



## Qualification Specification

### GA Level 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management (610/7539/5)

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

This GA qualification is delivered under an exclusivity agreement.

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## 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 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management (610/7539/5).

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 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management	610/7539/5	01/06/2026	June 2031

### 1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

This qualification is designed to enhance learners' career prospects and provide the underpinning knowledge and skills required for successful leadership and management roles within education, training and learning organisations.

The qualification covers both theoretical frameworks and applied strategic capabilities needed to lead effectively in complex and changing educational contexts.

The aim of the GA Level 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management qualification is to prepare learners to demonstrate advanced strategic thinking, ethical leadership, reflective judgement and organisational effectiveness within education and training environments.

Learners will engage critically with policy, governance, pedagogy, change, professional development and research, with competencies underpinned by contemporary theory, evidence-based decision making and contextual analysis.

The qualification provides an understanding of strategic leadership and management, organisational change and improvement, governance and accountability, pedagogy and professional practice, reflective leadership, and research methods relevant to education and training organisations.

The qualification will equip learners with the skills to lead strategically, manage complex change, support organisational improvement, and contribute to effective educational practice and outcomes.

The qualification will also encourage critical engagement and support progression to senior leadership and management roles in education and/or onto full Master’s degree level study.

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

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management (610/7539/5)					
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Level	Credits	GLH*	Study Time
1. Strategic Leadership, Management and Organisational Direction in Education	T/652/1911	7	20	60	140
2. Contemporary Issues, Policy and Governance in Education	Y/652/1912	7	20	60	140
3. Leading and Managing Change and Improvement in Education	A/652/1913	7	20	60	140
4. Pedagogy and Strategic Leadership and Management in Education	D/652/1914	7	20	60	140
5. Reflective Practice and Professional Development	F/652/1915	7	20	60	140
6. Research Methods in Education Leadership and Management	H/652/1916	7	20	60	140

	Total Credits 120	Total GLH* 360	TQT** (GLH + ST) 1200
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**\*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 7 on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) according to the Level Descriptors for knowledge and understanding, which build on those used within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that the qualifications are considered by GA to lead to the outcome as follows:

Achievement at Level 7 reflects the ability to reformulate and use practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways

forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors, and critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and theories to produce modified conceptions. It reflects an ability to understand the wider contexts in which the area of study or work is located, current developments in the area of study or work and different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the area of study or work. It also reflects the ability to use specialised skills to conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve many interacting factors, and to determine and use appropriate methodologies and approaches. The learner will also have the ability to design and undertake research, development or strategic activities to inform or produce change in the area of work or study, and critically evaluate actions, methods and results and their short- and long-term implications.

### 1.5 Rules of Combination

In order to meet the rules of combination for the GA Level 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management qualification, the learner must achieve all 6 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 intended for aspiring and established leaders, managers and senior practitioners working in education, training and learning environments who wish to develop their strategic leadership and management capabilities.

It is suitable for individuals working in roles involving educational leadership, quality improvement, curriculum or pedagogical oversight, organisational development, governance, professional development or related strategic responsibilities.

It is also suitable for practitioners seeking progression to more senior roles in education administration, educational management, leadership of provision, or wider organisational improvement roles.

The qualification is also appropriate for learners who wish to progress onto full Master's level programmes in educational leadership, education management, leadership or related disciplines.

## 1.7 Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is intended for learners aged 21 and above.

Learners should hold

- a degree (undergraduate honours degree)

or

- a Level 6 qualification

Applicants who do not meet the formal qualification requirements may be considered on an individual basis where they can demonstrate substantial relevant professional experience in education, training, leadership, management or a related field.

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

- a detailed CV or professional portfolio evidencing relevant leadership, management or educational experience
- a formal interview or professional discussion to assess the learner's readiness for Level 7 study
- evidence of continuing professional development and reflective practice
- written references from appropriate professional sources (e.g., line managers, senior colleagues)
- completion of a diagnostic assessment or written task to demonstrate academic capability at Level 7

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

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

It is recommended that prior to commencing a programme of study leading to this qualification, 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 6 qualifications such as undergraduate degrees, professional diplomas, or advanced education, leadership or management qualifications.

The qualification builds upon foundational knowledge in education, leadership, management or related disciplines acquired at undergraduate level.

Upon successful completion, learners may progress to:

- Full Master's degree programmes (MA/MSc in Educational Leadership, MA/MSc in Education Management, MBA with an education or public sector focus, or related postgraduate awards), including Master's programmes with a dissertation or research component, subject to the receiving university's entry requirements and individual recognition decisions
- Senior leadership, management and strategic director positions within education, training and learning organisations
- Professional membership at senior practitioner or chartered levels with relevant professional bodies (such as the Chartered College of Teaching, the Chartered Management Institute, the Association of School and College Leaders, or sector-specific bodies aligned to their chosen specialism)
- Level 8 professional qualifications or postgraduate doctorate level study.

## 1.11 Language of Assessment

This qualification is offered in English.

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

## 1.12 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available in the UK and internationally.

If you would like further information on offering this qualification, please contact us. Our contact details appear on our website, [www.gatehouseawards.org](http://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 six mandatory units.

Assessment will enable learners to demonstrate advanced understanding, strategic judgement and research-informed evaluation capability across all units. Assessment will address strategic leadership and organisational direction, policy, governance and accountability, change and improvement, pedagogy and professional practice, reflective leadership, and the application of research to education and training contexts.

Learners will be assessed through a range of written, analytical and evaluative assignments that require critical engagement with evidence and application of concepts to complex leadership, management and organisational contexts within education and training.

The research methods unit requires learners to undertake an independent research-based assignment, demonstrating the ability to formulate researchable questions, engage critically with relevant academic and professional literature, select and justify appropriate research methodologies and designs, evaluate data sources and analytical approaches, and develop a coherent research proposal relevant to education leadership and management.

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 three years. Should a learner not have achieved in the timescale, a new registration is required.

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

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

### 2.11 ID Requirements

It is the responsibility of the centre to have systems in place to confirm each 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 information governance requirements, with appropriate policies and procedures in place to maintain confidentiality, related to 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.

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 educational leadership and management and hold appropriate qualifications to make valid and reliable assessment decisions at Level 7.

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

All teachers must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in educational leadership and management or relevant professional practice

Teachers must also hold recognised teaching qualification or evidence of effective teaching practice at postgraduate level (desirable).

All assessors must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in educational leadership and management or relevant professional practice

Assessors must also have an understanding of assessment principles and quality assurance processes appropriate to Level 7 study.

All teachers and assessors must also:

- be able to evidence relevant and up to date teaching/assessing experience.
- understand the qualification structure, unit learning outcomes and criteria related to the teaching and learning being delivered.
- have access to appropriate guidance and support.
- participate in continuing professional development in the specific subject they are teaching and/or assessing.

### 3.3 Requirements for IQA (Internal Quality Assurers, also referred to as Internal Moderators).

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

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

All IQAs must hold:

- a Level 7 qualification or Master's degree in a related subject area
- demonstrable experience in educational leadership and management or relevant professional practice

IQAs must also have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as sufficient technical understanding related to the qualifications that they are internally quality assuring.

Each assessor may have one or several appointed IQAs.

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

### 3.4 CPD Requirements

All staff must ensure their role and subject-specific knowledge, understanding and competence is current and therefore must keep up to date with sector changes and developments.

Participation in continuing professional development in order to evidence contemporaneous proficiency must take place regularly. Centre staff in teaching, assessment or IQA roles must ensure that they complete and document a minimum of 30 CPD hours per year.

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

### 3.5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Resources

When devising teaching, 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 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 educational leadership and management literature
- IT facilities and systems to support research, presentations, and access to online learning materials
- case study materials, simulations, or scenario-based resources relevant to educational leadership and management 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](http://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](http://www.gatehouseawards.org).

## Section 4: Unit Specifications

### 4.1 Mandatory Unit 1: Strategic Leadership, Management and Organisational Direction in Education

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
1	Strategic Leadership, Management and Organisational Direction in Education	60	20	7	T/652/1911
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate strategic leadership and management within education, training and learning environments, and examine how leadership influences organisational direction, effectiveness and long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Learners will explore how leadership operates within complex systems shaped by policy, governance, stakeholder expectations and organisational context. The unit develops the ability to analyse leadership approaches, evaluate strategic decision making, and apply leadership frameworks to real and simulated education and training contexts.</p> <p>The unit emphasises leadership as a strategic, systems-level activity rather than an operational function, requiring learners to synthesise theory, research and contextual insight to inform leadership judgement.</p>					
<p><b>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</b></p> <p>Learners may be assessed through assignments, analytical reports, case-based evaluations and the development of strategic leadership proposals.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from education, training or learning organisations, sector-based research, policy documentation or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with leadership theory, application to organisational contexts and the ability to justify strategic leadership decisions using appropriate evidence.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
<p>1. Understand strategic leadership and its role in education and training contexts</p>	<p>1.1 Evaluate the role of strategic leadership in shaping organisational direction and effectiveness</p>
	<p><i>IC: Strategic leadership as a driver of organisational purpose and direction; distinction between strategic and operational leadership; leadership influence on vision, mission and long-term objectives; alignment between leadership decisions and organisational outcomes; leadership accountability and responsibility; leadership in complex, multi-stakeholder environments.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Synthesise leadership theories and frameworks relevant to education and training environments</p>
	<p><i>IC: Classical and contemporary leadership theories; transformational, distributed, systems and adaptive leadership; integration of multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret leadership practice; comparison of underlying assumptions, strengths and limitations of leadership models; contextual relevance of theory within education and training environments; application of theoretical synthesis to complex organisational contexts.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand how organisational and external factors influence strategic leadership</p>	<p>1.3 Assess the relationship between leadership intent and organisational practice</p>
	<p><i>IC: Leadership intent in relation to vision, values and strategic priorities; translation of leadership intent into organisational practice; alignment and misalignment between stated priorities and lived practice; influence of leadership on behaviours, expectations and implementation; barriers to translating intent into practice; impact on staff, learners and wider stakeholders.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand how organisational and external factors influence strategic leadership</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse organisational structures and systems that shape leadership practice</p>
	<p><i>IC: Organisational structures in education and training settings; governance and accountability frameworks; leadership hierarchies and distributed leadership models; decision-making processes; internal systems and controls; influence of organisational design on leadership effectiveness; workforce planning, people development and HR systems supporting organisational effectiveness.</i></p>

	<p>2.2 Evaluate how policy, regulation and external pressures shape strategic leadership decisions</p>
	<p><i>IC: National and international education policy and regulatory frameworks; inspection and accountability systems; funding models and resource pressures; political, social and stakeholder influences; interpretation of external constraints and opportunities in shaping leadership strategy.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess the challenges of leading within complex and dynamic education and training environments</p>
	<p><i>IC: Complexity, uncertainty and change in education systems; competing priorities and stakeholder demands; ethical dilemmas and professional accountability; resource constraints; balancing strategic and operational pressures; leadership in volatile and uncertain contexts.</i></p>
<p>3. Be able to critically evaluate leadership approaches in education and training contexts</p>	<p>3.1 Analyse leadership approaches used in education and training organisations</p>
	<p><i>IC: Evaluation of leadership styles and approaches in practice; contextual influences on leadership effectiveness; comparison of leadership models across different settings; strengths and limitations of approaches; leadership adaptability.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of leadership strategies in achieving organisational objectives</p>
	<p><i>IC: Evaluation of leadership strategies in relation to organisational objectives; alignment and misalignment between strategic intent and outcomes; use and limitations of performance indicators in assessing leadership impact; consideration of organisational context and influencing factors; identification of unintended consequences and trade-offs; critical judgement of effectiveness, sustainability and limitations of leadership approaches.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically evaluate leadership responses to organisational challenges and complex contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Leadership decision making in response to challenges; crisis leadership; strategic problem solving; leadership in complex organisational contexts; evaluation of leadership effectiveness in complex scenarios; reflection on alternative approaches and outcomes.</i></p>

4. Be able to apply strategic leadership approaches to organisational contexts	4.1 Apply strategic leadership frameworks to analyse an organisational context within education or training
	<i>IC: Application of leadership theory to real or simulated contexts; organisational analysis; identification of leadership challenges and opportunities; integration of theory and context.</i>
	4.2 Develop a coherent strategic leadership approach to support organisational direction and improvement
	<i>IC: Strategic leadership planning; setting direction and priorities; aligning leadership actions with organisational goals; consideration of stakeholders, resources and constraints; different approaches for segmentation, targeting, positioning, and the need for innovation in product and service design within education and training contexts; leadership for improvement and sustainability.</i>
	4.3 Justify strategic leadership decisions using theory, evidence and contextual analysis
	<i>IC: Evidence-based leadership decision making; justification of strategic choices; use of research, policy and organisational data; evaluation of alternatives; ethical and professional considerations; articulation of strategic reasoning.</i>

## 4.2 Mandatory Unit 2: Contemporary Issues, Policy and Governance in Education

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
2	Contemporary Issues, Policy and Governance in Education	60	20	7	Y/652/1912
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate how policy, governance frameworks and contemporary issues shape leadership, organisational decision making and strategic direction within education and training systems.</p> <p>Learners will examine the interaction between policy, regulation, accountability systems and organisational practice, and how these influence leadership priorities, resource allocation and organisational outcomes.</p> <p>The unit develops the ability to analyse complex policy environments, evaluate governance structures and assess the strategic implications of contemporary challenges affecting education and training systems.</p> <p>The unit emphasises systems-level thinking, requiring learners to synthesise policy, theory and contextual evidence to inform strategic judgement and organisational responses.</p>					
<p><b>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</b></p> <p>Learners may be assessed through analytical reports, policy evaluations, case-based analysis and the development of strategic responses to contemporary issues.</p> <p>Evidence may be drawn from national and international education systems, policy documentation, regulatory frameworks, sector reports or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical evaluation, synthesis of theory and policy, and the ability to justify strategic judgements within complex and evolving contexts.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand policy and governance	1.1 Evaluate the purpose, assumptions and implications of policy in shaping education and training systems

<p>frameworks in education and training</p>	<p><i>IC: Education policy as a mechanism for system direction and reform; underlying assumptions and ideological influences within policy; relationship between policy, strategy and practice; policy development and interpretation processes; intended and unintended consequences of policy decisions; policy as both constraint and enabler of organisational action.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Examine governance structures and accountability frameworks in relation to power, control and organisational behaviour</p>
	<p><i>IC: Governance models across education and training sectors; roles and influence of regulatory bodies, inspection frameworks and funding agencies; accountability mechanisms and performance measures; distribution of power and control within governance systems; leadership accountability, compliance and oversight; transparency, reporting and scrutiny; sources, uses and management of finance; the use of accounting and other information systems for managerial applications; influence of governance on organisational behaviour and decision making.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Assess tensions between governance, accountability and organisational effectiveness</p>
	<p><i>IC: Governance as oversight, control and influence; alignment and misalignment between governance and organisational strategy; impact of accountability systems on decision-making, behaviour and priorities; performance management and inspection regimes; risks associated with weak or excessive governance; governance as a driver of organisational legitimacy, compliance and trust.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand contemporary issues influencing education leadership and management</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse contemporary issues and the underlying drivers shaping education and training systems</p>
	<p><i>IC: Sector-wide challenges including funding pressures, workforce shortages and changing learner needs; underlying economic, political and social drivers shaping these challenges; inclusion, diversity and equity considerations; evolving expectations of education and training providers; global and local influences shaping system change.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate how social, economic and technological change reshape organisational priorities and strategic decision making</p>
	<p><i>IC: Economic conditions and resource constraints; demographic change and participation trends; technological disruption and digital learning; labour market demands and skills agendas; societal</i></p>

	<p><i>expectations; shifting organisational priorities; implications for strategic direction, resource allocation and leadership decision making.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess the implications of contemporary issues for leadership decision making and organisational strategy</p>
	<p><i>IC: Strategic responses to sector challenges; balancing competing priorities and stakeholder demands; risk, uncertainty and complexity; ethical considerations and dilemmas; leadership judgement under external pressure; tensions between short-term performance and long-term strategy.</i></p>
<p>3. Be able to critically evaluate policy and governance in practice</p>	<p>3.1 Analyse how policy is interpreted and enacted within an education or training context</p>
	<p><i>IC: Interpretation and enactment of policy within organisational practice; alignment and misalignment between policy intent and implementation; organisational adaptation of policy; barriers and constraints; variability in implementation; impact on staff, learners and outcomes.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness and limitations of governance and accountability frameworks in shaping organisational outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Evaluation of governance structures and processes; effectiveness and limitations of accountability mechanisms; impact on organisational behaviour, priorities and outcomes; unintended consequences and behavioural distortions; comparison of governance approaches across contexts.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically evaluate organisational responses to policy and regulatory requirements in relation to compliance, adaptation and strategic positioning</p>
	<p><i>IC: Organisational responses to policy and regulatory requirements; leadership strategies for navigating policy change; compliance versus strategic adaptation; management of risk, accountability and stakeholder expectations; evaluation of effectiveness, sustainability and unintended consequences of responses.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to apply policy and governance analysis to inform strategic decision making</p>	<p>4.1 Apply policy and governance analysis to interpret organisational challenges, risks and opportunities</p>
	<p><i>IC: Integration of policy and governance analysis into strategic evaluation; identification and interpretation of constraints, risks and</i></p>

	<i>opportunities; alignment with organisational priorities; analysis of policy impact on decision making.</i>
	4.2 Formulate a strategic response to a contemporary issue within education or training
	<i>IC: Identification and analysis of a contemporary issue; development of strategic options; consideration of policy, governance and organisational context; alignment with organisational objectives and stakeholder expectations.</i>
	4.3 Justify strategic decisions using policy, governance and contextual analysis
	<i>making; appraisal of the sources, uses and management of finance; use of accounting and other information systems for managerial applications; evaluation of alternative approaches; consideration of risk, ethics and long-term implications; articulation of strategic reasoning.</i>

### 4.3 Mandatory Unit 3: Leading and Managing Change and Improvement in Education

	Mandatory Unit	GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
3	Leading and Managing Change and Improvement in Education	60	20	7	A/652/1913

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate how strategic leadership and management enables change and improvement within complex education and training contexts.

Learners will examine theories, models and approaches to organisational change, and analyse how change is initiated, implemented and sustained within complex and dynamic systems.

The unit develops the ability to evaluate organisational readiness, critically evaluate risks, barriers and unintended consequences associated with change, and design strategic approaches to improvement that align with organisational priorities and external expectations.

The unit emphasises leadership responsibility for shaping, managing and sustaining change at a systems level, requiring learners to synthesise theory, research and contextual analysis to inform leadership judgement.

#### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical reports, case-based evaluations, change strategy proposals and reflective evaluations of organisational change.

Evidence may be drawn from education or training organisations, sector-based research, policy-driven change initiatives or realistic simulated scenarios.

Assessment must demonstrate critical evaluation, application of change theory and the ability to justify strategic decisions in relation to organisational improvement.

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

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand theories and models of change	1.1 Synthesise theories and models of organisational change

<p>in education and training</p>	<p><i>IC: Classical and contemporary change theories; planned and emergent change models; transformational and incremental change; systems thinking and complexity theory; comparison of theoretical perspectives; strengths, limitations and assumptions of models; application of theoretical synthesis to organisational change contexts.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Analyse the role of leadership in initiating and shaping organisational change</p>
	<p><i>IC: Leadership as a driver of change; vision setting and strategic direction; leadership behaviours, influence and credibility; distributed leadership in change processes; leadership role in shaping readiness, alignment and stakeholder engagement; managing expectations and resistance.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Assess the relationship between change, improvement and organisational performance</p>
	<p><i>IC: Change as a mechanism for improvement; relationship between change initiatives and organisational outcomes; quality improvement and performance enhancement; unintended consequences and trade-offs; sustainability of improvement; evaluation of impact over time and across contexts.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand factors influencing successful change and improvement</p>	<p>2.1 Analyse internal organisational factors influencing the success or failure of change processes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Organisational culture, values and behaviours; readiness and capacity for change; staff capability and leadership alignment; communication systems and engagement; resistance and buy-in; organisational structures and internal constraints; factors influencing successful or unsuccessful change.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate external drivers shaping change priorities in education and training environments</p> <p><i>IC: Policy reform, regulation and accountability; funding and resource pressures; technological developments and digital transformation; stakeholder expectations; labour market demands; societal and demographic change; external constraints shaping change priorities and direction.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Assess risks, barriers and unintended consequences associated with leading change</p>

	<i>IC: Resistance to change; cultural and behavioural barriers; leadership challenges; resource constraints; risk and uncertainty; ethical considerations; unintended consequences and trade-offs; balancing stability and change; failure points in change initiatives.</i>
3. Be able to critically evaluate change and improvement initiatives	3.1 Analyse the design and implementation of change initiatives within an education or training context
	<i>IC: Design and implementation of change initiatives; alignment with organisational objectives; choice of change approach and methodology; stakeholder involvement and engagement; identification of strengths, weaknesses and gaps; contextual influences on outcomes.</i>
	3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of change strategies in achieving improvement outcomes
	<i>IC: Change strategies in relation to intended outcomes; alignment and misalignment between planned and actual results; use and limitations of performance indicators; short-term and long-term impact; unintended consequences and trade-offs; sustainability of change.</i>
	3.3 Critically evaluate leadership decision making in managing change and improvement
	<i>IC: Leadership decision making in change contexts; selection of strategies and approaches; communication and stakeholder engagement; decision making under pressure and uncertainty; evaluation of leadership impact on success or failure; consideration of alternative decisions and outcomes.</i>
4. Be able to develop strategic approaches to leading change and improvement	4.1 Design a strategic approach to leading change within an education or training context
	<i>IC: Identification of need for change; diagnosis of organisational context; strategic planning and design of change approach; alignment with organisational priorities; stakeholder engagement; resource and capacity considerations; integration of theory and context.</i>
	4.2 Justify strategic decisions related to change using theory, evidence and contextual analysis
	<i>IC: Evidence-based justification; application of change models; evaluation of alternative approaches; consideration of risks and constraints; ethical implications; strategic reasoning.</i>

	<p>4.3 Evaluate implementation challenges and design mechanisms for monitoring and sustaining improvement</p>
	<p><i>IC: Implementation planning; managing resistance and engagement; monitoring progress and evaluating impact; use of feedback and data; sustaining change over time; continuous improvement cycles; adaptive leadership responses; mechanisms to address emerging challenges.</i></p>

#### 4.4 Mandatory Unit 4: Pedagogy and Strategic Leadership and Management in Education

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
4	Pedagogy and Strategic Leadership and Management in Education	60	20	7	D/652/1914

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate pedagogy and professional practice within education and training settings from a strategic leadership and management perspective.

Learners will examine how pedagogical approaches, curriculum design and assessment practices influence organisational quality, learner outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

The unit develops the ability to analyse teaching and learning at a systems level, evaluate the impact of pedagogical and curriculum decisions, and design strategic approaches to improving teaching quality and professional practice across organisations.

The unit emphasises leadership responsibility for shaping, supporting and improving teaching and learning, requiring learners to synthesise theory, research and contextual insight to inform strategic leadership judgement.

#### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical reports, case-based evaluations, curriculum or quality improvement proposals and critical evaluations of teaching and learning practices.

Evidence may be drawn from education or training organisations, sector-based research, policy frameworks or realistic simulated scenarios.

Assessment must demonstrate critical engagement with pedagogical theory, evaluation of practice and the ability to justify strategic decisions related to teaching, learning and assessment.

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

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand pedagogy and its	1.1 Synthesise pedagogical theories and approaches in relation to their implications for practice and outcomes

influence on strategic outcomes in education and training	<p><i>IC: Classical and contemporary pedagogical theories; behaviourist, constructivist and social learning theories; adult learning theories; experiential and digital learning approaches; comparison of theoretical perspectives; strengths, limitations and implications of pedagogical models for practice and learner outcomes; contextual application across education and training settings.</i></p>
	<p>1.2 Analyse how pedagogical and curriculum decisions shape learner outcomes and organisational performance</p>
	<p><i>IC: Curriculum intent, implementation and impact; alignment between pedagogy and curriculum; assessment design and learning outcomes; learner engagement and progression; influence of curriculum decisions on organisational performance; consideration of learner groups, service design and innovation.</i></p>
	<p>1.3 Evaluate the extent to which teaching and learning drive organisational effectiveness</p>
	<p><i>IC: Teaching and learning as a driver of organisational quality and performance; contribution of pedagogy to organisational outcomes; role of leadership in prioritising teaching quality; impact on learner achievement, retention and progression; teaching and learning as a strategic priority.</i></p>
2. Understand factors influencing teaching and learning in education and training	<p>2.1 Analyse how organisational systems and priorities shape teaching and learning practice</p>
	<p><i>IC: Leadership influence on teaching and learning; organisational culture, priorities and expectations; staff capability and professional development; resource allocation decisions; quality assurance systems; internal structures and processes shaping practice.</i></p>
	<p>2.2 Evaluate how external frameworks and expectations shape pedagogical practice</p>
	<p><i>IC: Policy and regulatory requirements; inspection frameworks; qualification standards; technological developments; sector expectations; professional standards and accountability; impact of external drivers on practice.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Critically assess challenges and trade-offs associated with improving teaching and learning</p>
<p><i>IC: Variability in teaching quality; resistance to change; workload and capacity constraints; digital transformation challenges; maintaining</i></p>	

	<i>consistency across provision; trade-offs between innovation and compliance; ethical considerations.</i>
3. Be able to critically evaluate teaching and learning practices	3.1 Analyse variation in teaching and learning practice within an education or training context
	<i>IC: Variation in teaching and learning approaches across contexts; observation and review of practice; alignment with pedagogical theory; identification of strengths, inconsistencies and areas for development; contextual influences on practice.</i>
	3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and assessment approaches in supporting learner outcomes
	<i>IC: Assessment of curriculum design and delivery; effectiveness of assessment strategies; impact on learner progress and achievement; alignment with organisational objectives; unintended consequences.</i>
	3.3 Critically evaluate quality assurance and improvement processes in relation to teaching and learning outcomes
	<i>IC: Quality assurance frameworks and processes; observation of teaching and learning; feedback and improvement mechanisms; standardisation and consistency; evaluation of impact on teaching and learning outcomes; continuous improvement approaches.</i>
4. Be able to apply strategic leadership approaches to improve teaching and learning	4.1 Design a strategic approach to improving teaching and learning within an education or training context
	<i>IC: Identification of improvement priorities; alignment with organisational strategy; leadership of teaching and learning; stakeholder engagement; resource and capability considerations; planning for sustained improvement.</i>
	4.2 Justify strategic decisions related to pedagogy and professional practice using theory and evidence
	<i>IC: Evidence-based decision making; application of pedagogical theory; use of data and research; evaluation of alternative approaches; consideration of risks and constraints; ethical implications.</i>
	4.3 Evaluate implementation challenges and design mechanisms to sustain improvement in teaching and learning
	<i>IC: Implementation planning; staff development and support; monitoring progress and assessing impact; use of feedback and data;</i>

	<i>sustaining improvement over time; leadership accountability; embedding change into organisational culture.</i>
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#### 4.5 Mandatory Unit 5: Leading Reflective Practice and Professional Development

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
5	Leading Reflective Practice and Professional Development	60	20	7	F/652/1915
<p>In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate reflective practice as a strategic leadership process within education, training and learning environments. The unit explores how reflective practice operates not only as an individual activity but as a structured, organisation-wide approach to improving professional practice, decision making and organisational effectiveness.</p> <p>Learners will examine theories and models of reflection and analyse how reflective processes inform leadership judgement, professional development and continuous improvement. The unit develops the ability to evaluate reflective practice at both individual and organisational levels, including how leaders create conditions that support critical reflection, professional dialogue and evidence-based improvement.</p> <p>The unit emphasises the leadership responsibility to embed reflective practice within organisational systems and culture. Learners will critically evaluate their own leadership practice through reflection, while also developing strategies to lead, support and sustain reflective practice and professional development in others.</p>					
<p><b>Assessment Instructions and Guidance</b></p> <p>Learners may be assessed through reflective evaluations, analytical reports, professional development strategies and critical evaluations of leadership practice and organisational approaches to reflection.</p> <p>Evidence may draw on personal leadership experience, organisational contexts, observed practice, case studies or realistic simulated scenarios.</p> <p>Assessment must demonstrate critical reflection, evaluation of leadership practice and the ability to apply reflective practice as a leadership process to support professional development and organisational improvement.</p> <p>Indicative Content (IC) is provided against each individual Assessment Criteria in the table below.</p>					

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand reflective practice as a leadership process in education and training	1.1 Synthesise theories and models of reflective practice
	<i>IC: Classical and contemporary reflective models; Schön, Kolb and Gibbs; reflective cycles and frameworks; distinctions between reflection in action and on action; strengths, limitations and assumptions of models; application of reflective theory to leadership contexts; relevance of reflective models to complex decision making.</i>
	1.2 Analyse the role of reflective practice in leadership decision making and professional judgement
	<i>IC: Reflection as a mechanism for leadership learning; influence on decision making and professional judgement; interrogation of assumptions, values and biases; reflective practice in complex and uncertain environments; relationship between reflection and evidence-based leadership.</i>
	1.3 Critically evaluate reflective practice as a driver of organisational improvement and professional practice
2. Understand how leaders create and sustain reflective practice within organisations	2.1 Analyse leadership responsibilities for embedding reflective practice within organisational systems and culture
	<i>IC: Leadership role in establishing expectations for reflective practice; organisational culture and psychological safety; integration of reflection into professional practice and quality assurance processes; alignment with organisational priorities; leadership accountability for reflective practice.</i>
	2.2 Evaluate approaches used to support reflective practice in others
<i>IC: Professional dialogue, coaching and mentoring; observation of practice and feedback mechanisms; use of critical friend approaches; peer review and collaborative reflection; structured reflective tools</i>	

	<p><i>and frameworks; strengths, limitations and contextual suitability of approaches.</i></p>
	<p>2.3 Critically assess factors that enable or constrain effective reflective practice in education and training contexts</p>
	<p><i>IC: Organisational culture, workload and resource constraints; staff capability and engagement; leadership support and expectations; barriers to honest reflection; resistance and compliance-driven approaches; impact of power dynamics and organisational structures.</i></p>
<p>3. Be able to evaluate leadership practice through reflection</p>	<p>3.1 Evaluate leadership decision making through reflection within an education or training context</p>
	<p><i>IC: Critical examination of leadership decisions; evaluation of actions and outcomes; identification of assumptions, strengths and limitations; consideration of contextual influences; analysis of decision making processes and consequences.</i></p>
	<p>3.2 Evaluate the impact of leadership behaviours and decisions on organisational outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Influence of leadership behaviour on culture and performance; evaluation of effectiveness and limitations; unintended consequences and trade-offs; alignment with organisational objectives; consideration of alternative approaches.</i></p>
	<p>3.3 Critically evaluate learning gained from reflective practice to inform future leadership approaches</p>
	<p><i>IC: Synthesis of experience, theory and evidence; identification of learning and development needs; application to future leadership practice; development of informed leadership judgement; reflection as a basis for strategic improvement.</i></p>
<p>4. Be able to develop and lead professional development and reflective practice strategies</p>	<p>4.1 Design a strategy to support reflective practice and professional development within an organisational context</p>
	<p><i>IC: Identification of organisational and professional development needs; integration of reflective practice into CPD systems; alignment with organisational priorities and performance improvement; planning structured opportunities for reflection; stakeholder engagement.</i></p>
	<p>4.2 Justify strategies for supporting reflective practice and professional development using theory and evidence</p>

	<p><i>IC: Evidence-based justification of approaches; application of reflective and leadership theory; evaluation of alternative strategies; consideration of feasibility, impact and constraints; alignment with organisational goals.</i></p>
	<p>4.3 Evaluate the potential effectiveness of reflective practice and professional development strategies in improving practice and organisational outcomes</p>
	<p><i>IC: Evaluation of proposed strategies in relation to organisational context and objectives; anticipated impact on professional practice, capability and performance; use of theoretical and evidence-based justification; consideration of limitations, risks and unintended consequences; comparison of alternative approaches; implications for implementation, sustainability and continuous improvement.</i></p>

#### 4.6 Mandatory Unit 6: Research Methods in Education Leadership and Management

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Level	Unit Reference
6	Research Methods in Education Leadership and Management	60	20	7	H/652/1916

In this unit, the learner will critically evaluate research methods and their application within education leadership and management contexts.

Learners will examine research philosophies, methodological approaches and ethical considerations, and analyse how research informs leadership decision making, policy development and organisational improvement.

The unit develops the ability to design, justify and evaluate research approaches suitable for investigating complex issues within education, training and learning environments.

The unit emphasises research as a strategic capability, requiring learners to synthesise theory, methodology and contextual understanding to develop a robust and feasible research proposal.

This unit prepares learners for independent research at postgraduate level, including progression to dissertation or thesis-based study.

#### Assessment Instructions and Guidance

Learners may be assessed through analytical assignments, methodological evaluations and the development of a research proposal.

Evidence may draw on academic literature, policy documentation, published research, secondary datasets or realistic simulated research scenarios.

Assessment must demonstrate critical evaluation, methodological justification and academic judgement appropriate to Level 7.

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

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
The learner will	The learner can
1. Understand the role of research in	1.1 Evaluate the purpose of research in informing leadership and organisational decision making

<p>education leadership and management</p>	<p><i>IC: Research as a source of evidence for strategic decision making; relationship between research, policy and practice; research-informed leadership; reducing uncertainty in complex environments; limitations of research in real-world contexts; role of research in organisational improvement.</i></p> <p>1.2 Synthesise different types of research used in education and training contexts</p> <p><i>IC: Exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research; applied and theoretical research; qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches; research across policy, practice and organisational contexts; strengths and limitations of different research types.</i></p> <p>1.3 Critically assess the limitations and challenges of using research to inform leadership and organisational decision making</p> <p><i>IC: Limitations of research evidence; contextual constraints; challenges in applying research to practice; conflicting evidence; bias and interpretation; risks of over-reliance on research; balancing evidence with professional judgement.</i></p>
<p>2. Understand research philosophies, approaches and design</p>	<p>2.1 Evaluate research philosophies and their implications for educational research</p> <p><i>IC: Ontology and epistemology; positivist, interpretivist and critical perspectives; pragmatism and mixed approaches; implications for research design; alignment between philosophy, methodology and research questions; limitations of paradigms.</i></p> <p>2.2 Analyse research approaches and strategies relevant to education leadership and management</p> <p><i>IC: Deductive, inductive and abductive approaches; case study, action research, survey and comparative research; use of secondary data; policy and organisational research strategies; methodological coherence.</i></p> <p>2.3 Critically assess strengths, limitations and risks associated with different research designs</p> <p><i>IC: Validity, reliability and credibility; bias and researcher influence; feasibility and access; ethical considerations; generalisability and transferability; managing complexity and uncertainty in research design.</i></p>

3. Be able to evaluate data sources, methods and analysis	3.1 Evaluate data sources used in education and training research
	<i>IC: Primary and secondary data; policy documents, organisational data and published datasets; data quality and limitations; ethical and legal considerations; data governance; reliability and bias.</i>
	3.2 Analyse qualitative and quantitative data collection methods
	<i>IC: Interviews, focus groups, surveys and observations; documentary and policy analysis; sampling strategies; strengths and limitations of methods; digital data collection; methodological rigour.</i>
	3.3 Evaluate analytical techniques used to interpret research data
	<i>IC: Thematic and content analysis; basic statistical interpretation; use of analytical tools; integrating qualitative and quantitative findings; limitations of analysis; ensuring robustness and transparency.</i>
4. Be able to design and justify a research proposal	4.1 Formulate a coherent and researchable question relevant to education leadership and management
	<i>IC: Identifying research problems; linking theory and practice; scoping and refining research questions; relevance to leadership, policy or organisational contexts; feasibility and ethical considerations.</i>
	4.2 Develop a structured research proposal aligned to research aims and methodology
	<i>IC: Research aims and objectives; literature positioning; methodological justification; data sources and analysis plan; ethical considerations; project planning and timelines.</i>
	4.3 Justify methodological and ethical choices within a research proposal
<i>IC: Justification of research design; evaluation of alternative approaches; ethical approval considerations; limitations and risks; researcher reflexivity; readiness for independent research.</i>	

Document Specification:					
Purpose:	To detail the specification of the GA Level 7 Diploma in Education Leadership and Management (610/7539/5) qualification.				
Accountability:	GA Governance Committee	Responsibility:	GA Compliance Manager		
Version:	1	Effective From:	June 2026	Indicative Review Date:	June 2031
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		