

gateway
qualifications



Apprenticeships

Digital

Employability
Enterprise

English & Maths

ESOL

Personal & Social Development

Professional Development

Vocational

For delivery from 1st August 2026.

This qualification specification covers the following qualification:

Qualification Number	Qualification Title
610/7149/3	Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Awareness of Autism

Version and date	Change detail	Section/Page reference

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 2 Award in Awareness of Autism.

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

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Introduction

The Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Awareness of Autism has been approved by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) that regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

The Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Awareness of Autism introduces learners to the wide-ranging characteristics associated with autism and the different ways these may be experienced by individuals. The qualification explores variations in communication, interaction, behaviour, and sensory processing, as well as the diverse ways autism can present across age groups, genders, and levels of support need. Learners also consider common co-occurring learning difficulties, neurodevelopmental differences, and mental health challenges that autistic people may experience.

As part of the course, learners examine how autism can influence social, emotional, and behavioural wellbeing, alongside the specific ways it may affect learning. Building on this understanding, the qualification introduces practical, person-centred approaches to supporting autistic learners, including the use of visual supports, structured tasks, clear communication, and collaborative working with families and professionals.

Learners are also guided towards key sources of information, advice, and guidance, including specialist organisations, training opportunities, helplines, peer networks, and support relating to services and funding. By engaging with these resources, learners gain insight into the range of support available and how it can assist both autistic individuals and those who work alongside them.

1. Qualification overview

1.1 Qualification purpose

The purpose of the Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Awareness of Autism is to provide learners with foundational knowledge and understanding of autism. This qualification is designed to help learners recognise the characteristics of autism, understand its impact on individuals, and explore practical ways to support learning and access relevant sources of information.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of the Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Awareness of Autism is to provide learners with a basic understanding of autism and its impact on individuals.

The objectives are to enable learners to:

- recognise the key characteristics of autism
- understand how it can affect social, emotional, behavioural development and learning
- identify practical strategies and sources of support to assist autistic individuals in professional practice

1.3 Key information

Qualification summary	
Qualification title	Gateway Qualifications Level 2 Award in Awareness of Autism
Qualification type	Regulated Qualifications Framework
Qualification number	610/7149/3
Learning aim reference number	61071493
Level	2
Guided learning hours (GLH)	24
Total qualification time (TQT)	30
Credit value	3
Sector subject area	13.2 Direct Learning Support
Age appropriateness	16-18 and 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 an understanding of autism.

Learners may extend their knowledge of other learning difficulties or disabilities through further Level 2 awareness awards, or progress onto higher-level qualifications such as the Gateway Qualifications Level 3 Award in Supporting Children and Young People with Autism.

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, the 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 Achieving this qualification

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

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

To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve one mandatory unit.

Mandatory unit

Unit reference	Unit title	Unit level	Credit value	GLH
M/651/9814	Awareness of Autism	Level 2	3	24

1.8 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.

1.9 Language used in this qualification

The language used throughout this qualification reflects the growing preference among many autistic people for identity-first terminology, such as “autistic people”, which recognises autism as an integral part of a person’s identity. At the same time, it is understood that views on language vary, and some individuals may prefer alternatives such as “person with autism”. In acknowledgement of these differing perspectives, this qualification adopts identity-first language; however, we encourage learners, practitioners and centres to remain sensitive to individual preferences and to use the language that each person is most comfortable with.

2. Assessment

2.1 Assessment overview

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 the 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 qualification unit.

2.2 Assessment language

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

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.

3. Unit details

3.1 Mandatory units

Awareness of Autism

Unit reference:	M/651/9814
Unit summary:	This unit provides learners with an introductory understanding of autism and its impact on individuals. This unit provides learners with an introductory understanding of autism and its impact on individuals. It explores the key characteristics of autism and how these may present differently from person to person. Learners will explore the social, emotional, behavioural, and learning implications of autism and consider strategies to support learning. The unit also introduces key sources of information, advice, and guidance for autistic individuals and those supporting them, ensuring learners can access appropriate support in professional contexts.
Unit level:	2
GLH:	24
Credit value:	3
Grading method:	Pass/Fail

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Know the characteristics of autism.	1.1 Describe key characteristics associated with autism.
	1.2 Describe how autism can present differently for different people.
	1.3 Outline the common co-occurring learning difficulties and neurodevelopmental differences that can be experienced by autistic people.
2. Know how autism can affect individuals.	2.1 Describe the possible social, emotional and behavioural effects of being autistic.

	2.2 Describe ways in which autism can affect learning .
3. Understand how to support the learning of autistic people.	3.1 Explain ways to support the learning of autistic people.
	3.2 Explain why person-centred approaches are essential when supporting autistic people.
4. Know about sources of information for autistic people and those supporting them.	4.1 Identify key sources of information, advice and guidance for autistic people.
	4.2 Give examples of the different types of support available for autistic people.
	4.3 Outline how these sources of information, advice and guidance can help those who support autistic people.

Indicative content:

AC1.1: Key characteristics, for example:

- social communication and interaction challenges
- challenges with forming and maintaining relationships
- difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication
- restricted and repetitive behaviours, interests, or activities
- intense focus on specific topics or interests
- preference for routines and resistance to change and limited flexibility
- sensory sensitivities

AC1.2: How autism can present differently, for example:

- differences in severity
- gender differences
- age differences
- unique strengths and challenges

AC1.3: Common co-occurring learning difficulties and neurodevelopmental differences, for example:

- learning difficulties
- neurodevelopmental conditions
- mental health challenges
- other conditions

AC2.2: Ways in which autism can affect learning, for example:

- difficulty with abstract thinking and generalisation
- challenges with focus and attention
- preference for structured environments and routines
- sensory sensitivities impacting engagement in learning activities
- need for tailored teaching and support approaches and strategies

Indicative content:

AC3.1: Ways to support the learning, for example:

- using visual aids and schedules
- breaking tasks into small, manageable steps
- providing clear, consistent instructions
- creating a calm and sensory-friendly learning environment
- encouraging the use of special interests to engage learners
- working collaboratively with families and professionals for tailored support

AC4.1: Key sources of information, advice and guidance, for example:

- webinars and training events
- practical strategies to support
- helplines and specialist advice, including advocacy, guidance on what support is available locally
- information on funding and benefits, not just for the autistic individual
- peer support forums and networks

Assessment guidance:

For AC1.1: The learner should describe at least three key characteristics associated with being autistic.

For AC1.2: The learner should describe at least three ways in which autism can present differently for different people.

For AC1.3: The learner should outline at least one common co-occurring learning difficulty and one neurodevelopmental difference that can be experienced by autistic people.

For AC2.1: The learner should describe at least one example for each of the three areas.

For AC2.2: The learner should describe at least three ways that autism can affect learning.

For AC3.1: The learner should explain at least three strategies and explain why each strategy is helpful.

For AC3.2: The learner should explain at least three reasons why person-centred approaches are essential when supporting autistic people.

For AC4.1: The learner should identify at least three key sources of information, advice and guidance for autistic people.

For AC4.2: The learner should give at least three examples of different types of support available for autistic people, from the sources identified in AC4.1.

For AC4.3: The learner should outline how the sources identified in AC4.1 can help those supporting autistic people.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) 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

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

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
Assessment Criteria (AC)	The standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that learning outcomes have been met.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	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.
Learning Outcomes (LO)	A description of the required knowledge, skills and understanding learners are required to demonstrate in a particular programme of study.
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	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.



Charity Registration No. 114282
Registered in England Company No. 5502449

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