QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

gateway qualifications

Qualifications in Garden Design (Level 2 – Level 3)

Access to HE
Apprenticeships
Digital
Employability & Enterprise
English & Maths
ESOL
Personal & Social Development
Professional Development
Vocational

This qualification specification covers the following qualifications:

Qualification Number	Qualification Title
600/9673/1	Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design
600/9674/3	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design
600/9676/7	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design
600/9675/5	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design

Version and date	Change detail	Section/Page Reference
1.2 (Dec 2022)	Funding section updated, removed address and changed back cover	Page 6 & 18
1.3 (August 2024)	Withdrawal of qualification 600/9677/9 - Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Garden Design	n/a
1.4 (July 2025)	The following two units have been withdrawn from Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design (600/9673/1): • Garden Design: Creating 3D Objects, Garden and Planting using Computer-Aided Design (**D/507/3024**) • Garden Design: Creating 2D Objects and Layout Plans using Computer-Aided Design (**Y/507/3023**) They have been replaced with: • Garden Design: Creating 3D Objects, Garden and Planting using Computer-Aided Design (**R/651/9563**) • Garden Design: Creating 2D Objects and Layout Plans using Computer-Aided Design (**M/651/9562**)	Page 11
1.5 (October 2026)	GLH and TQT has been updated, following review and all reference to Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Garden Design have been removed.	Page 6

About this qualification specification

This qualification specification is intended for Tutors, Assessors, Internal verifiers, Centre Quality Managers and other staff within Gateway Qualifications recognised centres and/or prospective centres.

It sets out what is required of the learner in order to achieve the qualification. It also contains information specific to managing and delivering the qualification(s) including specific quality assurance requirements.

The guide should be read in conjunction with the Gateway Qualifications Centre Handbook and other publications available on the website which contain more detailed guidance on assessment and verification practice.

In order to offer this qualification, you must be a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre.

If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our Development Team to discuss becoming a Gateway Qualifications Recognised Centre:

Telephone: 01206 911211

Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk

Website: www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/recognition

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1. Qualification Information

1.1 About the qualifications

The qualifications have been approved by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

The Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design has been designed to enable learners to develop the underpinning plant knowledge and drawing skills required to enter the garden design industry.

The Level 2 and 3 Certificate qualifications can be used in conjunction with other horticultural qualifications for those new to the land based sector.

The Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design has been designed to enable learners to develop specialist knowledge and skills in readiness for setting up a planting design business.

The Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in the Principles and Practice of Garden Design has been designed to enable learners to develop specialist knowledge and skills in readiness for employment as part of a garden design practice or larger organisation such as a local authority, or in setting up a self-employed business in design and structure.

The Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design has been designed to enable learners to develop design skills and knowledge of both plant requirements and garden design solutions required within the garden design industry. Achievement of this qualification meets the required standard for occupational competence to function as a professionally competent garden designer and, in addition, enables the learner to develop the additional business and customer service skills required to run a successful garden design business. On completion of this qualification learners will be equipped to progress to employment within the garden design industry.

The qualifications have been designed in conjunction with the garden design specialists at Capel Manor College.

1.2 Objective

The Gateway Qualifications suite of Garden Design qualifications are categorised as having the following objective:

- Qualifications that indicate an individual can undertake a specific role in the workplace and that may be relied upon by employers.

Qualifications taken primarily for growth and enjoyment.

1.3 Key Facts

Qualification Title	Total Qualification Time	Guided Learning	Credit Value
Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design	270	216	27

Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design	240	189	24
Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design	240	200	24
Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design	480	389	48

Total Qualification Time is the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could be reasonably expected to be required for a Learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of the qualification.

Total Qualification Time is comprised of the following two elements:

- The number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and

An estimate of the number of 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 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.

1.4 Funding

For information on potential sources of funding in England please visit the Education and Skills Funding Agency:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/qualifications-approved-for-public-funding

https://hub.fasst.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx

1.5 Geographical Coverage

The qualifications have been approved by Ofqual to be offered in England.

1.6 Progression Opportunities

The Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design enable progression to employment, further learning opportunities within employment, or further study.

Learners achieving the Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design could progress on to VRQs to achieve occupational competence in garden design, such as the Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design.

The Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design can enable progression to employment, further learning opportunities within employment, or further study.

The Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design and the Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design enables progression to other vocationally related

qualifications such as the Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design, or to further learning opportunities within employment, or further study in the garden design sector.

The Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design enables progression to further learning opportunities within employment or to further study in the garden design sector.

1.7 Relationship with other frameworks

The Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design are related to the Level 2 Amenity Horticulture National Occupational Standards (NOS) (2008) developed by Lantra. The qualifications provide a significant amount of knowledge, understanding and skills development that

The Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design is related to the Level 3 Amenity Horticulture National Occupational Standards (NOS) (2008) developed by Lantra. The qualification provides the knowledge, understanding and skills development that underpin occupational competence in garden design.

The Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design and the Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design are related to the Level 3 Horticulture National Occupation Standards (NOS) (2010) developed by Lantra.

2. Learner Entry Requirements

2.1 Age

The approved age range for these qualifications is

Qualification Title in full	Age range
Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design	16-18, 19+
Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design	16-18, 19+
Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design	16-18, 19+
Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design	16-18, 19+

2.2 Prior Qualifications

There are no requirements for learners to have attained prior qualifications.

2.3 Prior Skills/Knowledge/Understanding

The Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design is designed for open access without the need for prior knowledge or attainment in the specific area.

The Level 3 Garden Design qualifications are designed for open access without the need for prior attainment in the specific area. It is however suggested that learners have prior subject knowledge, for example plants knowledge.

2.4 Restrictions

There are no restrictions on learner entry to the Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design.

Although there are no restrictions on learner entry to the Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design, it is highly recommended that learners have experience and/or underpinning knowledge of the relevant subject areas before undertaking these qualifications.

2.5 Access to qualifications for learners with disabilities or specific needs

Equality and fairness are central to our work. Our equality policy requires that all learners should have equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments, and that our qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every learner.

We are committed to making sure that:

- learners with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to learners who do not share that characteristic
- all learners achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

- details on how to make adjustments for learners with protected characteristics in the policy document

Special Considerations

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible. Please refer to the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy.

2.6 Additional Rules/Guidance

There are no additional rules or guidance relating to these qualifications.

3. Qualification Details

3.1 Achievement methodology

The qualification will be awarded to learners who successfully achieve an approved combination of units through a Portfolio of Evidence that has been successfully verified and monitored through Gateway Qualifications' Quality Assurance process. Achievement is therefore determined by successful completion of unit assessment with no further requirement for additional/summative assessment.

3.2 Qualification Structure (Rules of Combination and Unit List)

The knowledge, skills and understanding that will be assessed as part of the qualification are set out within the unit specifications. These include the learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria. To obtain unit information, please contact Gateway Qualifications who will enable access to our unit library.

Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate In Garden Design

To achieve the Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate In Garden Design, learners must successfully complete 27 credits. All 24 credits from the mandatory units must be completed. A minimum of 3 credits are taken from the optional units.

Unit Reference Number	Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH	Subject Sector code	Group Name
L/507/0572	Plant and Soil Science	2	6	48	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
T/507/0565	Plant Knowledge	2	3	24	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
A/507/0566	Planning for Garden Design	2	3	24	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
F/507/0567	Garden Design Process	2	3	24	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
J/507/0568	Plant Selection and Care	2	6	48	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
L/507/0569	Graphics and 3-Dimensional Studies for Garden Design	2	3	24	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
F/507/0570	Planning for a Garden Design Project	2	3	24	3.2	O (Optional Units)
J/507/0571	Hard Landscaping Materials and Features	2	3	24	3.2	O (Optional Units)

Unit Reference Number	Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH	Subject Sector code	Group Name
R/651/9563	Garden Design: Creating 3D Objects, Garden and Planting Plans using Computer-Aided Design	2	3	24	3.2	O (Optional Units)
M/651/9562	Garden Design: Creating 2D Objects and Layout Plans using Computer-Aided Design	2	3	24	3.2	O (Optional Units)

Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate In Plants and Planting Design

To achieve the Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate In Plants and Planting Design, learners must achieve a minimum of 24 credits. 15 credits must be achieved from the Mandatory Group, 3 credits from Group OA and a further 6 credits being achieved from Group OB. Learners cannot achieve both the Essential Enterprise Know How or Garden Design Customer Service units as these are barred against each other.

Unit Reference Number	Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH	Subject Sector code	Group Name
A/507/0583	Plants and their Environment	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
K/507/0580	Plant Studies	3	6	50	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
A/507/1751	Garden Design Documentation and Legislation	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
M/507/0578	Garden Design Solutions	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
J/502/8403	Essential Enterprise Know How	3	3	14	3.2	OA (Group OA)
F/507/1783	Garden Design Customer Service	3	3	14	3.2	OA (Group OA)
A/507/3029	Plant Observation and Analysis	3	3	25	3.2	OB (Group OB)
M/507/3030	Planting Design Appraisal	3	3	25	3.2	OB (Group OB)
F/507/3033	Plant and Garden History	3	3	25	3.2	OB (Group OB)

Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design

To achieve the Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design, learners must achieve a minimum of 24 credits. 18 credits must be achieved from the Mandatory Group, with 6 credits being achieved from the Optional Group.

Unit Reference Number	Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH	Subject Sector code	Group Name
J/507/0585	Garden Design Detailing	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
R/507/0587	Garden Design Principles	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
F/507/0584	Garden Design Process and Development	3	6	50	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
H/507/3025	Setting Up in Garden Design	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
L/507/0586	Hard Landscaping Materials and Features	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
D/507/0589	Garden Design Styles	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
T/507/1750	Garden Design in Context	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
M/507/0581	Planning for a Garden Design Project	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)

Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma In Garden Design

To achieve the Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma In Garden Design, learners must successfully complete 48 credits. All 30 credits from the mandatory units must be completed. A minimum of 18 credits are taken from the optional units.

Unit Reference Number	Title	Level	Credit Value	GLH	Subject Sector code	Group Name
F/507/0584	Garden Design Process and Development	3	6	50	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
M/507/0578	Garden Design Solutions	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
R/507/0587	Garden Design Principles	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
K/507/0580	Plant Studies	3	6	50	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
J/507/0585	Garden Design Detailing	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)

L/507/0586	Hard Landscaping Materials and Features	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
F/507/1783	Garden Design Customer Service	3	3	14	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
H/507/3025	Setting Up in Garden Design	3	3	25	3.2	M (Mandatory Units)
M/507/0581	Planning for a Garden Design Project	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
D/507/0589	Garden Design Styles	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
A/507/0583	Plants and their Environment	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
F/507/3033	Plant and Garden History	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
M/507/3030	Planting Design Appraisal	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
T/507/1750	Garden Design in Context	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
A/507/3029	Plant Observation and Analysis	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)
A/507/1751	Garden Design Documentation and Legislation	3	3	25	3.2	O (Optional Units)

3.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides learners and Centres with an alternative assessment method by which a learner's previous achievements can meet the assessment requirements for a unit/qualification through the knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and so, do not need to develop these through a course of learning.

It enables the recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable to contribute to a unit, units or a whole qualification according to the RPL criteria for a given qualification.

*The recognition of prior learning is permitted for this qualification and includes the prior attainment of units on a qualification offered by Gateway Qualifications, e.g. where a learner progresses from a smaller qualification to a larger qualification and where the qualifications have shared content such as an Award, Certificate and/or Diploma.

Centres should refer to the Gateway Qualifications' Recognition of Prior Learning policy and follow the process available on the website.

Qualification Number	Qualification Title	RPL Permitted
600/9673/1	Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Certificate In Garden Design	No
600/9674/3	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate In Plants and Planting Design*	Yes
600/9676/7	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate In Principles and Practice of Garden Design	No
600/9675/5	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma In Garden Design*	Yes

3.4 Links to other qualifications

The Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design enable progression to employment, further learning opportunities within employment, or further study.

Learners achieving the Level 2 Certificate in Garden Design could progress on to VRQs to achieve occupational competence in garden design, such as the the Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design.

The Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design enables progression to employment, further learning opportunities within employment, or further study.

These qualifications are recognised by Lantra as meeting the required standard for occupational competence in the garden design sector.

The Level 3 Certificate in Plants and Planting Design, and the Level 3 Certificate in Principles and Practice of Garden Design enables progression to other vocationally related qualifications such as the Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design, or to further learning opportunities within employment, or further study in the garden design sector.

The Level 3 Diploma in Garden Design enables progression to further learning opportunities within employment or to further study in the garden design sector.

4 Assessment and Quality Assurance

The following are in addition to the standard assessment and quality assurance requirements set out in the Gateway Qualifications Centre Handbook.

4.1 Method of Assessment

The method of assessment for the qualifications is through a portfolio of evidence.

4.2 Assessment Materials

There are no specific assessment materials provided for this qualification.

4.3 Qualification-Specific Centre Requirements

Centres must ensure that they have the appropriate resources in place when delivering performance units from vocational areas.

4.4 Qualification-Specific Tutor/Assessor Requirements

There are no specific tutor/assessor requirements for these qualifications.

4.5 Qualification-Specific Verification Requirements

There are no specific verification requirements for these qualifications.

5 What to do next

For existing centres please contact your named Development Manager or Development Officer.

For organisations, not yet registered as a Gateway Qualifications centre please contact:

Tel: 01206 911211

Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk

6 Gateway Qualifications

Gateway Qualifications, a not for profit registered charity, is an Awarding Organisation based in Colchester.

We work with learning providers and industry experts to design and develop qualifications that benefit the learner and the employer.

We support flexible, responsive and quality assured learning opportunities whether it's in the classroom, at work, in the community or through distance learning.

We are recognised by Ofqual, to design, develop and submit qualifications to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

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enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk
Tel: 01206 911 211

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