

# QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION

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## Level 3 Certificate in Landscape Construction

This qualification specification covers the following qualification:

Qualification number	Qualification title
<b>603/3438/1</b>	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Landscape Construction

Version and date	Change detail	Section/page reference
<b>2.0 (March 2026)</b>	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 Level 1 Certificate in Landscape Construction.

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  
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Website: [Gateway Qualifications](https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk)

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.1 Qualification purpose .....	7
1.2 Aims and objectives .....	7
1.3 Key information .....	7
1.4 Entry requirements.....	8
1.5 Progression opportunities .....	8
1.6 Equity, diversity and inclusion .....	9
1.7 Resource requirements.....	9
1.8 Achieving this qualification .....	9
1.9 Indicative content.....	10
<b>2. Assessment</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 Assessment overview .....	11
2.2 Assessment language.....	11
2.3 Explanation of assessment terms used in this qualification .....	11
<b>3. Unit Details</b> .....	<b>12</b>
3.1 Optional Units Group .....	12
Business Practice and Project Management in the Landscaping Industry .....	12
Constructing Landscape Timber Features.....	13
Construction of Hard Landscaped Surfaces .....	14
Design and Construct Living Walls in an Urban Environment.....	15
Garden Water Features.....	16
Landscape Construction Machinery .....	17
Landscape Construction Materials .....	18
Landscape Surveying and Drawing Techniques.....	19
Show Build Preparation and Project Management .....	20
The Use of Brick Work in Landscaping.....	21
The Use of Plants in Landscaping .....	22
Using Turf in Landscaping.....	23
Water Management, Drainage and Groundworks in Landscape Construction.....	24
<b>4. Quality assurance</b> .....	<b>25</b>
4.1 Internal quality assurance .....	25
4.2 Sampling.....	25
4.3 Internal standardisation.....	26
4.4 External quality assurance .....	26
4.5 Centre monitoring .....	26
4.6 Quality assuring centre assessment decisions.....	27

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4.7 Malpractice and maladministration .....	27
4.8 Direct claim status.....	27
4.9 Recognition of prior learning .....	28
4.10 Reasonable adjustments and special considerations .....	28
4.11 Appeals.....	28
<b>5. Glossary of terms .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## Introduction

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

There is a significant skills gap and skills shortage in the landscape and horticultural industries. This market is significant in the UK and is growing as we increase our understanding of the importance of our environment to the quality of life, health, and future environmental protection.

The qualification has been designed for those who would like to work as landscapers and is intended to meet industry needs for professional hard landscapers who understand the needs of soft (plant-based) landscaping. Learners may already be in the workplace and wishing to upskill, or may take the qualification as part of a 16-19 study programme.

The qualification has been written in collaboration with a land-based college and local employers.

## Qualification overview

### 1.1 Qualification purpose

The purpose of this qualification is to provide learners with the advanced practical skills and technical knowledge needed to work confidently and competently within the landscape and horticulture industries. It develops the ability to interpret design specifications, construct and maintain landscape features to industry standards, select appropriate materials and operate tools and machinery safely.

### 1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this qualification is to develop the learners' knowledge and skills required to work effectively within the landscape and horticulture industries. It provides learners with the competence to construct and maintain a range of landscape features while applying safe and professional working practices. The qualification also aims to strengthen learners' understanding of business operations and project management to support effective planning, costing, and delivery of landscape projects.

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

- construct and maintain a range of hard landscaping features, including brickwork and timber structures, using appropriate materials, tools, and machinery
- apply project management and business practice principles to deliver landscape construction tasks effectively
- follow landscape design specifications accurately while working safely, sustainably, and to recognised industry standards
- develop the technical skills and professional behaviours needed for progression into employment, apprenticeships, or further study within the sector

### 1.3 Key information

Qualification summary	
Qualification title	Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Certificate in Landscape Construction
Qualification type	Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ)
Qualification number	603/3438/1
Learning aim reference number	60334381
Level	Level 3
Guided learning hours (GLH)	180
Total qualification time (TQT)	250
Credit value	25

Sector subject area	3.2 Horticulture and Forestry
Age appropriateness	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 advanced practical skills and technical knowledge relevant to Landscape Construction.

Successful completion of the Level 3 Certificate in Landscape Construction could allow learners to progress onto:

- Level 3 Diploma in Horticulture or Landscape Construction
- Level 4 qualifications in Horticulture or Landscape Design
- apprenticeships in Landscape Construction or Horticulture
- employment roles in Landscape Construction, for example, Landscape Operative, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, Site Assistant, Gardener

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

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

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

The qualification will be awarded to learners who successfully demonstrate all learning outcomes specified for each unit, as required by 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 a minimum of 3 units, totalling a minimum of 25 credits, from the Optional Units Group.

### Optional Units

Unit reference	Unit title	Unit level	Credit value	GLH
<b>K/617/1483</b>	Business Practice and Project Management in the Landscape Industry	Level 3	6	30
<b>H/617/1479</b>	Constructing Landscape Timber Features	Level 3	8	50
<b>L/617/1475</b>	Construction of Hard Lanscaped Surfaces	Level 3	8	60
<b>J/617/1491</b>	Design and Construct Living Walls in an Urban Environment	Level 3	7	50
<b>R/617/1493</b>	Garden Water Features	Level 3	4	25
<b>D/617/1495</b>	Landscape Construction Machinery	Level 3	4	30
<b>Y/617/1494</b>	Landscape Construction Materials	Level 3	5	25
<b>D/617/1481</b>	Landscape Surveying and Drawing Techniques	Level 3	6	50

<b>H/617/1496</b>	Show Build Preparation and Project Management	Level 3	7	30
<b>Y/617/1477</b>	The Use of Brick Work in Landscaping	Level 3	9	70
<b>L/617/1489</b>	The Use of Plants in Landscaping	Level 3	5	25
<b>T/617/1485</b>	Using Turf in Landscaping	Level 3	6	50
<b>F/617/1487</b>	Water Management, Drainage and Groundworks in Landscape Construction	Level 3	6	40

## 1.9 Indicative content

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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.

Assessors may use alternative assessment methods as long as they are fit for purpose, meet the requirements of the qualification and ensure the integrity of the assessment process.

On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own, and the Assessor must countersign 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 Optional Units Group

#### Business Practice and Project Management in the Landscaping Industry

<b>Unit reference:</b>	K/617/1483
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The learner will gain an overview of the principles behind sound business practice along with the responsibilities of managing a project. Learners will develop an understanding of how these can be put into practice within a business and throughout a project. There is an expectation that learners will gain industry experience prior to completing this unit.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	6
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand business practices in landscaping management.	1.1 Explain the importance of good business practices in relation to staff, clients and the environment.  1.2 Discuss the importance of business planning.  1.3 Evaluate the different marketing techniques that can be used to promote a business.
2. Understand the requirements for setting up and running a business.	2.1 Describe the different business insurance requirements.  2.2 Explain business tax liabilities.  2.3 Explain the differences between direct employment and a subcontractor.
3. Understand the principles of project management.	3.1 Explain the different stages of project management.  3.2 Produce a planning schedule for a project.

## Constructing Landscape Timber Features

<b>Unit reference:</b>	H/617/1479
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The learners will develop the knowledge to construct and maintain timber landscape features. The learner will construct and maintain timber landscape features.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	50
<b>Credit value:</b>	8
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the construction of timber features.	1.1 Evaluate the different timbers suitable for landscape features.  1.2 Explain the construction process for different timber features.
2. Be able to construct, timber features.	2.1 Construct horizontal timber features.  2.2 Construct vertical timber features.
3. Know how to repair and maintain timber features.	3.1 Describe the use of a range of preservatives in timber treatment.  3.2 Produce a COSHH assessment for a timber preservative.  3.3 Produce a maintenance plan for timber features.

## Construction of Hard Landscaped Surfaces

<b>Unit reference:</b>	L/617/1475
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The learner will gain an understanding of how to construct an area of paving from setting out to completion and maintenance using a range of materials both rigid and flexible. Health and safety and legislation for the works will be underpinned throughout this unit.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	60
<b>Credit value:</b>	8
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to set out hard landscaping works.	1.1 Set out hard landscaping on plan. 1.2 Set up vertical controls for excavation to reduced level and sub bases.
2. Understand the processes involved in excavation for landscaping.	2.1 Explain the construction standards and regulations for hard landscaping. 2.2 Describe the pavement layers and and their uses. 2.3 Explain the issues associated with the excavation of ground.
3. Be able to construct pavements.	3.1 Construct rigid hard surfaces to a given specification. 3.2 Construct free draining surfaces to a given specification.
4. Be able to maintain paved surfaces.	4.1 Explain maintenance operations required on paved surfaces. 4.2 Carry out routine maintenance to paved surfaces.

## Design and Construct Living Walls in an Urban Environment

<b>Unit reference:</b>	J/617/1491
<b>Unit summary:</b>	Learners will investigate emerging techniques for living walls, designing, planning and installing a living wall and understanding the maintenance schedule for these.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	50
<b>Credit value:</b>	7
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Carry out site survey assessment.	1.1 Assess site for light levels and aspect and access to proposed site. 1.2 Explain what dimensional data is required and take accurate measurements of site. 1.3 Evaluate a potential wall for the provision of services for power, water and drainage points. 1.4 Describe the safe means of working at height for living wall construction.
2. Be able to design a living wall.	2.1 Design a living wall in response to a client brief. 2.2 Create a plan for irrigation pipes, plant room and work out flow rates of system. 2.3 Produce a budget for the overall design.
3. Be able to construct a living wall.	3.1 Fix timber/metal sub-frame to surface, using the module overlay as a template. 3.2 Securely install hanging rails and living wall modules. 3.3 Install irrigation dripline, gutter and plant room.
4. Carry out planting techniques for living walls.	4.1 Produce a planting plan for a living wall.
	4.2 Carry out planting of a living wall module using correct depth, back filling and plant selection.
	4.3 Evaluate the living wall against the plan and make recommendations for improvements.

## Garden Water Features

<b>Unit reference:</b>	R/617/1493
<b>Unit summary:</b>	To provide learners with an understanding of how to choose, construct and maintain a range of water features. They will be able to select appropriate features and materials, construct a feature and outline a maintenance regime along with health and safety considerations.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	25
<b>Credit value:</b>	4
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the different types of water features and their materials.	1.1 Describe different types of water features and evaluate their use on different sites.  1.2 Evaluate a range of materials used to construct water features.
2. Be able to construct a water feature.	2.1 Select and calculate materials required.  2.2 Mark out and install a water feature.  2.3 Explain the quality checks required before handover to a client.
3. Know how to maintain water features.	3.1 Produce a 12-month and 5-year maintenance schedule for a chosen water feature.  3.2 Evaluate safety considerations that should be given to water features.

## Landscape Construction Machinery

<b>Unit reference:</b>	D/617/1495
<b>Unit summary:</b>	To provide learners with an understanding of the construction machinery that is available and how to safely operate and maintain machinery from initial prestart checks, selecting appropriate PPE, safe use and maintenance procedures.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	4
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the operation of landscape construction machinery.	1.1 Select appropriate machinery for a range of landscape construction tasks.  1.2 Explain how to operate construction machinery safely.
2. Know how to safely prepare machinery for use.	2.1 Select appropriate PPE for a specified task.  2.2 Describe the pre-start and operational checks required for machinery.  2.3 Carry out pre-start checks on machinery.
3. Be able to safely operate machinery.	3.1 Describe how to safely start machinery for landscaping.  3.2 Demonstrate the safe operation of machinery for specified tasks.
4. Be able to carry out routine maintenance of machinery.	4.1 Demonstrate the safe cleaning of machinery after use.  4.2 Describe how to report any faults or damage.  4.3 Describe the servicing procedures for machinery.

## Landscape Construction Materials

<b>Unit reference:</b>	Y/617/1494
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with the knowledge of different landscape construction materials and their uses and to understand their manufacturing, ethical and environmental impacts.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	25
<b>Credit value:</b>	5
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Know about different landscape construction materials and their uses.	1.1 Describe the use of soft landscaping materials. 1.2 Describe the use of natural hard landscaping materials. 1.3 Describe materials used for subbases. 1.4 Describe the fixings used with landscaping materials.
2. Understand sustainability in terms of construction materials.	2.1 Explain the benefits of specifying sustainable construction materials. 2.2 Describe legislation that promotes sustainability. 2.3 Compare a natural and a manufactured landscape construction material in terms of their environmental impact.

## Landscape Surveying and Drawing Techniques

<b>Unit reference:</b>	D/617/1481
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The learner will be able to survey a given site highlighting key site characteristics, set out a design and produce detailed construction drawings for specific features.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	50
<b>Credit value:</b>	6
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to carry out a survey and analysis of a site for a landscape design.	1.1 Carry out a site survey and analysis of a specified site. 1.2 Analyse survey data and produce a drawing using an appropriate scale. 1.3 Evaluate how site characteristics influence the choice of landscape design.
2. Be able to set out specified features using a landscape design plan.	2.1 Analyse landscape design plans for setting out data. 2.2 Establish control points on site. 2.3 Evaluate dimensional control for accuracy against design data.
3. Be able to produce detailed construction drawings.	3.1 Produce detailed construction drawing for a paving hard landscape feature. 3.2 Produce detailed construction drawing for a retaining landscape feature. 3.3 Produce detailed construction drawing for an arbour landscape feature.

## Show Build Preparation and Project Management

<b>Unit reference:</b>	H/617/1496
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The learner will use project management skills to plan and deliver a team garden show build, develop construction drawings, resourcing of materials, site safety and evaluate the project. There is an expectation that learners will gain industry experience prior to completing this unit.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	30
<b>Credit value:</b>	7
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to use the garden design plan and develop a set of construction drawings.	1.1 Analyse garden design plan and compile a set of hard landscape plans and construction drawings of key features within the show garden.
2. Be able to use their project management skills to plan and deliver a show garden build.	2.1 Create a time-line of key tasks. 2.2 Develop a detailed scheme of works to include costs and budget. 2.3 Compile generic and specific risk assessments.
3. Manage the construction of a garden show build.	3.1 Source and organise all materials and equipment including tools. 3.2 Manage personnel in the planning and construction stages. 3.3 Complete the construction to specified standard within the given time frame and budget.
4. Record the process and evaluate the success of the project.	4.1 Compile a digital record of all stages of the project from the beginning to the completion. 4.2 Evaluate the project and make recommendations for improved ways of working.

## The Use of Brick Work in Landscaping

<b>Unit reference:</b>	Y/617/1477
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with an understanding of how to construct and maintain walls. The learners will be able to develop the skills, knowledge and techniques to construct walls in gardens and the landscape and comply with the health and safety regulations.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	70
<b>Credit value:</b>	9
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the construction of landscape walls.	1.1 Explain the difference in construction techniques for a free standing and retaining wall.  1.2 Assess the suitability and cost of a range of different bricks and bonds for a free standing wall in the landscape.
2. Be able to construct landscape walls.	2.1 Mark out and excavate footings.  2.2 Construct a single brick wall with attached pier.  2.3 Apply render to a smooth finish.
3. Understand codes of practice and legislation.	3.1 Explore building regulations and planning constraints for landscaping.  3.2 Explain the application of health and safety legislation to landscaping.

## The Use of Plants in Landscaping

<b>Unit reference:</b>	L/617/1489
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The purpose of this unit is to provide learners with practical skills to identify and establish trees and shrubs suitable for the landscaped site.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	25
<b>Credit value:</b>	5
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Know about the trees and shrubs that are suitable for landscaping.	1.1 Explain the bi nominal plant naming system. 1.2 Explain the morphological features that aid plant identification. 1.3 Describe and identify 50 different trees and shrubs that can be used for landscaping purposes.
2. Plant bare roots trees and containerised woody plants for a landscape site.	2.1 Assess the suitability of bare root plants and containerised plants for seasonal planting 2.2 Plant a range of bare root trees and containerised woody plants to commercial standard. 2.3 Produce an immediate aftercare plan and seasonal maintenance schedule.

## Using Turf in Landscaping

<b>Unit reference:</b>	T/617/1485
<b>Unit summary:</b>	Understand the different types of turf used in landscape construction, understand the installation of natural and artificial turf and recognise the environmental impact of these.
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	50
<b>Credit value:</b>	6
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Be able to carry out preparation for turfing.	1.1 Produce a method statement for ground preparation.  1.2 Evaluate the use of artificial turf versus natural turf.  1.3 Prepare a given area for turf.
2. Be able to carry out the installation of turf.	2.1 Describe the installation of weed membranes for artificial turf.  2.2 Describe the treatment of perimeters for artificial turf.  2.3 Construct a turfed area to a given specification for natural and artificial samples.
3. Be able to maintain turf surfaces.	3.1 Explain the maintenance techniques required for turf surfaces.  3.2 Undertake maintenance techniques for turf surfaces.  3.3 Evaluate the sustainability of artificial turf installation.

## Water Management, Drainage and Groundworks in Landscape Construction

<b>Unit reference:</b>	F/617/1487
<b>Unit summary:</b>	The learner will be aware of a range of domestic surface water management systems, how to install these and the environmental impact of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).
<b>Unit level:</b>	Level 3
<b>GLH:</b>	40
<b>Credit value:</b>	6
<b>Grading method:</b>	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand the legislation and standards for domestic surface water management.	1.1 Describe current legislation in relation to domestic surface water management including local authority byelaws.  1.2 Explain relevant British Standards in relation to domestic surface water management.
2. Explain how domestic surface water drainage management systems operates.	2.1 Explain how surface water drainage operates. 2.2 Calculate the water run off from a specified area. 2.3 Produce a design drawing of a domestic water management system.
3. Be able to construct a water management system.	3.1 Prepare an area to receive drainage.  3.2 Construct a suitable drainage system following specified falls.
4. Understand Sustainable Urban Drainage legislation and its impact on landscape construction.	4.1 Explain Sustainable Urban Drainage legislation. 4.2 Analyse how the legislation impacts on landscape construction.  4.3 Explain the environmental impacts of Sustainable Urban Drainage system in an urban setting.

## 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>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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