





This qualification specification covers the following qualification:

Qualification number	Qualification title
603/6470/1	Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Award in Hair and Beauty Therapy (Entry 3)

Version and date	Change detail	Section/page reference
2.0 (January 2026)	Specification template updated	n/a

The previous version of this qualification specification is available in Prism. Search for the qualification in the Qualification Library and select the 'Documents' tab.

## About this qualification specification

Gateway Qualifications is a nationally regulated Awarding Organisation that supports education and training providers through its strong relationships, adaptability and expert team.

This qualification specification contains everything you need to know about this qualification and should be used by everyone involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of the Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Award in Hair and Beauty Therapy (Entry 3)

This document 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 quality assurance practice.

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

If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our Business Development team to discuss becoming a Gateway Qualifications recognised centre:

Telephone: 01206 911211  
Email: [enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk)  
Website: [Gateway Qualifications](https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk)

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## Introduction

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

This qualification is intended to provide learners with a broad introduction to the Hair and Beauty sector, equipping learners with underpinning knowledge and skills specific to the sector. It is designed to support progression to further learning and ultimately to work in hair and beauty therapy or other related sectors.

The qualification has been developed with the support of a number of further education colleges, training providers and adult and community learning providers. It has been designed to be consistent with the principles for study programmes for 16-19 year olds, but is also relevant for adults, particularly in the case of the smaller qualifications, for adults. This qualification is also suitable for pre 16 learners.

## 1. Qualification overview

### 1.1 Qualification purpose

The purpose of this qualification is to introduce learners to the hair and beauty therapy sector by developing basic knowledge, understanding and practical awareness of salon environments. It is designed for learners who are new to the sector and provides an accessible starting point to explore hair and beauty therapy. The qualification helps learners develop confidence, an understanding of professional behaviour, and awareness of health and safety and salon practices, supporting progression to further training or qualifications in hair, beauty or a related area.

### 1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this qualification is to introduce learners to the essential principles, behaviours, and skills required for entry-level roles in the hair and beauty therapy sector. It supports learners to become familiar with salon environments, professional standards, and basic hair and beauty techniques, while building confidence and employability skills needed to progress to further learning or entry-level roles within the sector.

The objectives of the qualification are to provide learners with the opportunity to:

- understand the basic structure, roles and services within the hair and beauty sector
- recognise the importance of health, safety and hygiene in a salon environment
- develop an awareness of professional behaviour, appearance and communication in a salon setting
- gain introductory practical skills through selected hair and beauty services
- follow simple instructions and procedures safely and effectively
- build confidence and readiness to progress to further training or qualifications in hair and beauty therapy

### 1.3 Key information

Qualification summary	
Qualification title	Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Award in Hair and Beauty Therapy (Entry 3)
Qualification type	Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)
Qualification number	603/6470/1
Learning aim reference number	60364701
Level	Entry Level 3
Guided learning hours (GLH)	60
Total qualification time (TQT)	60

Credit value	6
Sector subject area	7.3 Service Enterprises
Age appropriateness	Pre 16, 16-18, 19+
Grading scale	Pass/Fail
Assessment method	Portfolio of Evidence
Regulation information	This qualification is regulated by Ofqual for use in England only

## 1.4 Entry requirements

There are no specific prior skills/knowledge learners must have for this qualification.

Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice when selecting qualifications to ensure that the qualification will meet their needs.

Centres must ensure that this qualification suits the age and abilities of their learners by ensuring that learners can meet the relevant literacy, numeracy, digital, and health and safety requirements of the qualification.

Learners enrolled on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level with a similar title or content, as this could impact funding eligibility due to duplicated learning.

Centres are responsible for registering learners via the Gateway Qualifications' online registration portal Quartz. Learner registration guidance is available on our website, [Registering learners](#).

## 1.5 Progression opportunities

On completion of this qualification, learners will be equipped with a broad introduction to the Hair and Beauty sector, equipping learners with underpinning knowledge and skills specific to the sector.

Successful completion of the Gateway Qualifications Entry Level Award in Hair and Beauty Therapy (Entry 3) could allow learners to progress onto:

- Level 1 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Hair and Beauty Therapy
- apprenticeships in Hairdressing/Barbering or Beauty Therapy
- employment roles in Hair and Beauty Therapy, for example, Salon Assistant or Beauty Therapist

A full in-depth careers information, advice and guidance session should be completed for learners before, during and after completion of learning, finding them the most appropriate progression pathways unique to them and based on their ability and aspirations.

## 1.6 Equity, diversity and inclusion

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At Gateway Qualifications we aim to create an environment which celebrates differences and strives for equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. More than a mere commitment, this Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy stands as a framework, informing every aspect of the work we do. It is our aim to support our staff and learners of all abilities, ensuring the development, delivery, and awarding of qualifications in a fair and inclusive manner.

Whilst developing our qualifications, we have given due consideration to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not.

For full details please see the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

## 1.7 Resource requirements

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There are no prescribed resource requirements for this qualification. However, centres must ensure that learners have access to appropriate and sufficient resources to support the achievement of all learning outcomes.

## 1.8 Achieving this qualification

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The qualification will be awarded to learners who successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes of the units of the qualification and satisfy the rules of combination.

The knowledge and skills that will be assessed as part of the qualification are set out within the unit details.

To be awarded this qualification, learners must meet the rule of combination by successfully achieving at least one unit from Mandatory Group, worth a minimum of 2 credits, and 4 further credits from Mandatory Group or Optional Group O1 (Hair and Beauty Therapy).

### Mandatory Group

Unit reference	Unit title	Unit level	Credit value	GLH
H/504/7752	Health and Safety in the Salon Environment	Entry 3	2	20
A/502/3800	Introduction to the Hair and Beauty Sector	Entry 3	2	20
F/502/3801	Presenting a Professional Image in a Salon	Entry 3	2	20

### Optional Group O1 (Hair and Beauty Therapy)

Unit reference	Unit title	Unit level	Credit value	GLH
<b>R/502/3804</b>	Hair Plaiting	Entry 3	3	30
<b>K/502/3467</b>	Hand Care	Entry 3	3	30
<b>L/502/3753</b>	Shampoo and Conditioning	Entry 3	3	30
<b>Y/502/3464</b>	Skin Care	Entry 3	3	30

### 1.9 Indicative content

The examples included within the indicative content are provided as guidance only. They are not exhaustive and should not be regarded as limiting the range of knowledge, skills or understanding that may be taught, developed or assessed. Centres may incorporate additional relevant material, contexts or approaches as appropriate, provided these remain aligned with the stated learning outcomes and overall requirements of the qualification.

## 2. Assessment

### 2.1 Assessment overview

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The qualification is assessed through a portfolio of evidence which is internally assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by Gateway Qualifications. For more information, please see the [Centre Guide to Best Practice in Internal Assessment](#).

Each learner must build a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks which demonstrates achievement of all the learning outcomes associated with each unit through practical, work related tasks.

On completion of each unit learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the Assessor must counter sign this.

Should a learner not achieve the required standard to pass an assessment, further teaching and learning should take place before attempting the assessment again.

The qualification will be awarded to learners who successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes of the units of the qualification.

For learners who are not successful in achieving the whole qualification but still achieve any full unit, a unit certificate of achievement may be awarded.

### 2.2 Assessment language

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This qualification will be assessed in English. All learners' work must be in English. British Sign Language can be used where it is permitted for the purpose of a reasonable adjustment.

### 2.3 Explanation of assessment terms used in this qualification

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Gateway Qualifications has produced guidance to support consistent delivery of units across all centres offering our qualifications.

For clarification on how to interpret and deliver the command words used in our assessments, please refer to the Assessment Command Word Definitions document, available on the Gateway Qualifications website [Internal & External Assessment Practice - Gateway Qualifications](#) under assessment design.

### 3. Unit details

#### 3.1 Mandatory Group units

#### Health and Safety in the Salon Environment

<b>Unit reference:</b>	H/504/7752
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	20
<b>Credit value:</b>	2
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Know about the risks to health and safety in the salon environment.	1.1 List main risks to health and safety in the salon environment. 1.2 State the importance of following safe and hygienic working practices. 1.3 Give examples of <b>how risks to health and safety can be reduced</b> .
2. Know about responsibilities for health and safety in the salon environment.	2.1 State the employers' responsibilities for the safety of employees and customers in the salon. 2.2 Outline <b>employee's responsibility for their own safety and that of colleagues and customers</b> .
3. Know the importance of emergency procedures in the salon environment.	3.1 List situations that require emergency procedures. 3.2 Give examples of procedures for given <b>emergency situations</b> .

#### Indicative content:

##### AC1.3: How risks to health and safety can be reduced, for example:

- housekeeping and cleanliness
- equipment and tools
- personal hygiene and appearance
- use and storage of products
- working practices

**AC2.2: Employee's responsibility for their own safety and that of colleagues and customers, for example:**

- following workplace procedures
- safe use of tools and equipment
- maintaining a safe working area
- reporting concerns
- protecting clients and others

**AC3.2: Emergency situations, for example:**

- fire
- chemical spill
- medical emergency

## Introduction to the Hair and Beauty Sector

<b>Unit reference:</b>	A/502/3800
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	20
<b>Credit value:</b>	2
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Know the career opportunities within the hair and beauty sector.	1.1 State job roles in the hair and beauty sector. 1.2 State the main career opportunities available in the hair and beauty sector.
2. Know the main hairdressing services and beauty treatments.	2.1 Identify different types of salon. 2.2 List the main hairdressing services offered by salons. 2.3 List the main beauty treatments offered by salons.

## Presenting a Professional Image in a Salon

<b>Unit reference:</b>	F/502/3801
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	20
<b>Credit value:</b>	2
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to present a professional image in a salon.	1.1 Present a <b>professional image</b> in a salon environment.  1.2 State the personal hygiene required for working in a salon.
2. Be able to communicate and behave in a salon environment.	2.1 State how to communicate and behave in a salon environment.  2.2 Communicate and behave professionally in a salon environment.

### Indicative content:

#### AC1.1: Professional image, for example:

- wear clean and tidy clothing or uniform
- wear closed-toe shoes
- maintain a neat hairstyle
- use positive body language, smile, and make eye contact
- be polite and friendly when interacting with clients and colleagues
- keep workstations clean and organised

## 3.2 Optional Group O1 (Hair and Beauty Therapy) units

### Hair Plaiting

<b>Unit reference:</b>	R/502/3804
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	3
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to prepare for basic hair plaiting service.	1.1 Prepare for hair plaiting service. 1.2 Select products and tools for plaiting. 1.3 State the procedure for client preparation.
2. Be able to carry out basic hair plaiting techniques.	2.1 State when and how to use products, tools and equipment. 2.2 Carry out a plaiting technique. 2.3 Follow safe and hygienic working practices. 2.4 Communicate and behave in a professional manner.

#### Assessment guidance:

**LO1 and LO2:** The plaiting techniques include on or off the scalp plaits.

## Hand Care

<b>Unit reference:</b>	K/502/3467
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	3
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to prepare for a basic hand care treatment.	1.1 Prepare for a basic hand care treatment. 1.2 State the procedure for client preparation. 1.3 Select products and tools for a hand care treatment.
2. Be able to provide basic hand care treatment.	2.1 Identify typical nail shapes and basic nail structure. 2.2 Carry out a basic hand care treatment. 2.3 Follow safe and hygienic working practices. 2.4 Communicate and behave in a professional manner.

## Shampoo and Conditioning

<b>Unit reference:</b>	L/502/3753
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	3
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to prepare for shampoo and conditioning.	1.1 Prepare the client for shampooing and conditioning.  1.2 State the procedure for client preparation.  1.3 Select products and tools for shampoo and conditioning.
2. Be able to shampoo, condition and towel dry hair.	2.1 Shampoo and condition hair.  2.2 Towel dry and detangle hair.  2.3 State the effects of shampooing and conditioning on the hair.  2.4 State the basic structure of the hair.  2.5 Follow safe and hygienic working practices.  2.6 Communicate and behave in a professional manner.  2.7 State the main hair types and conditions.

## Skin Care

<b>Unit reference:</b>	Y/502/3464
<b>Unit level:</b>	Entry 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	3
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

<b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>
<b>The learner will:</b>	<b>The learner can:</b>
1. Be able to prepare for basic skin care treatment.	1.1 Prepare for a skin care treatment. 1.2 State the procedure for client preparation. 1.3 Select products and materials for a basic skin care treatment.
2. Be able to provide basic skin care treatment.	2.1 State the main skin types. 2.2 Carry out a basic skin care treatment. 2.3 Follow safe and hygienic working practices. 2.4 Communicate and behave in a professional manner.

## 4. Quality assurance

As the portfolio of evidence is assessed by the centre's assessor, the centre must operate an internal quality assurance process. This ensures that qualification standards are being applied consistently within a centre through training, standardisation, sampling of marking and feedback.

### 4.1 Internal quality assurance

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Centres should refer to the online [Centre Handbook](#) for further guidance on staffing requirements.

A centre's internal quality assurance process is led by the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA), who is responsible for identifying and promoting best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment. They are responsible for:

- monitoring assessment practices to ensure they meet our standards
- sampling assessment decisions and learner work to verify accuracy and consistency
- observing assessors and tutors, providing feedback and support for improvement
- facilitating standardisation meetings to align assessment practices across teams
- supporting assessors with professional development and guidance
- identifying and promoting best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment
- handling appeals and complaints related to assessment outcomes
- maintaining detailed records for audits and external quality assurance visits

The portfolio of evidence is subject to internal quality assurance whereby a centre regularly samples and evaluates its assessment practices and decisions, and acts on the findings to ensure consistency and fairness.

**To ensure the integrity of the internal quality assurance process, Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) must not quality assure work that they have assessed.**

Assessors must ensure fair assessment and equality of opportunity for the learner within the assessment process. In order to ensure that the assessor is making judgements that are consistent with the rest of the assessment team, they must meet regularly with other assessors and internal quality assurers to discuss assessment decisions.

### 4.2 Sampling

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Sampling is a key element of the internal quality assurance process whereby the IQA:

- uses a risk-based approach to determine what to sample and when
- checks the quality and consistency of each assessor's decisions
- maintains a common standard of marking within the centre over time
- applies methods like vertical sampling (same unit across assessors), horizontal sampling (multiple units from one learner), and diagonal sampling (across units and learners)
- ensures sampling covers all units over time, not just at the end of the assessment process

### 4.3 Internal standardisation

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Internal standardisation is a collaborative process by which tutors and assessors within a centre consider work that they have assessed and, using pre-determined criteria, reach a common agreement on standards as being typical of work at a particular level or grade by comparing samples and providing peer evaluation.

The process of internal quality assurance provides an opportunity for assessors to receive feedback and support, which can help improve their assessment skills. It fosters a culture of continuous improvement and professional development among teaching and assessment staff.

Standardisation will be facilitated by the Centre's IQA and should include all those involved in assessing learner evidence. Centre standardisation events should be held at regular intervals. Centres will be required to keep records of each internal standardisation event, including the date, attendees and notes on any outcomes and actions. Centres will be required to store these records securely for three years, and Gateway Qualifications may ask to see them as part of the centre's quality assurance and monitoring activities.

### 4.4 External quality assurance

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The external quality assurance process for this qualification takes a risk-based approach where external monitoring visits are carried out to review the internal quality systems of centres against key quality standards.

External quality assurance falls into two categories, the first being the quality assurance of the centre's policies and procedures (Centre monitoring) as detailed below, with the second being external sampling of the assessment decisions at qualification level.

### 4.5 Centre monitoring

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Centre monitoring is undertaken by an External Quality Assurer (EQA) allocated to the centre. The EQA plays a critical role in the Gateway Qualifications approach to centre assessment standards scrutiny as they are responsible for:

- validating the centre's procedures for delivery of qualifications and assessment
- completing reports for each visit with clear action points where needed
- carrying out an annual compliance visit
- risk rating centres on the above

The EQA will carry out an initial risk assessment at the centre recognition stage and then annually on an ongoing basis and will give a high/medium/low-risk.

The EQA will arrange the annual quality monitoring visits. These visits:

- monitor the centre's compliance with the centre recognition terms and conditions by reviewing programme documentation and meeting managers and centre staff
- identify any staff development needs
- ensure that all procedures are being complied with through an audit trail, and make sure that the award of certificates of achievement to learners is secure

The EQA will contact the centre in advance of a visit. However, Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to undertake unannounced visits, including during assessment times.

#### **4.6 Quality assuring centre assessment decisions**

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The external quality assurance process for this qualification involves a risk-based approach where sampling of assessment decisions and internal quality assurance activity to ensure that qualification standards are maintained.

An External Quality Assurer (EQA) will be allocated to the centre to sample the centre's assessment decisions, who will consider whether the sample provides evidence of the following:

- that the standard set out in the units is evidenced and assessment decisions are applied consistently
- appropriate teaching, stimulus, support, or learning materials and resources.
- an appropriate internal quality assurance strategy and sampling plans
- appropriate and consistent feedback provided by the assessor to the learner, and by the IQA to the assessor

A report will be completed by the EQA and made available to the Centres once the sampling activity has been completed.

#### **4.7 Malpractice and maladministration**

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Malpractice is any deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. It covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises or could compromise:

- the assessment process
- the integrity of a regulated qualification
- the validity of a result or certificate
- the reputation and credibility of Gateway Qualifications
- the qualification to the public at large

Centre staff should be familiar with the [Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure](#).

#### **4.8 Direct claim status**

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Direct claim status (DCS) is a status given to centres on an individual qualification basis and allows centres to claim certification without waiting for an external quality assurance activity to take place.

DCS is permitted for this qualification. Refer to the [Direct Claims Status page for further details](#).

## 4.9 Recognition of prior learning

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Recognition of Prior Learning enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities through the knowledge, understanding or skills that learners already possess and so do not need to develop these through a course of learning.

The use of RPL is not permitted for this qualification.

## 4.10 Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

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The following are reasonable adjustments that require permission from Gateway Qualifications prior to assessment.

- adapting assessment materials
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes
- adaptation to equipment
- assessment material in an enlarged format or Braille
- assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- use of British Sign Language (BSL)
- changing usual assessment arrangements
- extra time, e.g. assignment extensions
- reader
- scribe
- use of assistive software
- use of assistive technology
- use of coloured overlays, low vision aids
- use of a different assessment location

If not specifically listed in this section, reasonable adjustments are centre permitted, for details on this Centres should refer to the [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Centre Guidance](#)

For learners who require special consideration at the point of assessment, complete a Special Consideration Request Form.

## 4.11 Appeals

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Learners who wish to appeal about their assessment results or a decision affecting their learning should either be supported by their Centre or should have exhausted their Centre's own appeals process before appealing to Gateway Qualifications. In the latter case, learners must provide Gateway Qualifications with evidence that they have first appealed to their Centre.

Centres and learners should refer to the [Appeals policy](#) for further information.

## 5. Glossary of terms

This section provides a concise compilation of frequently used terms and acronyms within our organisation and the broader educational context.

Term	Definition
<b>Assessment Criteria (AC)</b>	The standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that learning outcomes have been met.
<b>Guided Learning Hours (GLH)</b>	The number of hours associated to a qualification/unit relating to 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.
<b>Learning Outcomes (LO)</b>	Describes what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do as a result of the process of learning.
<b>Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)</b>	Ofqual regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England. Ofqual is a non-ministerial department.
<b>Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</b>	A method of assessment that considers whether a learner can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning.
<b>Total Qualification Time (TQT)</b>	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.



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