

Responsible Advertising of Qualifications:

A Short Guide for GA Centres

This Short Guide is intended to support centres staff in meeting GA's requirement that marketing and promotional materials are clear, unambiguous and not misleading in relation to the qualifications being advertised, including accurate use of logos and any additional guidelines issued by GA and/or the Regulator.

1. What is responsible advertising?

Centres must be aware that when marketing and advertising qualifications, and courses leading to qualifications, the content of all adverts – in print, websites and on social media – must contain an accurate description of the qualification, be legal, decent, truthful, honest and socially responsible (i.e. not encouraging illegal, unsafe or anti-social behaviour).

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations means you cannot mislead or harass customers by, for example:

- claiming that a qualification is Regulated, if it is not
- leaving out important information such as how the qualification is delivered or assessed
- using aggressive sales techniques such as a 'guaranteed pass'

2. What constitutes "regulated vs non-regulated" qualifications?

Before advertising any qualification, centres must understand this crucial distinction:

Regulated Qualifications:

- Are listed on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications
- Meet government-set standards for quality and recognition
- Are nationally recognised by employers and education providers

Non-Regulated Qualifications:

- Are not on the Ofqual Register
- May be quality endorsed by GA but not government regulated
- Are useful for specific training needs but not nationally recognised
- Cannot be compared to regulated qualifications

The rules for advertising these two types (Regulated and Non-Regulated) are completely different. Mixing up the language or implying a non-regulated qualification has the same status as a regulated one is a serious compliance breach that can result in sanctions.

3. Why is responsible advertising of qualifications important?

Centres must ensure that their advertising and promotion of qualifications and courses leading to qualifications is clear and unambiguous, so that learners can make an informed choice about which course or qualification they need. Learners must be provided with information that they can discuss with their employer or further/higher education provider if they are using the qualification for employment or further study purposes.

If you break the regulations, you could be subject to a GA malpractice investigation, have sanctions applied, or have your centre's approval withdrawn. Persistent cases may be reported to the Trading Standards office and you could be fined, prosecuted or imprisoned.

4. What are the Dos and Don'ts of advertising qualifications?

Centres MUST:

- use appropriate descriptions of each qualification, clearly stating whether it is a regulated or non-regulated qualification
- use accurate information about the use and benefits of the qualification so as not to mislead learners and potential learners
- ensure that any advertising by third parties on its behalf (e.g. employers, recruitment services etc) is consistent with and also follows the rules on responsible advertising and promotion of qualifications
- use the same qualification title that appears on the Ofqual Register, where the qualification is regulated
- take into consideration the TQT (Total Qualification Time) when using the terms Award, Certificate or Diploma in a non-regulated qualification title.

Centres MUST NOT make any statement that would be likely to lead qualification users to believe that a qualification it makes available is a regulated qualification when it is not a regulated qualification, or advertise or promote qualifications in a manner that is likely to be misleading.

Centres MUST NOT:

- give learners cause to believe that a non-regulated qualification is a nationally recognised and regulated qualification when it is not
- make any claims that a non-regulated qualification is 'nationally recognised' or a 'nationally recognised qualification'
- use 'professional' or similar wording indicating a 'licence to practice' in any professional role, unless this is clearly stated in the aims and objective of the regulated GA qualification
- include GA in the title or as a prefix for any non-regulated qualification or endorsed course
- issue their own certificates if a learner is expecting to receive a GA-issued certificate

- imply that a qualification meets industry standards to qualify a learner for employment when it does not
- mislead learners by claiming that completion of a course or GA qualification will entitle them to use post-nominals ('letters after their name')
- compare non-regulated qualifications with other types of regulated qualifications such as GCSEs, NVQs, etc
- use the titles Degree, Masters, Doctorate, Postgraduate when describing a GA qualification.

5. What wording can my centre use?

Centres must NOT refer to themselves as being 'approved' by a Regulator or offering qualifications 'approved' or 'accredited' by a Regulator. This is a serious breach of the Regulators' conditions as it is misleading to the general public. Any centre found to be using such references to the Regulator will be asked to remove such references and, in the case of written material, withdraw and destroy any documents containing the reference.

Approved centres are recommended to use the following phrases when describing their approved status:

- 'Approved by Gatehouse Awards, an Awarding Organisation recognised by Ofqual'
- 'Approved by Gatehouse Awards to offer qualifications on the Register of Qualifications regulated by Ofqual'
- 'Able to offer regulated qualifications under Approval by Gatehouse Awards, an Awarding Organisation recognised by Ofqual'

To describe non-regulated qualifications and endorsed courses:

- 'Our course/qualification has been developed to meet the specific needs of our learners and has been accredited by GA under the Quality Endorsement Service demonstrating the quality and rigor of the course/qualification'
- 'GA is an awarding organisation recognised by the qualification regulators for England (Ofqual). This is a non-regulated qualification and is not a nationally recognised qualification'
- 'On completion, the learner will receive a certificate of achievement which confirms evidence of the knowledge and skills gained completing the endorsed course/qualification under the GA Quality Endorsement Scheme (QES)'
- 'The endorsement of this non-regulated qualification includes a level assigned according to benchmarking the difficulty and depth of study against the UK Regulated Qualifications Framework'.

6. What are the rules about using logos?

Centres must not use the GA logo unless it is an Approved Centre, and must not advertise any GA qualifications until the centre receives confirmation of Qualification Approval.

Centres must not use the Ofqual logo under **any** circumstances. Under Ofqual Regulations, the logo can only be used by Awarding Organisations and then only on qualification certificates.

The Ofqual logo will not be included on any certificates for qualifications not listed on the Ofqual Register of Regulated Qualifications (i.e. unit certificates and non-regulated qualification certificates).

Where a centre advertises and promotes a non-regulated qualification, the appropriate GA logo must be used, i.e. the GA Quality Endorsement Scheme (QES) logo.

7. Where can I find more information and support?

Centres can contact their dedicated GA contact for help and support with any queries or questions relating to advertising and promotion of courses and qualifications.