performance and focus; increased risk of fragmented decision making and misaligned priorities; consequences of poor coordination between goals, resources and activity; exposure to short-term, reactive or contradictory decisions; implications for organisational resilience, credibility and long-term sustainability when strategic management is weak or ineffective.
2. Understand how organisational direction and strategic objectives are determined	2.1 Analyse how organisational purpose, mission and values influence strategic direction
	IC: Influence of organisational purpose in shaping overall strategic intent and long-term direction; role of mission statements in clarifying organisational focus and priorities; contribution of organisational

	values to guiding strategic choices and acceptable courses of action; relationship between stated purpose, mission and values and actual strategic behaviour; risks and limitations when organisational purpose, mission or values are unclear, inconsistent or not reflected in strategic decisions.
	2.2 Evaluate how strategic objectives are established and prioritised within organisations
	IC: Processes used to translate organisational direction into specific strategic objectives; role of leadership judgement, analysis and consultation in setting objectives; evaluation of how objectives are prioritised in response to limited resources and competing demands; influence of risk, opportunity and organisational capability on objective selection; challenges and limitations involved in establishing clear, realistic and coherent strategic objectives.
	2.3 Analyse the role of leadership judgement and organisational context in shaping strategic objectives
	IC: Influence of leadership judgement in interpreting organisational purpose, priorities and external conditions when shaping strategic objectives; role of experience, values and risk tolerance in leadership decision making; impact of organisational context such as culture, structure, capability and resources on the range of feasible objectives; interaction between leadership judgement and contextual constraints in determining strategic focus; risks associated with overreliance on individual judgement or failure to account for organisational context.
	2.4 Evaluate the challenges organisations face when translating broad direction into clear strategic objectives
	IC: Difficulty of converting broad organisational purpose and strategic intent into specific, measurable objectives; challenges of maintaining clarity and focus when direction is interpreted differently across leadership levels or functions; impact of uncertainty, competing priorities and limited resources on objective clarity; risk of objectives becoming vague, unrealistic or misaligned with organisational capability; implications for strategic execution when objectives lack precision or shared understanding.
3. Understand the role of governance and	3.1 Analyse the role of governance structures in overseeing strategic decision making

oversight in strategic decision making	*IC: Role of governance structures such as boards, committees or oversight bodies in monitoring strategic decision making; contribution of governance arrangements to providing challenge, scrutiny and assurance over strategic choices; importance of separation between strategic oversight and operational management; role of governance in ensuring decisions align with organisational purpose, obligations and risk appetite; limitations and risks associated with weak, unclear or ineffective governance structures.*
	3.2 Evaluate how accountability and responsibility are applied to strategic decisions within organisations
	IC: Allocation of accountability and responsibility for strategic decisions across leadership and governance roles; evaluation of how decision ownership, authority and reporting lines are defined and applied; role of accountability in supporting transparency, challenge and informed decision making; challenges in maintaining clear accountability where decisions are shared, delegated or complex; risks to organisational effectiveness and integrity when accountability for strategic decisions is unclear or poorly enforced.
	3.3 Analyse how governance arrangements influence risk management and strategic assurance
	IC: Influence of governance arrangements on how strategic risks are identified, assessed and monitored; role of governance in setting risk appetite and tolerance for strategic decisions; contribution of oversight mechanisms to providing assurance over decision quality, compliance and alignment with organisational objectives; relationship between governance processes and confidence in strategic outcomes; limitations of risk management and assurance where governance arrangements are weak, fragmented or ineffective.
	3.4 Evaluate the consequences of ineffective governance for strategic outcomes and organisational integrity
	IC: Impact of ineffective governance on the quality and consistency of strategic decision making; increased likelihood of poorly managed risk, weak oversight or strategic failure; consequences for organisational integrity including loss of trust, credibility and ethical standards; potential legal, regulatory or reputational damage arising from governance failure; long-term implications for organisational performance, resilience and stakeholder confidence when governance arrangements are ineffective.

4. Understand how strategic decisions are implemented and reviewed within organisations	4.1 Analyse how strategic decisions are translated into organisational actions and plans
	IC: Processes used to convert strategic decisions into operational plans, initiatives and actions; role of planning, resource allocation and responsibility in supporting implementation; importance of aligning actions and plans with agreed strategic priorities; influence of organisational structures and systems on effective execution; risks of misalignment or breakdown between strategic decisions and operational activity.
	4.2 Evaluate the role of communication and coordination in effective strategy implementation
	IC: Role of clear communication in ensuring shared understanding of strategic decisions and expectations; importance of coordination across teams, functions or levels in delivering strategic actions; evaluation of how communication supports engagement, commitment and alignment during implementation; challenges created by poor communication or weak coordination; consequences for strategy delivery when messages are unclear, inconsistent or not effectively shared.
	4.3 Analyse how organisations monitor and review the effectiveness of strategic decisions
	IC: Use of performance information, indicators and feedback to assess the effectiveness of strategic decisions; role of review processes in comparing outcomes against intended objectives; contribution of monitoring and review to identifying gaps, issues or unintended consequences; importance of learning and reflection in refining strategic decisions over time; limitations of monitoring where measures are poorly defined, delayed or not acted upon.
	4.4 Evaluate the challenges organisations face in maintaining strategic alignment during implementation and review
	IC: Challenges of maintaining alignment between strategic intent and operational activity during implementation; impact of changing circumstances, competing priorities or resource pressures on strategic focus; difficulty of sustaining alignment across different organisational levels, functions or timeframes; risk of strategic drift when review processes are weak or poorly integrated with decision making;

	implications for organisational performance and coherence when alignment is not effectively maintained.

4.3 Mandatory Unit 3: Financial Decision Making

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Financial Decision Making	120	24	5	D/652/0096

In this unit, learners will analyse how financial decision making supports organisational strategy. Learners will understand how strategic priorities, financial constraints and risk influence financial choices and trade-offs.

Learners will be able to assess and compare financial options when making strategic decisions, and analyse how financial risk and uncertainty affect strategic judgement. They will also evaluate how organisations balance potential returns against financial risk when selecting strategic options.

The unit enables learners to analyse how strategic financial decisions are reviewed and adjusted over time, and assess the challenges organisations face when revising financial commitments. Learners will also evaluate how strategic investment and funding decisions affect organisational flexibility, resilience and long-term sustainability.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.

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

Learning Outcomes The learner will	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the role of financial decision making in organisational strategy	1.1 Analyse how strategic priorities influence financial decision making within organisations
	IC: Influence of organisational strategic priorities on financial planning and decision making; relationship between strategic objectives and choices about spending, investment and cost control; role of financial decision making in supporting strategic focus areas such as growth, stability or transformation; impact of prioritisation on how financial

	resources are allocated across competing initiatives; risks arising when financial decisions are not aligned with strategic priorities.
	1.2 Assess how financial constraints shape strategic choices and trade-offs
	IC: Impact of limited financial resources on the range of strategic options available to organisations; role of budgetary constraints in forcing prioritisation between competing strategic initiatives; influence of cash flow, cost structures and funding availability on strategic choices; trade-offs between short-term affordability and long-term strategic benefit; risks and implications of pursuing strategic ambitions that exceed financial capacity.
	1.3 Evaluate how financial decision making supports long-term organisational sustainability
	IC: Contribution of financial decision making to maintaining organisational viability over the long term; role of prudent financial planning in supporting sustainable growth, stability and resilience; importance of balancing investment, cost management and risk in financial decisions; evaluation of how financial choices affect an organisation's ability to adapt to change and withstand financial pressure; implications for long-term sustainability when financial decision making is short-term, reactive or poorly informed.
	1.4 Evaluate the consequences of poor financial decision making for strategic outcomes
	IC: Impact of poor financial decision making on the achievement of strategic objectives; increased likelihood of misallocated resources, underinvestment or financial instability; consequences for organisational competitiveness, resilience and credibility; exposure to heightened financial risk or reduced strategic flexibility; long-term implications for organisational performance and viability when financial decisions undermine strategic intent.
2. Understand how organisations assess and compare financial options when making strategic decisions	2.1 Compare different financial options available to organisations when making strategic decisions
	IC: Range of financial options available to organisations when making strategic decisions; comparison of options such as internal funding, external finance, borrowing or reinvestment; differences in cost, risk, flexibility and control associated with alternative financial options; strategic implications of selecting particular funding or financing

	approaches; limitations and constraints that influence the availability or suitability of different financial options.
	2.2 Assess the factors organisations consider when judging the relative financial merits of strategic alternatives
	IC: Factors used to evaluate the financial attractiveness of strategic alternatives; consideration of cost, expected return and payback over time; influence of financial risk, uncertainty and affordability on decision making; role of alignment with strategic objectives when assessing financial merit; limitations of financial assessment where assumptions, forecasts or data are uncertain or incomplete.
	2.3 Analyse how financial trade-offs influence strategic choice and prioritisation
	IC: Nature of financial trade-offs involved in strategic decision making; influence of competing demands for limited financial resources on strategic choice; impact of trade-offs between cost, risk and potential return on prioritisation decisions; role of financial constraints in shaping sequencing and timing of strategic initiatives; implications for strategic focus when trade-offs are poorly understood or managed.
	2.4 Analyse how organisations select between competing financial options in the context of strategic objectives
	IC: Process of evaluating competing financial options against agreed strategic objectives; role of strategic fit in determining which financial options best support organisational priorities; consideration of timing, affordability and long-term impact when selecting between alternatives; influence of risk tolerance and resource availability on final selection decisions; challenges organisations face when financial options align differently with short-term pressures and long-term strategic goals.
3. Understand how financial risk and uncertainty affect strategic decision making	3.1 Analyse how financial risk influences strategic decision making within organisations
	IC: Influence of financial risk on organisational willingness to pursue particular strategic options; role of risk exposure in shaping decisions about investment, growth or retrenchment; impact of potential financial loss or volatility on strategic judgement and prioritisation; consideration of risk tolerance when evaluating strategic

	opportunities; implications for strategic ambition and flexibility when financial risk is perceived to be high.
	3.2 Evaluate how uncertainty affects financial assumptions used in strategic planning
	IC: Influence of uncertainty on the reliability of financial assumptions used in strategic planning; impact of unpredictable market conditions, costs or revenues on financial forecasts; evaluation of how assumptions about growth, demand or funding may change over time; challenges of planning where financial information is incomplete or volatile; risks to strategic decision making when assumptions fail to reflect uncertainty realistically.
	3.3 Assess how organisations consider risk tolerance and exposure when making strategic financial decisions
	IC: Consideration of organisational risk tolerance when evaluating strategic financial decisions; assessment of exposure to potential financial loss, volatility or downside risk; role of leadership judgement and governance in determining acceptable levels of financial risk; influence of organisational context, stability and resources on risk appetite; implications for strategic choice when risk tolerance is misjudged or poorly defined.
	3.4 Justify how organisations balance potential financial returns against financial risk and uncertainty
	IC: Judgement involved in weighing potential financial returns against levels of financial risk and uncertainty; consideration of expected benefits relative to possible downside impacts; role of strategic priorities and long-term objectives in shaping acceptable risk–return balances; influence of organisational risk tolerance and financial resilience on decision justification; consequences of overemphasising returns or risk when making strategic financial decisions.
4. Understand how strategic financial decisions are reviewed and adjusted over time	4.1 Analyse how organisations review the outcomes of strategic financial decisions
	IC: Use of financial performance information to review the outcomes of strategic financial decisions; comparison of actual results against expected financial objectives and assumptions; role of review processes in identifying variance, underperformance or unintended outcomes; importance of regular and timely review in maintaining

	financial control; limitations of review where information is delayed, incomplete or not effectively interpreted.
	4.2 Evaluate how financial performance information is used to judge the effectiveness of strategic financial decisions
	IC: Use of financial performance information to evaluate whether strategic financial decisions have achieved intended outcomes; consideration of indicators such as profitability, cash flow, return on investment or cost control; role of performance data in informing judgement about value, efficiency and strategic impact; challenges of interpreting financial information where results are influenced by external factors or time delays; risks of drawing misleading conclusions when performance information is incomplete or taken in isolation.
	4.3 Analyse how organisations adjust strategic financial decisions in response to changing circumstances or outcomes
	IC: Role of changing internal or external circumstances in prompting review of strategic financial decisions; influence of performance outcomes, market conditions or resource availability on financial adjustment; analysis of how organisations revise investment levels, funding approaches or cost structures over time; importance of flexibility and responsiveness in maintaining financial alignment with strategic objectives; risks associated with delayed, inconsistent or poorly judged financial adjustments.
	4.4 Assess the challenges organisations face when revising strategic financial decisions over time
	IC: Challenges associated with revising strategic financial decisions once commitments have been made; impact of sunk costs, contractual obligations or reputational considerations on willingness to change course; difficulty of responding to new information or outcomes in uncertain financial environments; tension between maintaining stability and adapting financial decisions over time; implications for organisational performance and strategic flexibility when revision is resisted or poorly managed.
5. Understand how organisations make strategic investment and funding decisions	5.1 Analyse how organisations distinguish between routine financial decisions and strategic investment decisions
	IC: Distinction between routine financial decisions and strategic investment decisions based on scale, risk and long-term impact;

	characteristics of strategic investment decisions such as commitment of significant resources and influence on future direction; role of strategic intent in determining whether financial decisions are considered routine or strategic; implications of misclassifying strategic investment decisions as routine; importance of appropriate levels of scrutiny and approval for strategic investments.
	5.2 Evaluate how organisations assess funding options when making strategic investment decisions
	IC: Evaluation of different funding options available for strategic investment decisions; consideration of cost, availability and conditions attached to alternative funding sources; influence of funding structure on risk, control and long-term financial position; role of strategic priorities and financial capacity in assessing suitability of funding options; limitations and challenges when funding choices constrain flexibility or increase financial exposure.
	5.3 Analyse how strategic investment decisions affect organisational flexibility and long-term financial position
	IC: Impact of strategic investment decisions on organisational flexibility and ability to respond to future change; influence of long-term financial commitments on cash flow, borrowing capacity and resource availability; relationship between investment decisions and long-term financial stability or vulnerability; analysis of how investment timing and scale affect financial resilience; risks associated with investments that reduce flexibility or constrain future strategic options.
	5.4 Evaluate the consequences of ineffective strategic investment and funding decisions for organisational performance and resilience
	IC: Consequences of ineffective strategic investment and funding decisions for organisational performance and financial stability; increased exposure to financial strain, reduced competitiveness or constrained growth; impact on organisational resilience and ability to respond to change or external shocks; long-term implications for sustainability where investment decisions undermine financial capacity; reputational, operational or strategic risks arising from poorly judged investment or funding choices.

4.4 Mandatory Unit 4: Innovation and Organisational Change

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
4	Innovation and Organisational Change	120	24	5	F/652/0097

In this unit, learners will analyse the role of innovation within organisational strategy and evaluate how innovation supports competitiveness, positioning and long-term direction. Learners will understand why organisations pursue innovation and the consequences of failing to integrate innovation into strategic planning.

Learners will analyse how organisations make strategic choices about innovation, including decisions about timing, prioritisation and selection when resources are limited. They will also assess how organisational context influences innovation choices and strategic focus.

The unit enables learners to analyse how innovation leads to organisational change, including changes to structures, roles, culture and ways of working. Learners will evaluate how the scale and nature of innovation affect the extent of change required and assess the challenges of managing innovation-driven change.

Learners will also be able to analyse how organisations assess the outcomes of strategic change, identify intended and unintended consequences, and apply learning from change to inform future innovation and decision making.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.

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

Learning Outcomes The learner will	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the purpose of innovation	1.1 Analyse why organisations pursue innovation as part of their strategic approach

within organisational strategy	*IC: Reasons organisations pursue innovation to support long-term strategic objectives; role of innovation in responding to changing markets, technologies or customer expectations; contribution of innovation to maintaining competitiveness, relevance and differentiation; use of innovation to address strategic constraints or challenges; risks and limitations associated with pursuing innovation without clear strategic intent.*
	1.2 Evaluate how innovation supports organisational positioning, competitiveness and future direction
	IC: Role of innovation in shaping how organisations position themselves within competitive markets; evaluation of how innovative products, services or processes contribute to competitive advantage; influence of innovation on perceptions of value, relevance and differentiation; importance of innovation in supporting future strategic direction and growth opportunities; limitations of innovation as a source of competitiveness where it is poorly aligned with organisational capability or market needs.
	1.3 Analyse the role of innovation in addressing strategic challenges and constraints
	IC: Role of innovation in overcoming strategic challenges such as resource limitations, competitive pressure or changing market conditions; use of innovation to respond to constraints affecting growth, efficiency or capability; influence of innovative approaches on expanding strategic options where traditional solutions are limited; contribution of innovation to problem solving and adaptation within constrained environments; risks associated with relying on innovation to resolve challenges without sufficient capability or support.
	1.4 Evaluate the consequences for organisations of failing to integrate innovation into strategic planning
	IC: Consequences of failing to embed innovation within strategic planning processes; increased risk of strategic stagnation, loss of relevance or reduced competitiveness; impact on an organisation's ability to respond to change, disruption or emerging opportunities; exposure to long-term decline where existing strategies are not refreshed through innovation; implications for organisational resilience and future viability when innovation is treated as isolated or ad hoc rather than strategic.

	2.1 Analyse how organisations decide whether and when to pursue innovation at a strategic level
	IC: Factors influencing decisions about whether innovation should be pursued as part of organisational strategy; consideration of strategic priorities, competitive position and organisational readiness when determining the need for innovation; role of timing in deciding when innovation is appropriate or necessary; influence of risk, uncertainty and resource availability on innovation decisions; consequences of delayed, premature or poorly timed innovation at a strategic level.
	2.2 Evaluate the factors organisations consider when prioritising innovation initiatives
2. Understand how organisations make strategic choices about innovation	*IC: Factors influencing the prioritisation of innovation initiatives within organisational strategy; evaluation of strategic fit, potential value and alignment with organisational objectives; consideration of resource availability, capability and capacity when prioritising innovation; influence of risk, uncertainty and time horizons on prioritisation decisions; challenges of balancing multiple innovation initiatives against existing strategic and operational demands.*
	2.3 Analyse how organisational context influences strategic innovation choices
	IC: Influence of organisational context on the range and nature of strategic innovation choices; impact of factors such as culture, structure, leadership style and existing capabilities on innovation decisions; role of organisational history, size and sector in shaping innovation appetite; interaction between internal context and external pressures when determining innovation approaches; risks associated with pursuing innovation strategies that are poorly matched to organisational context.
	2.4 Justify how organisations select between alternative innovation paths when strategic resources are limited
	IC: Judgement involved in selecting between alternative innovation paths where strategic resources are constrained; consideration of strategic fit, potential impact and feasibility when resources are limited; role of prioritisation in balancing innovation ambition against organisational capacity; influence of risk tolerance and expected return on innovation selection decisions; consequences of poor

	justification where innovation choices dilute focus or overextend resources.
3. Understand how innovation leads to organisational change	3.1 Analyse how innovation can drive changes to organisational structures, roles and ways of working
	IC: Influence of innovation on changes to organisational structures, reporting lines and governance arrangements; impact of innovation on job roles, skill requirements and responsibilities; effect of new technologies, processes or business models on ways of working; relationship between innovation scale and the extent of organisational change required; challenges organisations face in adapting structures and roles to support innovation.
	3.2 Analyse how innovation influences organisational culture, behaviours and expectations
	IC: Influence of innovation on organisational culture, including attitudes to risk, change and experimentation; impact of innovation on employee behaviours, ways of working and decision making; role of innovation in shaping expectations around performance, learning and adaptability; relationship between innovation initiatives and cultural alignment or resistance; challenges organisations face when cultural norms and behaviours do not support innovative ways of working.
	3.3 Evaluate how the scale and nature of innovation affect the extent of organisational change required
	IC: Evaluation of how incremental versus radical innovation influences the scale of organisational change required; impact of innovation scope on the need for structural, cultural or process change; relationship between the nature of innovation and the level of disruption to existing ways of working; consideration of organisational readiness when assessing the extent of change needed; risks associated with underestimating or overestimating the scale of change required to support innovation.
	3.4 Assess the challenges organisations face when managing change resulting from innovation
	IC: Challenges associated with managing organisational change driven by innovation; resistance to change arising from uncertainty, disruption or perceived threat to existing roles and practices; difficulty of maintaining operational performance while implementing innovation-related change; importance of leadership, communication

	and support during periods of transition; risks to innovation outcomes when change is poorly planned, communicated or managed.
4. Understand how organisations assess the outcomes and effectiveness of strategic change	4.1 Analyse how organisations assess whether strategic change has achieved its intended outcomes
	IC: Use of evaluation processes to assess whether strategic change has delivered intended outcomes; comparison of actual results against planned objectives and success criteria; role of performance information and feedback in judging change effectiveness; identification of gaps between expected and realised outcomes; limitations of assessment where measures are unclear, short-term or not aligned with strategic intent.
	4.2 Evaluate how organisations identify intended and unintended consequences of strategic change
	IC: Processes used to identify both intended and unintended consequences arising from strategic change; evaluation of how monitoring, feedback and review mechanisms reveal expected and unexpected outcomes; importance of recognising positive and negative unintended effects on performance, culture or stakeholder relationships; role of organisational learning in interpreting consequences of change; risks of failing to identify unintended consequences when assessment focuses too narrowly on planned outcomes.
	4.3 Analyse how learning from strategic change informs future innovation and change decisions
	IC: Role of organisational learning in shaping future innovation and change decisions; use of insights gained from previous strategic change to refine approaches and assumptions; influence of reflection on successes and failures in improving decision making; contribution of learning to building organisational capability and confidence in managing change; risks of repeating mistakes or limiting innovation when learning from strategic change is not effectively captured or applied.
	4.4 Evaluate the risks of failing to assess and learn from the outcomes of strategic change
	IC: Risks associated with failing to assess the outcomes of strategic change effectively; increased likelihood of repeating ineffective practices or misjudged decisions; loss of insight into what contributed

	to success or failure; impact on organisational capability, adaptability and confidence in future change initiatives; long-term consequences for innovation, performance and resilience when learning from strategic change is neglected.

4.5 Mandatory Unit 5: Leadership, Ethics and Sustainable Business Practice

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
5	Leadership, Ethics and Sustainable Business Practice	120	24	5	H/652/0098

In this unit, learners will analyse how leadership judgement and ethical decision-making influence organisational values, behaviour and long-term outcomes, exploring how leadership judgement shapes what is acceptable within organisations and how ethical priorities are set when competing interests arise.

Learners will be able to explain key ethical principles relevant to organisational decision making, evaluating the ethical tensions that arise when organisational objectives and pressures conflict with ethical standards.

Learners will analyse how organisations balance ethical considerations with strategic objectives, and evaluate risks when this balance is not maintained. Learners will also be able to analyse sustainability as both an ethical and strategic consideration, and assess the risks of treating sustainability as disconnected from organisational values and strategy.

Assessment Instructions and Guidance

There are no specific instructions or guidance for this unit.

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

Learning Outcomes The learner will	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand how leadership judgement influences organisational values and decision making	1.1 Analyse how leadership judgement contributes to the formation and reinforcement of organisational values
	IC: Ways in which leadership judgement shapes what an organisation stands for and prioritises; influence of leadership decisions, behaviours and responses on defining acceptable standards and norms; role of leadership judgement in reinforcing values through consistency

	between words and actions; impact of leadership choices on how values are interpreted and applied across the organisation; risks to organisational culture and credibility where leadership judgement is inconsistent or misaligned with stated values.
	1.2 Evaluate how leadership judgement shapes what is considered acceptable or unacceptable in organisational decision making
	IC: Influence of leadership judgement on boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable organisational behaviour; impact of leadership responses to dilemmas, pressure or misconduct on decision making norms; role of leadership judgement in signalling tolerance or intolerance for ethical compromise; effect of consistent or inconsistent leadership decisions on organisational standards; implications for decision quality, trust and accountability when expectations are unclear or unevenly applied.
	1.3 Analyse how leadership judgement influences ethical priorities when organisations face competing interests
	IC: Ways leadership judgement is applied when organisations face competing ethical, commercial or stakeholder interests; influence of leadership values, experience and risk tolerance on ethical prioritisation; impact of pressure from financial targets, stakeholders or external expectations on ethical decision making; role of leadership judgement in balancing short-term demands against ethical standards; risks to organisational integrity and trust when ethical priorities are compromised or inconsistently applied under pressure.
	1.4 Evaluate the risks to organisations when leadership judgement fails to align with stated values
	IC: Impact of inconsistency between stated organisational values and leadership decision making; erosion of trust, credibility and confidence among employees, stakeholders or customers; increased risk of unethical behaviour becoming normalised within the organisation; consequences for organisational culture, morale and accountability; longer-term risks to reputation, sustainability and performance when values are not reflected in leadership judgement.
2. Understand ethical principles and their	2.1 Explain key ethical principles relevant to organisational decision making

relevance to organisational decision making	IC: Ethical principles that commonly inform organisational decision making, including fairness, honesty, integrity, accountability and responsibility; relevance of ethical principles in guiding choices that affect employees, customers, stakeholders and wider society; distinction between ethical principles and legal compliance in organisational contexts; role of ethical principles in shaping organisational standards and expectations; challenges organisations face when ethical principles are interpreted differently or applied inconsistently.
	2.2 Analyse how ethical principles are used to guide organisational decision making
	IC: Ways ethical principles are applied when evaluating options and making organisational decisions; use of ethical frameworks or codes to inform judgement in complex or sensitive situations; influence of ethical principles on balancing organisational objectives with responsibilities to stakeholders; role of ethical guidance in managing risk, uncertainty and competing interests; limitations of ethical principles where they are vague, poorly communicated or overridden by other pressures.
	2.3 Evaluate tensions that arise when ethical principles conflict with organisational objectives or pressures
	IC: Situations where ethical considerations come into tension with commercial targets, performance pressures or stakeholder demands; evaluation of how competing priorities can create ethical dilemmas in organisational decision making; impact of time pressure, financial incentives or external expectations on ethical judgement; role of leadership and governance in navigating ethical tension; risks to organisational integrity, trust and reputation when ethical principles are compromised in favour of short-term objectives.
	2.4 Assess the implications for organisations of applying ethical principles inconsistently in decision making
	IC: Consequences of inconsistent application of ethical principles across decisions, teams or leadership levels; impact on organisational trust, fairness and perceived integrity; risk of confusion or disengagement where expectations are unclear or unevenly enforced; implications for decision quality, accountability and organisational culture; longer-term effects on reputation, stakeholder confidence

	and sustainable performance when ethical standards are applied selectively.
3. Understand how organisations balance ethical considerations with strategic and commercial objectives	3.1 Analyse situations where ethical considerations conflict with strategic or commercial objectives
	IC: Examples of organisational situations where ethical considerations come into conflict with strategic goals or commercial pressures; tension between profit generation, growth targets or competitiveness and ethical responsibilities to stakeholders; influence of market pressure, investor expectations or cost constraints on ethical decision making; role of leadership judgement in recognising and framing ethical conflict; risks associated with ignoring or oversimplifying ethical considerations in pursuit of strategic or commercial objectives.
	3.2 Evaluate how organisations prioritise between ethical considerations and strategic or commercial pressures
	IC: Approaches organisations use to weigh ethical considerations against strategic or commercial demands; evaluation of how leadership judgement, governance and organisational values influence prioritisation decisions; factors such as risk, reputational impact and long-term sustainability in shaping ethical trade-offs; role of formal policies or frameworks in supporting prioritisation under pressure; consequences of prioritisation decisions for trust, credibility and organisational performance.
	3.3 Analyse the short-term and long-term implications of prioritising commercial objectives over ethical considerations
	IC: Immediate effects of favouring commercial objectives on decision speed, financial performance or competitive position; longer-term consequences for organisational trust, culture and stakeholder relationships; impact on employee morale, retention and ethical behaviour over time; risk of reputational damage, regulatory scrutiny or loss of legitimacy as ethical compromises accumulate; implications for organisational resilience and sustainability when ethical considerations are consistently subordinated to commercial priorities.
	3.4 Evaluate the organisational risks associated with failing to balance ethical considerations with strategic objectives
	IC: Organisational risks arising when ethical considerations are marginalised in strategic decision making; increased exposure to reputational damage, loss of stakeholder trust or regulatory

	intervention; impact on organisational culture, employee engagement and ethical behaviour; risk of strategic decisions undermining long-term sustainability and legitimacy; consequences for organisational resilience and performance when ethical balance is not maintained.
4. Understand sustainability as an ethical and strategic consideration in business practice	4.1 Explain sustainability as an ethical and strategic consideration within business practice
	IC: Concept of sustainability in relation to long-term organisational responsibility and impact; ethical dimensions of sustainability including responsibility to stakeholders, society and future generations; strategic importance of sustainability in supporting long-term viability, resilience and legitimacy; relationship between sustainable practices and organisational reputation, risk and performance; challenges organisations face when integrating sustainability into both ethical thinking and strategic planning.
	4.2 Analyse how ethical considerations influence how organisations interpret sustainability
	IC: Ways ethical values and principles shape how organisations define and interpret sustainability; influence of organisational beliefs about responsibility, fairness and impact on sustainability priorities; variation in sustainability interpretation depending on stakeholder expectations and ethical stance; role of leadership judgement in framing sustainability beyond compliance or cost; risks of narrow or superficial interpretations of sustainability where ethical considerations are weak or selective.
	4.3 Evaluate how sustainability is considered alongside strategic priorities in organisational decision making
	IC: Extent to which sustainability considerations are integrated into strategic planning and decision making processes; evaluation of how organisations balance sustainability goals with commercial performance, growth or efficiency objectives; influence of long-term impact, risk and reputation on strategic choices involving sustainability; role of leadership and governance in embedding sustainability within strategic priorities; challenges organisations face when sustainability objectives compete with short-term strategic pressures.
	4.4 Analyse the risks organisations face when sustainability is disconnected from ethical and strategic considerations

	IC: Risks arising when sustainability initiatives are treated as isolated, symbolic or compliance-driven rather than ethically and strategically grounded; increased likelihood of reputational damage, stakeholder scepticism or accusations of superficial practice; impact on organisational coherence where sustainability actions conflict with stated values or strategic priorities; exposure to long-term operational, regulatory or market risk when sustainability is poorly integrated; consequences for organisational resilience and credibility when sustainability lacks ethical and strategic alignment.
5. Understand how leadership and ethical decision-making shape long-term sustainable organisational outcomes	5.1 Analyse how leadership decisions influence long-term organisational sustainability
	IC: Impact of leadership decisions on an organisation's long-term viability, resilience and capacity to adapt; influence of leadership judgement on balancing short-term performance with sustainable practices; role of leadership choices in shaping organisational culture, resource use and strategic direction over time; contribution of consistent leadership behaviour to embedding sustainability into everyday decision making; risks to long-term sustainability where leadership decisions prioritise immediate gains over enduring organisational health.
	5.2 Evaluate how ethical decision making contributes to sustainable organisational outcomes
	IC: Contribution of ethical decision making to long-term organisational stability, trust and legitimacy; influence of ethically informed choices on stakeholder relationships, reputation and confidence; role of ethical consistency in supporting sustainable performance and risk management; evaluation of how ethical decision-making shapes organisational culture and behaviour over time; consequences for sustainability when ethical considerations are marginalised or applied inconsistently.
	5.3 Analyse how consistent or inconsistent ethical leadership affects organisational trust, reputation and resilience
	IC: Effects of consistent ethical leadership on building trust among employees, stakeholders and external partners; influence of ethical consistency on organisational reputation and perceived credibility; impact of inconsistent or contradictory leadership behaviour on confidence, morale and ethical culture; relationship between ethical leadership and organisational resilience during periods of challenge or

	uncertainty; long-term implications for performance and sustainability when ethical leadership is unreliable or undermined.

Document Specification:					
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Links to Ofqual GCR:	E3; G6; G7; H2	Other relevant documents:	GA Centre Handbook GA Candidate Access Policy GA Malpractice & Maladministration Policy GA CASS Strategy and General Moderation Policy GA Quality Assurance policy		