



Qualification Specification

GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy 610/5388/0

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

Section 1 - Qualifications Overview

1.1 Introduction: About the Gatehouse Awards Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy Qualification.

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

This specification covers the GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy (610/5388/0).

The GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy has been designed to meet the demands of the rapidly advancing animal osteopathy industry. Recognised as a specialised profession, Animal Osteopathy requires a thorough understanding of the wider veterinary and animal paraprofessional sectors, animal physiological systems, and the importance of professionalism and accurate record-keeping.

To ensure practitioners are well-equipped to handle the complexities and risks of working in this field, this qualification covers a broad spectrum of topics in depth, enabling practitioners to enhance their practice, improve animal welfare, and establish a recognised career in Animal Osteopathy. It provides a valued qualification for those committed to becoming Animal Osteopathic Practitioners acknowledged by both insurers and veterinarians as the industry continues to develop.

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

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

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

This qualification is not designed to replace any existing qualifications.

1.2 Industry Body Recognition

This qualification is currently awaiting confirmation of endorsement by industry-recognised bodies.

1.3 Qualification Title, Qualification Number and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy	610/5388/0	28th February 2025	Dec 2030

1.5 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This qualification is designed to enable learners to develop effective study skills and engage in reflective practice, enhancing their clinical reasoning and critical thinking abilities. This qualification emphasises the importance of professional development and working within one's scope of practice while critically appraising the legal, ethical, and professional standards, obligations, and accountability required in the field of Animal Osteopathy.

Learners will develop valuable skills in research critique and analysis to better provide care, backed or guided by best practice and evidence. Additionally, learners will evaluate the assessment process to strengthen their clinical reasoning, discuss and apply advanced osteopathic treatment techniques, and refine their skills in managing complex cases and veterinary referrals. Throughout, learners will assess and adhere to current legislation pertaining to animal therapy and osteopathic practice on animals, including the Osteopaths Act 1993.

1.6 Qualification Structure and Overview: GLH, TQT, Credit Values and Units

The GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy qualification is listed on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications as part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy (610/5388/0)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time**
1. Professional Practice and Personal Development	K/651/5121	4	7	17	70
2. Osteopathic Principles, History and Philosophy	L/651/5122	4	12	45	120
3. Animal Behaviour and Psychology	M/651/5123	5	11	38	110
4. Animal Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Disease	R/651/5124	4	12	38	120
5. Biomechanics and Neurophysiology	T/651/5125	6	16	51	160
6. Clinical Assessment and Osteopathic Palpation	Y/651/5126	6	17	91	170
7. Osteopathic Treatment of Animals	A/651/5127	6	16	119	160
8. Advanced Osteopathic Practice	D/651/5128	6	13	95	130
9. Advanced Osteopathic Principles, History and Philosophy	F/651/5129	6	9	52	90
10. Advanced Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Disease	K/651/5130	6	7	22	70
			Total Credits 120	Total GLH* 568	GLH + Study Time = TQT** 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 this qualification.

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

Level

The qualification within this specification is designated at Level 6 on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) according to the Level Descriptors for knowledge and understanding, which build on those used within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that this qualification is considered by GA to lead to the outcome as follows:

Achievement at Level 6 reflects the ability to use advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors and understand different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them. It reflects an ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas and determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors. It also reflects the ability to use and, where appropriate, design relevant research and development to inform actions and evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.

1.7 Intended Audience, Age and Entry Requirements

The GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy is intended for learners who have professional animal experience or training and seek to enter the animal therapy industry. Learners without recognised qualifications in animal care or science may be accepted with evidence of sufficient experience in a professional or volunteering capacity. Practitioners of Human Osteopathy, Physiotherapy or Chiropractic may also be eligible to enter this qualification but will be expected to provide evidence of sufficient animal experience.

This qualification is therefore available to learners who:

- are aged 18 and above

AND

- hold a recognised qualification in animal care, veterinary science, animal sports massage or animal husbandry at Level 3 or above

OR

- hold a minimum of a full Level 3 in science-related subjects, for example, Level 3 Extended Diploma in Applied Science, Level 3 Access to Higher Education in Science, Level 3 BTEC in Applied Science, or Scottish Highers or A-levels with minimum Grades BCC with a minimum of two science-related A-level subjects (e.g. Biology, Chemistry), or equivalent.

PLUS

- have a minimum of 5 years' experience or the equivalent of 200 hours+ working with animals in a professional or voluntary role (verifiable through work references) in a hands-on capacity and with canine and equine handling experience, for example working as a veterinary nurse or animal keeper. Animal ownership alone is not sufficient.

PLUS

- can demonstrate sufficient equine handling skills.
- can demonstrate sufficient canine handling skills.

In addition to the above, learners must also be able to or must have already:

- secured a Clinical Placement in a veterinary surgery or shadowing with an Animal Osteopathic Practitioner, Human Osteopath or Animal Physiotherapist/Chiropractor.

AND

- hold suitable (student-level) insurance covering the techniques and interventions being taught and practiced, ensuring adequate protection for both the learner and any practice clients/patients while undertaking their Clinical Placement.

Due to the nature of the qualification content, those undertaking the qualification must also have a proficient level of English and maths.

We recommend that learners hold formal English language, maths and core science qualifications of at least Level 2, e.g.

- GCSE English Language, maths and science (A* - C / Grade 4 or above), or equivalent

If English is not the learner's first language, an English language level of International English C1 (CEFR) is required.

If learners have studied overseas and hold international qualifications such as an Irish Leaving Certificate or a French Baccalaureate, these may be recognised. Applicants should refer directly to the training provider for further advice and guidance.

All applicants to this qualification will receive detailed advice and guidance from the training provider in order to ensure the programme will meet their needs.

Applicants are subject to a pre-enrolment interview and initial assessment to ensure the qualification is suitable for them.

1.8 Rules of Combination

The Rules of Combination for this qualification are:

- in order to achieve the GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy qualification, learners must achieve all 10 mandatory units.

1.9 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer of Credits

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

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

Where there is evidence that the candidate's knowledge and skills are current, valid and sufficient the use of RPL may be acceptable for recognising achievement of a unit, units or whole qualification. The requirement for RPL in such instances will include a consideration of the currency of the knowledge gained by the candidate at the time they undertook the prior learning. RPL cannot be guaranteed in instances where industry practice or legislation has

significantly changed in the time since the prior learning was undertaken / a previous award was issued.

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

No transfer of credits is permitted.

1.10 Relationship to Other Qualifications & Progression Opportunities

The GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy qualification is an ideal qualification for learners who wish to progress onto further higher-level study or higher level practical occupational training or employment or self-employment.

Progression may include further continued professional development in Animal Osteopathy, additional training in physiotherapeutic techniques or human therapy training.

Examples of qualifications and further learning which learners may wish to consider following completion of the Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy are:

- Degree level study in Animal Physiotherapy, Animal Sciences, Equine Science, Equine Performance and Rehabilitation
- Further specialist study in animal therapies
- Level 6 Diploma in Applied Advanced Equine Hydrotherapy
- Level 6 Diploma in the Principles of Advanced Equine Hydrotherapy

1.11 Language of Assessment

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

1.12 Grading

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

This qualification is not graded on a scale. Learners are assessed as Pass or Fail. Learners who aren't successful can resubmit work within the registration period.

1.13 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available via GA Approved Centres in the UK and internationally. If you would like further information on offering this qualification, please contact us.

Our contact details appear on our website, www.gatehouseawards.org

Section 2: Qualification Delivery, Assessment & Quality Assurance Model

2.1 Teaching and Learning Requirements

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

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

Learners must have suitable access to teaching and assessment staff as well as technical support. Specialist staff, high quality learning materials and access to assessment opportunities are essential for all centres.

Further details and guidance on the content of teaching and learning for each unit can be accessed by approved GA centres, or upon request.

2.2 Assessment and Quality Assurance Model

For this qualification, learners' work is internally assessed and internally moderated by centre staff to clearly show where learners have achieved the learning outcomes and qualification requirements.

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

2.3 Registering Candidates & Unique Learner Numbers

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

Owing to the Total Qualification Time of this qualification, the validity period of registrations made will be 3 years. Should a candidate 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 candidate is known, this should be provided at the point of registration in order for GA to issue updates to the Learner Record Service.

2.4 ID Requirements

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

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

2.5 Record Keeping

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

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

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

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

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

Section 3 – Centre Requirements: Assessment & Quality Assurance

Course providers offering these GA qualifications must ensure that they have the following resources in place.

3.1 Staff

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

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

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

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

Requirements for Tutors and Assessors

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

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

Tutors delivering teaching and learning relating to Units 1, 3, 4, 5 and 10 must:

- hold a minimum Level 6 qualification in manual animal therapies OR be a qualified veterinarian

AND

- have a minimum of 2 years' experience working in a veterinary or manual animal therapy role

Tutors delivering teaching and learning relating to Units 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9 must:

- hold the Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy, OR a Diploma in Osteopathy (Human) OR Masters level degree in Human Osteopathy

AND

- have a minimum of 2 years' experience working as an animal osteopathic practitioner, with experience of canine and equine handling

ALL Tutors must:

- be actively working in the industry in either a practitioner or in a teaching capacity

AND

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

All Assessors must:

- hold the Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy OR a Diploma in Osteopathy (Human) OR Masters level degree in Human Osteopathy

AND

- have a minimum of 5 years' experience working as an animal osteopathic practitioner, with experience of canine and equine handling
- be actively working in the industry as either a practitioner or in a teaching and assessing capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IQAs therefore need to have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as sufficient technical understanding related to the qualifications that they are internally quality assuring. It is the centre's responsibility to select and appoint IQAs.

Assessors may have one or several appointed Internal Moderators.

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

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

- hold the Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy OR a Diploma in Osteopathy (Human) OR Masters level degree in Human Osteopathy

AND

- have a minimum of 5 years' experience working as an animal osteopathic practitioner, with experience of canine and equine handling
- be actively working in the industry as either a practitioner or in an educational quality assurance capacity

AND

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

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

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

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

Note, for Tutors, Assessors and IQAs:

- relevant professional registration/licenses must remain current, where applicable (e.g. for animal osteopathic practitioners who practice under the General Osteopathic Council)
- annual CPD requirements apply

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

Requirements for Clinical Placement Supervisors

Workplace practitioners are required to provide supervision of the learner whilst the learner undertakes clinical placement hours and shadowing activities.

Clinical Placement Supervisor must have occupational expertise. The use of workplace supervisors should be determined and agreed by the centre.

The Clinical Placement Supervisor must:

- have a working knowledge of the qualification units on which their expertise is based

AND

- be a qualified as:
 - an Animal Osteopath
 - an Animal Chiropractor
 - an Animal Physiotherapist
 - a Veterinary Surgeon

AND

- have experience in clinical practice
- have experience in the safe handling of canines and/or equines (as applicable)

The Clinical Placement Supervisor does not need to meet the requirements set out for tutors or assessors above. However, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the practitioner is suitably qualified and experienced, meets the requirements stipulated above, and is able to take direct responsibility for the treatment and management of any complications.

3.2 Assessment of Learners & Portfolio Requirements

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

To meet the assessment requirements, candidates must:

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

Various types of evidence may be used, for example:

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

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

3.3 Components of Assessment

- **Component 1 – Theory Assessment:** for the following units: Units 1 to 10.
- **Component 2 – Clinical Practice:** A log of a minimum of 200 hours of Clinical Practice hours relating to Units 6, 7, 8 and 9, consisting of:
 - a minimum 40 hours of shadowing and practice in the work environment under the supervision of a Clinical Placement Supervisor

AND

- a minimum of 160 hours of face-to-face practical training and practice in the work environment, delivered by centre tutor/assessors
- **Component 3 – Summative Assessment:** assessment of skills relating to Units 6, 7, 8 and 9, consisting of
 - Summative Practical Assessments
 - Summative Professional Discussions

Components of assessment by unit are detailed below:

Unit Number and Title	Assessment Criteria	Assessment Method
1. Professional Practice and Personal Development	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1
2. Osteopathic Principles, History and Philosophy	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1
3. Animal Behaviour and Psychology	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1
4. Animal Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Disease	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1
5. Biomechanics and Neurophysiology	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1
6. Clinical Assessment and Osteopathic Palpation	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1, Clinical Practice - Component 2 Summative Assessment - Component 3
7. Osteopathic Treatment of Animals	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1, Clinical Practice - Component 2 Summative Assessment - Component 3
8. Advanced Osteopathic Practice	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1, Clinical Practice - Component 2 Summative Assessment - Component 3
9. Advanced Osteopathic Principles, History and Philosophy	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1, Clinical Practice - Component 2 Summative Assessment - Component 3
10. Advanced Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Disease	ALL	Portfolio – Component 1

3.4 Breakdown of Components of Assessment

Component 1 - Theory Assessment: Units 1 to 10.

This component comprises the theoretical knowledge assessment covering Units 1-10.

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

Component 2 – Clinical Practice: Units 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Learners must demonstrate the completion of at least 200 hours of practical face to face work shadowing, practical training and experience before being awarded this qualification.

GA provides a Practical Skills Log document to approved centres for this purpose.

Learners must be supervised by a Clinical Workplace Supervisor in the work environment for a minimum of 40 hours.

Learners must be supervised by a centre tutor or assessor in the work environment for a minimum of 160 hours.

A learner may complete their required hours across multiple placements. Where a work placement is used, the centre must maintain regular contact with both the learner and the supervisor throughout to monitor the learner's progress.

During the Clinical Practice component, the learner must acquire and be observed demonstrating proficiency in carrying out treatments:

- a minimum of three different patients, under the direct supervision of the Clinical Workplace Supervisor
- a minimum of 5 'live' patients (*real animals*), under the direct supervision of a centre Tutor/Assessor
- a range of animals including at least canine and equine.

It is important that the practical skills training component is integral to the programme so that the learner is provided with the opportunity to observe and develop the relevant practical skills and reach proficiency under the correct level of supervision.

Observed treatments are expected to reflect a range of different musculoskeletal conditions and associated visceral complaints.

Clinical settings must meet the minimum venue equipment requirements specified below and must maintain appropriate insurance cover for their facility.

The centre must be able to verify the learner's completion of Component 2, confirming successful completion of a minimum of 200 practical hours.

It is the responsibility of the centre to identify and address any conflicts of interest or bias arising from the allocation of centre staff and workplace supervisors.

Clinical Placement hours and activities must be documented in the Clinical Skills Logbook and Competency Record.

The Clinical Skills Logbook and Competency Record must be supplemented with relevant evidence, such as images, videos, photos, and relevant documentation. The centre's qualified Assessor must sign off the Clinical Skills Logbook and Competency Record.

Learners must complete all required practical hours prior to undertaking the summative practical assessment.

Component 3 – Summative Assessment – Units 6, 7, 8 and 9.

Learners must complete:

- a) 3 x Summative Practical Assessments
- b) 3 x Summative Professional Interviews

a) Summative Practical Assessments

Each Practical Assessment will last a maximum of 45 minutes and must be delivered face-to-face.

The learner must complete their Clinical Practice hours prior to being permitted to undertake the Summative Practical Assessments & Professional Interviews. The Assessor must sign off the Clinical Skills Logbook and Competency Record prior to scheduling the Summative Assessments.

The learner must complete THREE Summative Practical Assessments.

The Summative Practical Assessments must reflect real scenarios and enable learners to demonstrate their practical skills. The welfare of the patient, whether an actual patient or acting as one for the purpose of the assessment, must be prioritised at all times.

During the Practical Assessment, the learner will prepare the animal, handle the animal, and execute the session accordingly, following the Animal Osteopathy Protocol. Practical Assessments can take place on more than one site.

The learner is able to make clinical notes as they go during the Summative Practical Assessments, however the learner is NOT allowed to bring any pre-prepared notes in with them.

Summative Practical Assessments must be video recorded, stored securely on a suitable platform and made available for internal and external moderation.

To confirm the identity of the learner, the video must be introduced by the learner to confirm their name, date of assessment, Assessor name and centre name.

b) Professional Interviews

Professional Interviews must follow each of the three Summative Practical Assessments and be conducted within 72 hours of the Summative Practical Assessment taking place. This timing ensures that learners can recall details of their performance while also allowing sufficient time for reflection, enabling them to effectively express their insights.

The Professional Interview is expected to take approximately 45 minutes. Professional Interviews may be conducted either face-to-face or remotely via live video link.

The Professional Interview is to confirm underpinning knowledge relating to the Practical Assessments and provides opportunity for the learner to satisfactorily evidence reflective practice, share any additional relevant feedback and highlight areas to focus on for further professional development.

The Assessor may also ask questions relating to any theory-based assessment criteria across all units.

During the Professional Interview, the Assessor will record summary notes on the Professional Interview Record. For quality assurance, the interview must be digitally recorded (e.g., audio or video) and stored on a secure platform accessible to the internal moderator (IQA) and the external moderator (EQA), while ensuring compliance with data protection and privacy requirements.

To verify the learner's identity, the video must include an introduction by the learner, stating their name, assessment date, Assessor name and centre name.

3.5 The Osteopathy Treatment Protocol

The learner must demonstrate the following professional competencies in each treatment by having:

- ensured professional and appropriate presentation of self.
- ensured the treatment area was prepared effectively, hygienically and safely.
- completed the consultation procedure and established that the patient had no contraindications to treatment.

- explained the treatment fully and established that a realistic outcome for the treatment was recognised by the owner.
- gained 'consent to and request for' the treatment.
- prepared the patient appropriately and made adaptations where needed to ensure patient comfort.
- effectively and professionally explained the procedure to the owner.
- confirmed the owner's understanding and ensured they have given informed consent.
- identified anatomical landmarks and correct, safe treatment sites.
- physically supported the patient effectively throughout the treatment.
- demonstrated good posture and working position throughout.
- addressed adverse events correctly (where applicable).
- provided the owner with aftercare advice and treatment-specific information, where applicable.
- ensured the owner understands whether a follow-up appointment is recommended,
- accurately recorded all treatment details in accordance with clinic requirements.
- followed all protocols throughout the treatment for tidiness, hygiene and safety, including the use of PPE and disposal of clinical waste.
- maintained professional and appropriate communication with the owner throughout the treatment.
- carried out the treatment within commercially accepted timeframes.
- ensured all risks and hazards were managed throughout.
- correctly answered all oral questions (where applicable).
- thoroughly and accurately completed patient review documentation.

*where the patient owner is not present for the treatment, the owner must delegate responsibility for the treatment to a veterinary practitioner, animal handler or other individual, with details of this recorded on the relevant veterinary case notes.

3.6 The Working Environment and Use of Simulation

Training and assessment of practical skills and competencies must be undertaken in a real working environment, under appropriate supervision.

The Clinical Placement (Component 2) and Summative Assessments (Component 3) requires demonstration of osteopathic therapy treatments on actual patients.

While learners must demonstrate competency with real patients for the majority of treatments, it is acknowledged that certain conditions may not present during the assessment period. In such cases, where specific conditions are unavailable:

- treatment of a range of different musculoskeletal conditions and associated visceral complaints must be demonstrated with real patients

- for condition types not naturally presenting during the assessment period, competency may be demonstrated through structured simulation exercises
- any simulation must accurately reflect real-world clinical scenarios and equipment use
- the assessor must document which conditions were assessed through simulation and provide justification

3.7 Ratio of Staff to Learners

Where demonstrations of treatments being carried out are used as part of Clinical Placement, the ratio of staff to learners must not exceed 1:4.

For treatments carried out by the learner under the direct supervision of the Teacher/Assessor or Clinical Workplace Supervisor, the ratio of staff to learners must not exceed 1:1.

For the Summative Assessment, the ratio of Assessors to learners must not exceed 1:1.

3.8 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 candidate's own work
- **valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **evaluated:** where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner
- **sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy.

3.9 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

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

- ensuring Assessors are suitably experienced and qualified in line with the qualification requirements
- sampling assessments and assessment decisions

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

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

Centre IQAs may wish to refer to the guidance documents provided by GA to approved centres (available on the Ark) in order to formulate an appropriate Sampling Strategy. An overview is provided in Appendix 1 of this document.

3.10 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. These include:

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

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

3.11 Venue and Equipment Requirements

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

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

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

For this qualification, suitable venue and equipment should include the learner having access to:

- A range of bridles and headcollars for equine training days
- Suitable area for equines to be secured safely
- Suitable leads, harnesses, collars and treatment plinths or pads for canine training days
- Spacious and safe areas under cover for equine training days
- Wifi/4G, suitable video/audio recording equipment
- Appropriate fire extinguishers
- Designated emergency gathering area
- Appropriate kitchen and toilet facilities, plus office or seating area for learners to write up clinical and study-related notes

The clinical setting must meet the minimum equipment requirements specified above, maintain documented risk assessments, and must maintain appropriate insurance cover for their facility.

3.12 Teaching and Learning Resources

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

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

GA provides additional resources for this qualification on the relevant qualification page of the website: www.gatehouseawards.org

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

3.13 Marking, Re-Submission of Work and Re-Sit Summative Assessments

The use of artificial intelligence ('AI') to mark learner work is strictly prohibited.

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.

If a learner must retake any formal assessment, the centre is expected to offer additional training or support to address areas needing improvement. It is essential that the centre maintains regular contact hours with learners to identify any challenges and implement necessary support or access arrangements.

Any re-submissions of work or re-sits of practical assessments must be completed within the qualification registration period.

Re-submissions of work or re-sits of practical assessments must be assessed with the same rigour and adherence to the qualification standards.

If a learner does not pass after three attempts, the centre must assess whether, despite supportive measures and multiple attempts, the candidate'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.

3.14 Results

Centres may make claims for certification via the Ark when learners complete and the Assessor and Internal Moderator have confirmed achievement. Such claims for certification are subject to successful external moderation (EQA).

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

3.15 Certificates

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

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

Replacement certificates are available upon request.

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

3.16 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claims Status is not available for this qualification.

3.17 Appeals and Enquiries

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

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

3.18 Ongoing Support

There are a number of documents on the GA website that centres and candidates may find useful: www.gatehouseawards.org

The website is updated regularly with news, information about all GA qualifications, sample materials, updates on regulations and other important notices.

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

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

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

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

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

Section 4: Unit Specifications

4.1 GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy (610/5388/0)

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Professional Practice and Personal Development	17	7	4	K/651/5121
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of the legislative frameworks governing animal therapy in the UK, with particular focus on how animal osteopathic practitioners can operate legally and ethically. The learner will also explore professional ethics and conduct, examining key principles, advantages of ethical practice, consequences of unethical behaviour, and how legal policies shape professional standards.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers diverse learning styles and their application to professional development, alongside critical thinking skills specific to animal osteopathy. The learner will examine the value and limitations of research in animal science, including evidence-based decision-making, research methodologies, and the implementation of evidence-based practice in osteopathy.</p> <p>The learner will also develop lifelong learning skills essential for professional growth, including reflective practice through various theories, models, and techniques. This will culminate in the creation of a structured career plan with short, medium, and long-term goals, reinforcing the importance of continuous professional development in the field of animal therapy.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the legislation pertaining to animal therapy and paraprofessionals.	1.1 Explain the legislation relating to animal therapies in the UK.
	1.2 Clarify how animal osteopathy practitioners can work within legal frameworks.
	1.3 Apply legislative knowledge to hypothetical scenarios in animal therapy.
2. Understand professional ethics and conduct within a professional environment.	2.1 Describe key ethical principles relating to professional conduct.
	2.2 Describe the advantages of maintaining ethical conduct in a professional setting.
	2.3 Explain the consequences of unethical behaviour in a professional environment.
	2.4 Explain how legal and organisational policies influence ethical conduct.
3. Understand approaches to study and learning styles.	3.1 Explain the different types of learning styles.
	3.2 Evaluate the suitability of learning styles to different areas of study and personal development.
	3.3 Develop critical thinking skills in relation to animal osteopathy.
4. Understand why research is valuable and what its limitations are in the field of animal science.	4.1 Explain the value of evidence-based decision-making in osteopathy practice.
	4.2 Define research methodology and types of research.
	4.3 Describe the role and value of research in animal science.

	4.4 Evaluate current evidence in animal therapy.
	4.5 Assess the limitations of research.
	4.6 Describe the significance of implementing evidence-based practice.
5. Understand lifelong learning skills and professional development in professional practice.	5.1 Evaluate different forms of lifelong learning and the relevance to professional growth.
	5.2 Reflect on own personal development and lifelong learning skills.
	5.3 Construct a structured career plan incorporating short, medium, and long-term goals.
	5.4 Explain the importance of continuous professional development and lifelong learning.
	5.5 Describe key theories and models of reflection.
	5.6 Explain various tools and techniques used for reflection.

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Osteopathic Principles, History and Philosophy	45	12	4	L/651/5122
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of the foundational principles of osteopathy, exploring their relevance to animal therapy and modern veterinary care provided by paraprofessionals and veterinarians. The learner will also examine the osteopathic lesion concept and principles of spinal motion, learning to identify presenting signs and symptoms through application of these concepts.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers the historical development of osteopathy, including key figures, events, and the evolution of osteopathic principles and philosophies. The learner will evaluate how these historical developments have shaped contemporary practice, compare osteopathic and allopathic approaches, and reflect on how osteopathic history influences professional identity.</p> <p>The learner will also develop reflective practice skills by integrating osteopathic principles into personal and professional development, evaluating their strengths and areas for improvement, recognising significant learning experiences, and understanding how osteopathic principles foster ethical and professional responsibility in practice.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the foundational principles of osteopathy.	1.1 Describe the main founding principles of osteopathy.
	1.2 Explain the relevance of foundational principles in animal therapy.
	1.3 Explain one principle in relation to modern veterinary care as provided by paraprofessionals or vets.
2. Understand the principles of spinal motion relevant to osteopathic lesion concepts.	2.1 Describe the osteopathic lesion concept.
	2.2 Analyse the principles of spinal motion.
	2.3 Describe presenting signs and symptoms by applying the osteopathic concept of lesions and spinal motion.
3. Understand the historical development of osteopathy and its influence on modern practice.	3.1 Describe key figures and events in osteopathic history.
	3.2 Explain the development of osteopathic principles and philosophies.
	3.3 Evaluate the impact of historical developments on contemporary osteopathic practice.
	3.4 Compare and contrast the practice of osteopathy with allopathic practice.
	3.5 Reflect on how the historical of osteopathy can shape professional identity and practice.
4. Understand reflective practice by integrating osteopathic principles into personal and professional development.	4.1 Evaluate personal strengths and areas for improvement.
	4.2 Recognise learning experiences and their impact on own practice.

	4.3 Evaluate the role of osteopathic principles in fostering ethical and professional responsibility.
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	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Animal Behaviour and Psychology	38	11	5	M/651/5123
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of animal behaviour science, exploring evolutionary development, human influence on both wild and domesticated species, and the relationship between animal senses, communication, and emotions. The learner will also examine the importance of animal behaviour in osteopathic practice, including identifying dangerous behaviours, pain indicators, and establishing risk assessment protocols to determine an animal's suitability for treatment.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers key theories and principles of animal behaviour and psychology, requiring critical analysis of their strengths and weaknesses supported by appropriate evidence. The learner will explore biological, environmental, and social factors influencing animal behaviour and reflect on animal welfare implications.</p> <p>The learner will also evaluate the implications of animal behaviour for human-animal interactions, including ethical considerations and analysis of animal behaviour during human interaction. Finally, the unit addresses animal clinical emergencies, with learners developing appropriate clinical procedures and identifying essential components of an animal first aid kit suitable for osteopathic practice.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand animal behaviour science.	1.1 Describe the evolutionary development of animal behaviours.
	1.2 Explain how humans have influenced animal behaviour in both wild and domesticated species.
	1.3 Critically evaluate the relationship between animal senses and behaviour.
	1.4 Explain the different types of animal communication.
	1.5 Evaluate the role of emotions in animal behaviour.
2. Understand the importance of animal behaviour in osteopathic practice.	2.1 Describe different behaviours that may be considered dangerous.
	2.2 Critically evaluate behavioural reasons for withholding treatment and/or referring on.
	2.3 Describe the different behaviours that may indicate pain and dysfunction.
	2.4 Detail risk assessment protocols to safely assess an animal's behaviour and suitability for osteopathic intervention.
	2.5 Critically evaluate how to safely assess an animal's behaviour and suitability for osteopathic intervention.
	2.6 Explain the role of the osteopathic practitioner in animal behaviour change.
	2.7 Critically evaluate the roles of therapists and behavioural trainers/professionals.
	3.1 Critically analyse key theories in animal behaviour and psychology.

3. Understand theories and principles of animal behaviour and psychology.	3.2 Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each theory.
	3.3 Provide appropriate references and evidence to support analysis.
4. Understand biological, environmental, and social factors influencing animal behaviour.	4.1 Explain biological factors affecting animal behaviour.
	4.2 Explain environmental factors influencing animal behaviour.
	4.3 Analyse social factors in shaping animal behaviour.
	4.4 Reflect on the implications of animal welfare on animal behaviour.
5. Understand the implications of animal behaviour for human-animal interactions.	5.1 Critically evaluate the implications of animal behaviour for human-animal interactions.
	5.2 Analyse animal behaviour during human interaction.
	5.3 Assess ethical considerations in human-animal interactions.
	5.4 Communicate findings and analyses effectively.
	5.5 Evaluate ongoing developments in animal behaviour research.
6. Understand how to assess and respond to animal clinical emergencies.	6.1 Develop a clinical procedure for handling different emergencies.
	6.2 State the contents of an animal first aid kit appropriate for clinical practice.

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
4	Animal Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Disease	38	12	4	R/651/5124
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of foundational anatomical terminology, including key terms, standardised language, and directional planes essential for professional communication when working in animal health. The learner will also explore cellular biology and histology, examining cellular structures, functions, processes, and their relationship to tissue function.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers the different body systems with particular focus on the musculoskeletal system, including muscle physiology, key muscles for functional movement, and the structure and function of non-musculoskeletal systems. The learner will examine pathology relating to animals, including pathophysiological changes associated with injury and disease, systemic conditions, contraindications to osteopathic treatment, and evaluation of pathological progression.</p> <p>The learner will also investigate the typical changes associated with aging, describing functional and physiological changes at different life stages and evaluating the osteopathic perspective on healthy aging and illness prevention in animals.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand anatomical terminology.	1.1 Define key anatomical terms.
	1.2 Explain the importance of standardised anatomical language.
	1.3 Explain directional planes.
2. Understand cellular biology and histology.	2.1 Explain cellular structure and functions.
	2.2 Explain cellular processes.
	2.3 Relate histology to functions.
3. Understand the different body systems.	3.1 Explain the different body systems.
	3.2 Describe the physiology of different muscle types.
	3.3 Identify the key muscles essential for functional movement.
	3.4 Explain the structure and function of non-musculoskeletal systems.
	3.5 Identify the key components of the musculoskeletal system.
4. Understand pathology relating to animals.	4.1 Describe the pathophysiological changes associated with injury and disease.
	4.2 Examine systemic disease and the functional changes that occur.

	4.3 Analyse systemic conditions and potential somatic presentations.
	4.4 Describe signs and symptoms that necessitate referral.
	4.5 Describe contraindications to animal osteopathy.
	4.6 Explain potential veterinary approaches to conditions.
	4.7 Evaluate the potential progression of pathology with and without intervention.
5. Understand the typical changes associated with ageing.	5.1 Describe the functional and physiological changes associated with different stages of life.
	5.2 Evaluate the osteopathic perspective on ageing well and the prevention of illness.

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
5	Biomechanics and Neurophysiology	51	16	6	T/651/5125
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of the function of the nervous system in relation to biomechanics, including critical analysis of neural functions, afferent and efferent signal physiology, and neural mechanisms involved in motor control and movement. The learner will also examine the locomotor system, classifying its components, analysing typical and atypical movement patterns, defining normal ranges of motion for major joints, and describing muscle actions, attachments, and innervation.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers restrictions and compensations of the locomotor system, with learners explaining typical posture and movement patterns across species, breeds, and ages. The learner will critically assess osteopathic theories on restrictions and compensation patterns, describe common causes of movement restrictions, analyse trauma and injury types leading to atypical patterns, and evaluate environmental influences on locomotion.</p> <p>The learner will also explore predisposing and maintaining factors affecting animal movement and develop strategies to mitigate risks associated with environmental influences on biomechanical function.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the function of the nervous system in relation to biomechanics.	1.1 Critically analyse the functions of the nervous system.
	1.2 Explain the physiology of afferent and efferent signals.
	1.3 Critically analyse the importance of neurological health in relation to biomechanics and movement.
	1.4 Explain the neural mechanisms in motor control and movement.
2. Understand the locomotor system.	2.1 Classify the components of the locomotor system.
	2.2 Critically analyse movement patterns, both typical and atypical.
	2.3 Define the normal expected ranges of motion for major joints.
	2.4 Describe joint motion.
	2.5 Define muscle action, attachments and innervation.
3. Understand restrictions and compensations of the locomotor system including possible causes.	3.1 Explain typical posture and movement considering species, breed and age.
	3.2 Critically assess osteopathic theory on restrictions.
	3.3 Critically evaluate osteopathic theory on compensation patterns.
	3.4 Describe common causes of movement restrictions.

	3.5 Critically analyse the types of trauma and injury that can lead to the emergence of atypical patterns.
	3.6 Explain predisposing and maintaining factors.
	3.7 Critically evaluate environmental influences on movement and locomotion and how to mitigate risks.

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
6	Clinical Assessment and Osteopathic Palpation	91	17	6	Y/651/5126
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of osteopathic clinical and risk assessment for animals, exploring the scope of practice, appropriate assessment tools, and the distinction between osteopathic and conventional veterinary diagnosis. The learner will also demonstrate practical skills in applying osteopathic clinical assessment, including case history taking, full clinical assessment across various animal species, neurological assessment, developing working hypotheses, and documenting findings.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers contraindications to osteopathic treatment, with learners explaining referral indicators, evaluating contraindications, establishing referral protocols, and demonstrating understanding of emergency protocols. The learner will examine principles and application of palpation in animal osteopathy, demonstrating understanding of tissue qualities, applying species-appropriate palpation techniques, and critically evaluating findings.</p> <p>The learner will also develop skills in effective communication of assessment findings to animal owners/handlers, producing comprehensive clinical documentation, and demonstrating professional communication with veterinary colleagues.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand osteopathic clinical assessment and risk assessment for animals.	1.1 Explain the scope of practice relating to clinical assessment for animal osteopathy.
	1.2 Describe appropriate risk assessment tools and protocols.
	1.3 Describe osteopathic diagnosis and compare this to conventional veterinary diagnosis.
2. Be able to apply osteopathic clinical assessment to animals.	2.1 Demonstrate case history taking skills to obtain all details necessary to undertake osteopathic consultation
	2.2 Demonstrate full osteopathic clinical assessment of a range of animals.
	2.3 Demonstrate neurological assessment to the animal patient.
	2.4 Demonstrate osteopathic working hypothesis based on clinical findings.
	2.5 Demonstrate appropriate documentation of clinical findings and assessment outcomes.
	2.6 Apply critical reasoning to differentiate between normal and pathological findings.
3. Understand contraindications to osteopathic treatment.	3.1 Explain signs and symptoms that necessitate referral.
	3.2 Critically evaluate local and total contraindications.
	3.3 Explain referral protocols.
	3.4 Demonstrate understanding of emergency protocols and immediate action requirements.

4. Understand the principles and application of palpation in animal osteopathy.	4.1 Demonstrate understanding of tissue qualities and their clinical significance.
	4.2 Apply appropriate palpation techniques for different species.
	4.3 Critically evaluate palpatory findings in relation to case presentation.
5. Be able to communicate assessment findings effectively.	5.1 Demonstrate clear communication of findings to animal owners/handlers.
	5.2 Produce comprehensive clinical documentation.
	5.3 Demonstrate appropriate professional communication with veterinary colleagues.

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
7	Osteopathic Treatment of Animals	119	16	6	A/651/5127
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of the principles of Osteopathic Articular Balancing (OAB) and classical osteopathy, critically analysing its physiological action, evaluating the benefits of holistic treatment approaches, and describing safety considerations for both practitioners and animal patients. The learner will also explore the application of classical OAB to various animal patients, explaining treatment proposals based on clinical findings, adaptations following treatment, and post-treatment reassessment protocols.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers classical osteopathic approaches across different animals and presentations through case study analysis, comparison of treatment reactions, and explanation of factors affecting outcomes across species and breeds. The learner will demonstrate practical skills in applying OAB techniques, including safe handling and restraint, technique modifications for different species and conditions, and full-body application.</p> <p>The learner will also develop skills in maintaining detailed treatment documentation, recording progression and outcomes, and demonstrating appropriate clinical reasoning.</p> <p>Finally, the unit addresses effective communication of treatment plans to animal owners/handlers, providing post-treatment advice, and demonstrating effective communication with the Multi-Disciplinary Team.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the principles of Osteopathic Articular Balancing (OAB) and classical osteopathy.	1.1 Critically analyse the physiological action of Osteopathic Articular Balancing (OAB).
	1.2 Critically evaluate the benefits of a holistic approach to treatment.
	1.3 Describe safety considerations for practitioners.
	1.4 Describe safety considerations for animal patients.
2. Understand classical OAB to a range of animal patients.	2.1 Explain and justify treatment proposals based on clinical findings.
	2.2 Explain adaptations following treatment.
	2.3 Describe post-treatment reassessment.
3. Understand classical osteopathic approaches to a range of animals and presentations.	3.1 Critically analyse case studies with reflective accounts.
	3.2 Compare and contrast different presentations and reactions to treatment.
	3.3 Describe appropriate progression and monitoring strategies.
	3.4 Explain the factors affecting treatment outcomes across different species and breeds.
4. Be able to apply classical OAB to a range of animal patients.	4.1 Demonstrate appropriate safe handling and restraint techniques during treatment
	4.2 Apply modifications of techniques for different species and conditions and/or based on animal behaviour and response

	4.3 Demonstrate OAB technique to all areas of the body.
	4.4 Demonstrate a range of case studies showing OAB use for different animal presentations.
5. Understand and apply appropriate treatment documentation.	5.1 Maintain detailed treatment records.
	5.2 Document treatment progression and outcomes.
	5.3 Demonstrate appropriate clinical reasoning in treatment notes.
6. Be able to communicate treatment plans effectively.	6.1 Explain treatment approaches to animal owners/handlers.
	6.2 Provide appropriate post-treatment advice.
	6.3 Demonstrate effective communication with colleagues / the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT).

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
8	Advanced Osteopathic Practice	95	13	6	D/651/5128
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of principles underlying a range of additional osteopathic interventions, critically assessing their physiological and neurological actions and evaluating contraindications and risk factors. The learner will also analyse how these additional techniques integrate with classical osteopathic approaches and their role in comprehensive case management.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers practical application of additional techniques to animal patients, with learners demonstrating safe and effective application, species-appropriate modifications, clinical reasoning in technique selection, and evaluation of effectiveness. The learner will explain the rationale for different advanced techniques and describe findings and changes observed following treatment.</p> <p>The learner will also develop skills in understanding and managing complex clinical situations, evaluating different pathological presentations, developing management strategies for challenging cases, demonstrating problem-solving in clinical practice, and applying appropriate risk assessment and management across various cases.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the principles of a range of additional osteopathic interventions.	1.1 Critically assess analyse the physiological and neurological action of a range of additional interventions.
	1.2 Critically evaluate the contraindications and risk factors for specific additional techniques/interventions.
	1.3 Define the contraindications to specific techniques.
	1.4 Analyse the integration of additional interventions and techniques with classical approaches.
	1.5 Describe the role of these techniques in case management.
2. Be able to apply a range of additional techniques to animal patients.	2.1 Demonstrate the safe and effective application of additional osteopathic techniques and approaches.
	2.2 Apply appropriate modifications for different species and presentations.
	2.3 Demonstrate clinical reasoning in technique selection and application.
	2.4 Document and evaluate effectiveness of additional techniques and intervention applications.
3. Understand a range of additional techniques to animal patients.	3.1 Explain the rationale for different advanced techniques.
	3.2 Explain findings and changes found following treatment.
4. Understand and manage complex clinical situations.	4.1 Evaluate different pathological presentations.
	4.2 Develop appropriate management strategies for challenging cases.

	4.3 Demonstrate problem-solving in clinical practice.
	4.4 Apply risk assessment and management in different cases.

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
9	Advanced Osteopathic Principles, History and Philosophy	52	9	6	F/651/5129
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of applying foundational osteopathic principles to clinical practice, demonstrating these principles in case management, exploring the benefits of philosophical frameworks in clinical settings, and critically analysing the evolution of osteopathic practice. The learner will also apply osteopathic lesion concepts in clinical practice, describing lesion patterns identified during assessment, their clinical implications, and formulating appropriate management plans.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers the limitations of osteopathic practice, with learners explaining the concept of vitality, describing vital reserve and its impact, evaluating situations beyond the patient's vital reserve, and comparing osteopathic practice with other medical models. The learner will critically evaluate osteopathy's role within veterinary healthcare and assess practice boundaries in various cases.</p> <p>The learner will also apply reflective practice by integrating osteopathic principles into personal and professional development, analysing the role of mentorship, and understanding the historical development and future directions of animal osteopathy, including current trends, potential challenges, and the integration of traditional principles with emerging evidence.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Apply foundational osteopathic principles to clinical practice.	1.1 Demonstrate the main principles of osteopathy in clinical cases and osteopathic case management.
	1.2 Demonstrate the benefit of guiding principles and philosophical framework within a clinical setting.
	1.3 Demonstrate the application of foundational principles in clinical assessment and treatment.
	1.4 Critically analyse the evolution of osteopathic practice.
2. Apply osteopathic lesion concepts to clinical practice.	2.1 Describe the osteopathic lesion patterns found within clinical assessment.
	2.2 Describe the clinical implications of an osteopathic lesion.
	2.3 Formulate a management plan in line with the lesion pattern found.
3. Understand the limitations of osteopathic practice.	3.1 Explain the osteopathic concept of vitality.
	3.2 Describe vital reserve and its impact.
	3.3 Evaluate situations that are beyond the patient's vital reserve.
	3.4 Compare and contrast osteopathic practice with other medical models in emergencies and referral cases.
	3.5 Critically evaluate the role of osteopathy within the wider veterinary healthcare industry.
	3.6 Evaluate the boundaries of osteopathic practice in different cases.

4. Apply reflective practice by integrating osteopathic principles into personal and professional development.	4.1 Critically analyse reflective practice in relation to osteopathic principles
	4.2 Critically evaluate personal strengths and areas for improvement.
	4.3 Critically analyse learning experiences and their impact on practice.
	4.4 Analyse the role of mentorship in professional development.
5. Understand the historical development and future directions of animal osteopathy.	5.1 Analyse the historical development of animal osteopathy.
	5.2 Evaluate current trends and developments in the field.
	5.3 Assess potential future directions and challenges.
	5.4 Critically evaluate the integration of traditional principles with emerging evidence.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
10	Advanced Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology and Disease	22	7	6	K/651/5130
<p>In this unit, the learner will develop their knowledge and understanding of comparative anatomy across different species and breeds, critically analysing evolutionary and environmental adaptations, anatomical changes due to domestication, and homologous and analogous structures. The learner will also implement appropriate anatomical terminology, evaluate clinical implications of anatomical variations, and describe the impact of breed-specific features on animal health.</p> <p>Additionally, the unit covers genetics and inheritance, with learners explaining DNA replication and repair, critically analysing gene function, genetic implications of inheritance, and evolution in the context of genetics. The learner will examine sports injuries in animals, explaining pathophysiological changes, biomechanical impacts, species-specific injury patterns, and the role of osteopathy in both treatment and prevention.</p> <p>The learner will also explore animal paraprofessional care, critically analysing the physiological mechanisms of various animal therapies, equine dental science, hoof care, tack fitting, and animal nutrition as they relate to overall health and osteopathic practice.</p>					
<p>Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content</p>					
<p>Additional Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand comparative anatomy.	1.1 Compare and contrast species and breed differences in anatomical detail.
	1.2 Critically analyse evolutionary and environmental adaptations.
	1.3 Critically analyse anatomical changes due to domestication.
	1.4 Describe homologous and analogous structures.
	1.5 Implement appropriate anatomical terminology.
	1.6 Evaluate clinical implications of anatomical variations.
	1.7 Describe the Impact of breed-specific anatomical features on health.
2. Understand genetics and inheritance.	2.1 Explain DNA replication and repair.
	2.2 Critically analyse gene function.
	2.3 Critically analyse the genetic implications of inheritance.
	2.4 Critically analyse evolution in the context of genetics.
3. Understand sports injury in animals.	3.1 Explain the pathophysiological changes associated with sports injury.
	3.2 Explain biomechanical impacts of sports injury to the body as a whole.

	3.3 Critically analyse risks associated with animal sports.
	3.4 Explain common sports specific injury patterns in different species.
	3.4 Explain the role of osteopathy in the treatment of sports injuries in animals.
	3.5 Critically analyse osteopathic thinking in prevention of injuries in animal sports.
	3.6 Critically analyse osteopathic thinking in the rehabilitation of sports injuries in animals.
4. Understand animal paraprofessional care.	4.1 Critically analyse the physiological mechanisms of other animal therapies.
	4.2 Critically analyse equine dental science and care.
	4.3 Critically analyse equine hoof science and care.
	4.4 Critically analyse equine tack fit and biting.
	4.5 Critically analyse animal nutrition.

Appendix 1: Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Regulations and Guidance

1.1 Introduction to Internal Moderation

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

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

1.2 Internal Moderation Processes

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

These processes are conducted by one Internal Moderator or, if there is more than one, a team of Internal Moderators who are under the direction of a Lead Internal Moderator.

Information about the experience and qualification requirements for Internal Moderators is provided in the *Qualification Specification*.

1.3. Co-ordination of the Assessment Process

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

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

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

1.4 Standardisation of Assessment

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

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

1.5. Sampling Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.6 Establishing a Sampling Strategy

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

Evidence must be confirmed by Assessors as '**CRAVES**'

- **Current:** the work is relevant at the time of the assessment

- **Reliable:** the work is consistent with that produced by other learners
- **Authentic:** the work is the learner's own work
- **Valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **Evaluated:** Where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner resulting in improvements in knowledge or competency leading to the award
- **Sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy.

1.7 Planning Sampling Activities

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

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

1.8 Producing a Sampling Plan

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

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

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

1.9 Completing a Sample Record

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

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

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

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

Document Specification:					
Purpose:	To detail the specification of the GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy (610/5388/0) qualification.				
Accountability:	GA Governance Committee	Responsibility :	GA Senior Product Development Manager		
Version:	1	Effective From:	28 th Feb 2025	Indicative Review Date:	Feb 2030
Links to Ofqual GCR	E3; G6; G7; H2	Other relevant documents:	GA Centre Handbook GA Candidate Access Policy GA Malpractice & Maladministration Policy GA CASS & General Moderation Policy Relevant Indicative Content, Assessment Instructions and Guidance documents specific to this qualification.		