



Qualification Specification

GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine) (610/5997/3)

This qualification is subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny and General Moderation policy.

Section 1: Qualification Overview

1.1 Introduction: About this Qualification

Gatehouse Awards (GA) qualifications are designed to give learners the skills to be active in the modern labour market and progress in their career and/or into higher level study.

This specification covers the GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine) (610/5997/3). This qualification is aimed at learners interested in a career in animal care, welfare, therapy or science and provides them with the underpinning knowledge to pursue further study in these areas or move into a working environment. This qualification provides the learner with the knowledge and understanding of animal science, focusing on canine and equine anatomy, physiology, genetics, behaviour, parasitology, and pharmacology. Learners will develop the scientific knowledge and understanding necessary for careers in animal-related industries and professions.

This document provides centre staff, learners and employers with an overview of the qualification content as well as the assessment and quality assurance requirements for this qualification.

This qualification is regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) in England and is part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). All versions of this qualification are listed on the Register of Regulated Qualifications which is operated by Ofqual at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

This qualification is not designed to replace an existing qualification.

1.2 Qualification Title, Qualification Number and Important Dates

Qualification Title and Level	Qualification Number	Operational Start Date	Operational Review Date
GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine)	610/5997/3	07/07/2025	July 2030

1.3 Qualification Aims and Objectives

The aim of this qualification is to provide learners with comprehensive scientific knowledge and understanding of canine and equine biology, anatomy, and physiological processes and the theoretical foundation necessary for careers in animal science and related professional fields. Learners will develop their understanding of canine and equine health, behaviour, and

reproduction, preparing them for progression to further or higher education in veterinary science, animal science, or related disciplines.

Learners will attain the understanding of emergency procedures for canines and equines by completing units in first aid. This will ensure successful learners have acquired the necessary knowledge of canine and equine first aid without having to complete separate qualifications in this area.

The skills and knowledge gained from this course will also be relevant to those wishing to continue into small animal or other species specialisms.

1.4 Qualification Structure and Overview: Units, GLH, TQT, Level and Credit Value

The structure of this qualification is as follows:

GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine) (610/5997/3)				
Mandatory Units	Unit Reference	Credits	GLH*	GLH + Study Time
1. Canine and Equine Biology	R/651/6980	5	32	50
2. Canine and Equine Anatomy and Physiology	T/651/6981	5	32	50
3. Canine First Aid	R/651/4973	2	14	20
4. Equine First Aid	T/651/4974	2	14	20
5. Canine and Equine Behaviour	Y/651/6982	5	35	50
6. Canine and Equine Husbandry	A/651/6983	4	20	40
7. Canine and Equine Parasitology	D/651/6984	6	32	60
8. Canine and Equine Pharmacology	F/651/6985	4	20	40
9. Canine and Equine Genetics and Reproductive Physiology	H/651/6986	5	35	50
		Total Credits 38	Total GLH* 234	TQT** 380

***Guided Learning Hours (GLH): Definition**

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.

****Total Qualification Time (TQT): Definition**

The number of Guided Learning Hours assigned, plus an estimate of the number of study hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

The number of study hours a learner is expected to undertake in order to complete each unit is expressed in the '**Study Time**' above. This, including the GLH, provides the Total Qualification Time, or TQT, and represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate the achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of this qualification.

The estimates for Guided Learning Hours and Total Qualification Time above have been produced with due regard to information gathered from those with experience in education and training and is in line with guidance published by Ofqual on the allocation and expression of Total Qualification Time and Guided Learning Hours.

Level

The qualification within this specification is designated at Level 3 on the Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) according to the Level Descriptors for knowledge and understanding, which build on those used within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). This means that this qualification is considered by GA to lead to the outcome as follows:

Achievement at Level 3 reflects the ability to identify and use factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas, and reflects an awareness of the nature of the area of study or work and different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.

1.5 Rules of Combination

This qualification consists of 9 mandatory units. There are no optional units.

The mandatory units within the qualification are detailed in Section 1.4 above. Learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria within the mandatory units.

The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the unit are provided in Section 4 below.

There are no further rules of combination.

1.6 Intended Audience, Age and Entry Requirements

This qualification is designed for learners from diverse educational backgrounds who share a passion for animal science. It is suitable for school leavers who have completed GCSEs or equivalent qualifications and are seeking a specialised pathway into animal-related careers.

The qualification is also suitable for adult learners looking to change career direction, perhaps from unrelated fields, who want to develop their knowledge of animal science.

The qualification is also suitable for those working in current animal care roles - such as kennel assistants, stable hands, or pet shop workers - who wish to advance their careers through formal education in animal science.

The qualification is equally appropriate for those who have completed other Level 2 animal care courses and are ready to progress to more advanced animal science study, as well as mature learners returning to education with the goal of entering the veterinary or animal science sectors.

This qualification is intended for learners aged 16 and above.

No prior specialised knowledge of animal science is required, though a genuine interest in biology and animal welfare is essential.

There are no formal entry requirements for this qualification; however, due to the nature of the qualification content, those undertaking the qualification must have a proficient level of spoken and written English (e.g. GCSE Grade C / Grade 4 or above) or equivalent). It may also be appropriate for learners to be undertaking Level 2 maths and English qualifications alongside studying for this vocational qualification at Level 3.

It is recommended that centres are able to assure themselves that learners wishing to undertake this qualification are physically capable of completing the practical demands of the Canine and Equine First Aid units within this qualification.

It is also recommended that prior to commencing a programme of study leading to this qualification, learners receive detailed advice and guidance from the training provider in order to ensure the programme and qualification will meet their needs.

1.7 Recognition of Prior Learning and Transfer of Credits

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessing whether a learner's previous experience and achievements meet the standard requirements of a GA Unit or Units prior to the learner taking the assessment for the qualification, or part of the qualification, they are registered for.

Any prior learning must be relevant to the knowledge, skills and understanding which will be assessed as part of that qualification, and GA will subsequently amend the requirements which a learner must have satisfied before they are assessed as eligible to be awarded the qualification.

Where there is evidence that the learner's knowledge and skills are current, valid and sufficient the use of RPL may be acceptable for recognising achievement of assessment criteria, learning outcome or unit(s). The requirement for RPL in such instances must also include a consideration of the currency of the knowledge gained by the learner at the time they undertook the prior learning. RPL cannot be guaranteed in instances where industry practice or legislation has significantly changed in the time since the prior learning was undertaken / a previous award was issued.

All RPL decisions and processes are subject to External Quality Assurance (EQA) scrutiny and must be documented in line with GA's quality assurance requirements.

No transfer of credits is permitted.

1.8 Relationship to Other Qualifications & Progression Opportunities

The GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine) is an ideal qualification from which a learner might progress onto higher level study, practical occupational training or a career in the animal therapies field, for example:

- GA Level 4 Diploma in Canine Hydrotherapy

- GA Level 4 Diploma in Applied Equine Hydrotherapy
- GA Level 4 Certificate in Veterinary Laser Applications
- GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Osteopathy
- GA Level 6 Diploma in Animal Physiotherapy
- A Veterinary Nursing Diploma (RVN qualification)
- HE degree level programmes such as , BSc Animal Science, BSc Veterinary Science/Veterinary Medicine, BSc Veterinary Nursing, BSc Equine Science/Equine Studies, BSc Animal Behaviour and Welfare, BSc Applied Animal Biology, BSc Zoology
- Foundation Degrees in Animal Management or Veterinary Nursing

The learner may also progress onto a range of other veterinary science or animal care and welfare qualifications or related Apprenticeships.

1.9 Language of Assessment

This qualification is offered in English. Further information concerning the provision of qualification and assessment materials in other languages may be obtained from GA.

1.10 Grading

All learning outcomes and assessment requirements must be met before a learner can be considered having achieved this qualification.

This qualification is not graded on a scale. Learners are assessed as Pass or Fail.

Learners who aren't successful can resubmit work within the registration period.

1.11 Qualification Availability

This qualification is available via GA Approved Centres in the UK and internationally. If you would like further information on offering this qualification, please contact us.

Our contact details appear on our website: www.gatehouseawards.org

Section 2 – Qualification Delivery, Assessment Model and Certification

2.1 Teaching and Learning Requirements

Courses leading to this qualification may consist of e-learning courses or classroom-based courses, or a blended option.

Learners can therefore undertake learning and assessment on a flexible basis.

Learners must have suitable access to teaching and assessment staff as well as technical support. Specialist staff, high quality learning materials and access to assessment opportunities are essential for all centres.

Further details and guidance on the content of teaching and learning for each unit can be found in the Unit Specifications in Section 4 below.

2.2 Assessment and Quality Assurance Model

This qualification is internally assessed and internally moderated by centre staff to clearly demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes and qualification requirements.

Internal assessment, internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and quality assurance conducted by GA.

Centres are therefore subject to the GA Centre Assessment and Standards Scrutiny (CASS) and General Moderation Policy.

2.3 Registering Learners, Registration Validity Period & Unique Learner Numbers

Learners must be registered through the Ark, the GA online Learner Management System.

Owing to the Total Qualification Time of this qualification, the validity period of registrations made will be 18 months. Should a learner not have achieved in the timescale, a new registration is required.

Each approved GA centre is provided with a user account to allow approved staff access to the online system.

2.4 ID Requirements

It is the responsibility of the centre to have systems in place to confirm each learner's identity.

All Centres are therefore required to ensure that each learner's formal identification documents are checked, and these checks are recorded prior to registration.

Learners are required to declare that all work submitted for assessment is their own work.

2.5 Record Keeping

Records of learner's details, their work and any records of Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and records containing learners' personal details must be kept by the centre in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 (including GDPR and all relevant privacy regulations) for a minimum of 2 years.

The centre must operate a safe and effective system of care and comply with clinical and information governance requirements, with appropriate policies and procedures in place to maintain confidentiality related to clients, staff and learners.

All records must be easily retrievable and made available to GA or the Regulator upon request.

Portfolios must be retained until the following External Quality Assurance visit to allow them to be sampled. Following external moderation and the award of a qualification by GA, centres may return portfolios to learners.

Records of all internal quality assurance and moderation activity undertaken must be kept and made available to GA upon request.

Section 3 – Centre Requirements, Assessment & Quality Assurance

Course providers offering this GA qualification must ensure that they have the following resources in place.

3.1 Staff

The knowledge and experience of all staff involved in the teaching, assessment and internal quality assurance of this qualification will be considered during the approval and re-approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

The course provider must ensure that they hold up-to-date and detailed information about the staff involved with the delivery and quality assurance of this qualification and must make records available to GA upon request. The information GA expects the course provider to hold for each member of staff includes, as a minimum:

- current up to date CV
- copies of relevant qualification certificates
- relevant and up to date CPD (Continuous Professional Development) records

The course provider must also ensure that they have the management and administrative arrangements in place which are suitable to support the registration of learners and the qualification delivery.

Requirements for Tutors and Assessors

Teaching staff ('Tutors') include those who deliver teaching and learning content for knowledge and understanding elements and those who are involved in teaching and learning of practical skills, where these are included in the qualification.

The primary responsibility of an Assessor is to assess a learner's performance and ensure that the evidence submitted by the learner meets the requirements of the qualification.

All Tutors must:

- hold appropriate qualifications at Level 3 or above in a veterinary-related qualification, such as Veterinary Nursing, Animal Science, Animal Management or Animal Therapies.

AND

- hold, or be working towards, a recognised teaching or training qualification, e.g. Level 3 Award in Education and Training or equivalent*

All Assessors must:

- hold appropriate qualifications at Level 3 or above in a veterinary-related qualification, such as Veterinary Nursing, Animal Science, Animal Management or Animal Therapies.

AND

- hold, or be working towards, a recognised assessor qualification or their recognised equivalent** e.g.,
 - Level 3 Award in Assessing Competence in the Work Environment
 - Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
 - A1 Assess Candidate Performance Using a Range of Methods
 - D32 Assess Candidate Performance and D33 Assess Candidate Using Differing Sources of Evidence.

All Tutors and Assessors must also:

- be able to evidence relevant and up to date teaching/assessing experience.
- understand the qualification structure, unit learning outcomes and criteria related to the teaching and learning being delivered.
- have access to appropriate guidance and support.

*In the absence of a regulated teaching qualification, the Tutor must ensure that they are able to demonstrate that they have delivered a minimum of 30 hours of teaching or assessing. They are then required to agree to update their training to an Ofqual-regulated teaching qualification within two years of commencing their role in order to continue to deliver the qualification. Trainee Tutors MUST be mentored by a suitable qualified Tutor.

**Assessors may be working towards a relevant equivalent qualification in assessing under the guidance of a suitably qualified and experienced Assessor and their IQA. Trainee Assessors' decisions MUST be counter-signed by a suitably qualified, experienced Assessor.

All staff involved with the delivery and assessment of this qualification must also be able to demonstrate ongoing professional development (CPD) relevant to the sector subject area.

Further information about supporting staff members working towards the required qualifications, including requirements for mentoring, counter-signatories and record-keeping, along with expectations for participation in centre-led standardisation activities and

instructions for increased sampling and internal moderation activities are also detailed in the Centre Handbook.

Requirements for Internal Moderators (also referred to as an Internal Quality Assurers or IQAs)

IQAs are responsible for internal moderation and quality assurance of the qualification to ensure standardisation, reliability, validity and sufficiency of the assessor's assessment decisions.

IQAs therefore need to have a thorough understanding of quality assurance and assessment practices, as well as sufficient technical understanding related to the qualifications that they are internally quality assuring. It is the centre's responsibility to select and appoint IQAs.

Assessors may have one or several appointed Internal Moderators.

This qualification is assessed by an Assessor and internally moderated and quality assured by an Internal Moderator to ensure standardisation, reliability, validity and sufficiency of the Assessor's assessment decisions.

To be able to perform the internal moderation and quality assurance role, an Internal Moderator must:

- hold appropriate qualifications at Level 3 or above in a veterinary-related qualification, such as Veterinary Nursing, Animal Science, Animal Management or Animal Therapies.

AND

- hold, or be working towards**, one of the following internal quality assurance qualifications or their recognised equivalent:
 - Level 4 Award in Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
 - Level 4 Certificate in Leading the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice
 - V1 Conduct internal quality assurance of the assessment process
 - D34 Internally verify the assessment process

**Internal Moderators may be working towards a relevant equivalent quality assurance qualification under the guidance of a suitably qualified and experienced Internal Moderator. Trainee Internal Moderator's decisions MUST be counter-signed by a suitably qualified, experienced Internal Moderator.

Staff may undertake more than one role within the centre, e.g., Tutor, Assessor and Internal Moderator. However, members of staff must NOT IQA their own assessment decisions.

All staff (Tutors, Assessors and IQAs) must maintain a log of their Continuing Professional Development.

The knowledge and experience of Tutors, Assessors, Internal Moderators and Invigilators will be considered during the centre and qualification approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

3.2 Assessment Strategy

Learners are assessed on the evidence contained within their portfolio. Assessment decisions are subject to internal moderation (IQA).

The table below indicates the methods of assessment for each of the units within the GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine).

Unit Number and Title	Assessment Criteria	Assessment Method
1. Canine and Equine Biology	ALL	Portfolio
2. Canine and Equine Anatomy and Physiology	ALL	Portfolio
3. Canine First Aid	ALL	Portfolio and Practical Portfolio
4. Equine First Aid	ALL	Portfolio and Practical Portfolio
5. Canine and Equine Husbandry	ALL	Portfolio
6. Canine and Equine Parasitology	ALL	Portfolio
7. Canine and Equine Pharmacology	ALL	Portfolio
8. Canine and Equine Genetics and Reproductive Physiology	ALL	Portfolio
9. Canine and Equine Genetics and Reproductive Physiology	ALL	Portfolio

3.3 Assessment of Learners - Portfolio Requirements

Learners are expected to build a portfolio of evidence, clearly demonstrating where they have met the learning outcomes and qualification requirements.

Various types of evidence may be used, for example:

- essays/assignments
- short questions and answers
- professional discussions
- observations of performance
- workbooks
- product evidence
- reflective accounts
- witness testimony
- records of questioning

Evidence in the portfolio should be mapped against the learning outcomes, reflect the type of evidence supplied and indicate its location within the portfolio. The use of portfolio reference numbers will enable the learner, assessor, IQA and EQA to quickly locate the evidence submitted.

All evidence must meet CRAVES requirements.

3.4 Use of Simulation

Simulation of real-world canine and equine first aid scenarios is permitted in Units 3 and 4.

3.5 CRAVES Requirements

Assessors must ensure that all evidence within the learner's portfolio judged to meet GA's 'CRAVES' requirements is:

- **current:** the work is relevant at the time of the assessment
- **reliable:** the work is consistent with that produced by other learners
- **authentic:** the work is the learner's own work
- **valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **evaluated:** where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner

- **sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy.

3.6 Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

Internal Moderators (also known as Internal Quality Assurers or IQAs) ensure that Assessors are assessing to the same standards, i.e. consistently and reliably, and that assessment decisions are correct. IQA activities will include:

- ensuring Assessors are suitably experienced and qualified in line with the qualification requirements
- sampling assessments and assessment decisions
- ensuring that assessment decisions meet the GA 'CRAVES' requirements (Current, Reliable, Authentic, Valid, Evaluated and Sufficient)
- conducting standardisation and moderation of assessment decisions
- providing Assessors with clear and constructive feedback
- supporting Assessors and providing training and development where appropriate
- ensuring any stimulus or materials used for the purposes of assessment are fit for purpose.

Sampling of assessment will be planned and carried out in line with a clear IQA and moderation strategy, which incorporates the number of learners, number of Assessors, and the experience and competency of Assessors.

Centre IQAs may wish to refer to the guidance documents provided by GA to approved centres (available on the Ark) in order to formulate an appropriate Sampling Strategy.

3.7 External Moderation and Quality Assurance Arrangements

All GA Approved Centres are entitled to two EQA visits per year. Additional visits can be requested, for which there may be an additional charge.

Assessment and internal moderation and quality assurance activities are subject to external moderation and wider scrutiny and centre controls as per GA's quality assurance arrangements for centre-assessed qualifications

EQA activities will also focus on the centre's continuing adherence to and maintenance of the *GA Centre Approval Criteria* and the criteria and requirements for the specific qualifications for which it holds approval. These include:

- checking that the management of the centre and the management arrangements relating to the qualification are sufficient
- checking that resources to support the delivery of the qualifications, including physical resources and staffing, are in place and sufficient
- ensuring that the centre has appropriate policies and procedures in place relevant to the organisation and to the delivery and quality assurance of the qualifications
- the use of assessment materials and the arrangements in place to ensure that evidence for assessment is 'CRAVES' (Current, Reliable, Authentic, Valid, Evaluated and Sufficient)
- sampling assessment decisions against the qualification requirements across the range of levels, number of Assessors and assessment sites, according to the number of learners
- the internal moderation and quality assurance arrangements
- sampling internal moderation records against the qualification requirements across the range of levels, number of Assessors and assessment sites, according to the number of learners
- administrative arrangements
- ensuring that any actions from moderation and wider quality assurance activity have been carried out by the centre
- confirming any claims for RPL, reasonable adjustments or special considerations

Through discussions with centre staff, examining learner's work, moderation of assessment, talking to learners and reviewing documentation and systems, the GA EQA will provide the centre with full support, advice and guidance as necessary.

3.8 Venue and Equipment Requirements

When training premises are used in the delivery of teaching and assessment of this qualification, centres should, wherever possible, provide suitable access in line with Disability Discrimination, Diversity & Equality law and regulations and any other regulations which apply.

Centres must ensure that all products and equipment used in the delivery and assessment of this qualification must be authorised by GA and confirmed as fit for purpose and compliant with current Health and Safety legislation and any other relevant regulations. This will be considered at approval and during the on-going monitoring of centres.

Where specific products and equipment are required for the delivery and assessment of a GA qualification, the suitability of the products and equipment at the centre will be considered during the centre and qualification approval process and at External Quality Assurance Visits.

Where physical training venues are used, it is expected that centres will provide sufficient space for practical demonstrations and assessment, e.g. during the delivery of practical canine and equine first aid in Units 3 and 4.

Suitable equipment may include:

- canine and equine first aid kits - complete and properly maintained
- canine mannequins / equine mannequin or partial mannequins/leg/hoof models
- halters and lead ropes, hoof care tools
- wound simulation kits
- bandaging practice models
- restraint and transport equipment
- documentation materials
- hygiene and biosecurity supplies
- learning resources – canine and equine anatomical charts/models, visual aids, reference materials
- IT, video and photography equipment

3.9 Teaching and Learning Resources

GA does not prescribe the use of set course books, workbooks or other materials but expects that centres providing such courses should use relevant and up-to-date, high-quality teaching and learning materials which allow learners to adequately prepare for assessment.

All delivery and assessment resources should be inclusive of the principles of equality and diversity and the safeguarding of learners.

Please note, any references to books, journals, websites or other third-party materials and publications made by GA does not infer that GA's accepts responsibility for the content of such materials or any opinions expressed within them.

3.10 Results

Centres may make claims for certification via the Ark when learners complete and the Assessor and Internal Moderator have confirmed achievement of all qualification components. Such claims for certification are subject to successful external moderation.

Following the External Moderator's confirmation of a learner's achievement of all components of the qualification, GA will authorise claims for the certification of learners, details of which will be visible to the centre in the centre's Ark account. Certificates are usually issued within 10 working days of the award of the qualification.

3.11 Certificates

The qualification certificate will indicate both the title and the level at which the qualification is achieved.

Certificates will only be issued to learners who have achieved sufficient credits and met the rules of combination for the qualification they are registered for. If a learner has not achieved sufficient credits or failed to meet the rules of combination, the qualification certificate will not be issued.

Replacement certificates are available upon request.

Amendments to certificates are available upon request but may require the centre to provide evidence of the need for any amendment (e.g. learner proof of identification) and will involve the return of the original certificate. Replacements and amendments may incur an additional charge.

3.12 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claims Status is not available for this qualification.

3.13 Appeals and Enquiries

GA has an appeals procedure in accordance with the arrangements for regulated qualifications.

General enquiries can be made at any time and should be directed to a GA Centre Administrator.

3.14 Ongoing Support

There are a number of documents on the GA website that centres and learners may find useful: www.gatehouseawards.org

The website is updated regularly with news, information about all GA qualifications, sample materials, updates on regulations and other important notices.

Within the centre, a named Examinations Officer is responsible for ensuring that all information and documents provided to centre staff and learners are correct and up to date.

GA must be kept up to date with contact details of all changes of personnel so centres can be provided with the best level of support and guidance.

At the time of approval, centres are assigned a designated Centre Administrator who is their primary point of contact for all aspects of service or support.

Learners should always speak to a member of staff at the centre for information relating to GA and our qualifications prior to approaching GA directly.

Contact details for GA can be found on the GA website www.gatehouseawards.org.

Section 4: Unit Specifications

4.1 GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine) (610/5997/3)

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
1	Canine and Equine Biology	32	5	R/651/6980
This unit provides learners with the knowledge and understanding of biological principles that underpin the structure and function of animals. Learners will acquire knowledge of cellular biology and cell functions providing them with strong foundations to fully understand the following anatomy and physiology unit. The key concepts of evolution are included, alongside the domestication and selective breeding of canine and equine species. Learners will demonstrate an understanding of genetic diversity, breed development, and how selective breeding has shaped modern characteristics in dogs and horses, the principles of genetics and learners will develop their of understanding in DNA replication and transcription, inheritance and variations such as mutations. Knowledge of histology is introduced in this unit to allow learners to understand the main types and subtypes of tissues in the animal equine and canine body, in preparation for the anatomy and physiology unit.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions As most animal biology subjects are transferable and comparable between species, learners are expected to be exposed to generalised biology. However, the subject matter taught and assessed must be restricted to mammalian sources and with specifics in the canine and equine model. Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.				

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand cellular biology in canines and equines	1.1 Identify cellular components and organelles.
	1.2 Explain key cellular processes using correct terminology.
	1.3 Describe different canine and equine cell types and their specialised functions.
2. Understand evolution, domestication and selective breeding of canine and equine species	2.1 Explain key concepts in evolution.
	2.2 Describe the historical process of domestication in dogs and horses.
	2.3 Explain the principles and methods of selective breeding.
	2.4 Analyse genetic diversity within and between canine and equine breeds.
	2.5 Explain how selective breeding has shaped modern breed characteristics.
	2.6 Compare biological characteristics of wild ancestors with modern domestic breeds
	2.7 Discuss the genetic consequences of selective breeding of dogs and horses.
3. Understand genetics in canine and equine biology	3.1 Describe DNA and its role in storage of genetic information.
	3.2 Outline the organisation of chromosomes and genes.
	3.3 Outline the processes of DNA replication, transcription and translation.

	3.4 Describe inheritance.
	3.5 Explain development and variation including mutations.
4. Understand the structure and function of canine and equine tissue	4.1 Identify main tissue types.
	4.2 Recognise tissue subtypes.
	4.3 Explain tissue structure.
	4.4 Discuss the relationship between tissue structure and function in canines and equines.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
2	Canine and Equine Anatomy and Physiology	32	5	T/651/6981
In this unit, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of animal anatomy and physiology in canines and equines. Learners will use the knowledge gained within the previous unit and use key terminology used in animal anatomy and physiology, crucial for accurate communication in veterinary and animal care settings. The unit develops the learner's understanding of each of the major body systems including respiratory, circulatory, reproductive, digestive, musculoskeletal, excretory, endocrine, and nervous systems. For each system, learners will gain knowledge of the key components and their functions, as well as understanding how these systems work together to maintain animal health. Learners will also understand body cavities and how they are organised within the animal body, with emphasis on the comparative differences between canine and equine species. The knowledge and understanding of animal anatomy and physiology will enable learners to better understand animal health, recognise normal functions, and appreciate how body systems interact.				
Assessment Instructions & Guidance				
Assessment Instructions Comparative anatomy and physiology must focus specifically on canine and equine species throughout all learning outcomes. "Major body systems" include skeletal, muscular, integumentary, digestive, circulatory, respiratory, nervous, endocrine, urinary, reproductive systems, and their associated body cavities. LO4 - Digestive system comparisons must include the significant differences between canine monogastric digestion and equine hindgut fermentation processes. LO7 AC 7.1 - Must include the interplay of systems and holistic nature of health, demonstrating understanding of how systems work together rather than in isolation.				

LO7 AC 7.4 - Should connect anatomical knowledge to practical applications in animal care, handling, and basic health assessment.

Learners should be able to locate major anatomical landmarks and interpret basic anatomical diagrams for both species.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the structure and function of body systems in canines and equines	1.1 Identify the major body systems and body cavities in canines and equines.
	1.2 Compare anatomical and physiological differences between canines and equines and explain the significance of these differences.
	1.3 Describe the main structures and organs within each system in both canines and equines.
	1.4 Compare anatomical and physiological differences between canines and equines and explain these differences.
	1.5 Explain the physiological functions of each body system.
2. Understand the skeletal and muscular systems in canines and equines	2.1 Identify and locate the major bones, joints and anatomical landmarks in canines and equines.
	2.2 Explain the functions of the skeletal system including support, movement, and protection.
	2.3 Describe the major muscle groups and their functions.
	2.4 Discuss the interaction between bones, muscles, tendons and joints in movement.

3. Understand the circulatory, respiratory, and integumentary systems in canines and equines	3.1 Describe the structure and function of the heart and blood vessels in canines and equines.
	3.2 Explain the process of blood fluid dynamics and its role in oxygen and nutrient transport.
	3.3 Identify key components of the respiratory system and explain the process of breathing.
	3.4 Describe the structure and function of the integumentary system.
4. Understand the digestive system in canines and equines	4.1 Outline the structure and function of the digestive system in monogastric animals.
	4.2 Compare digestive processes between canines and equines, including hindgut fermentation.
	4.3 Explain the role of digestive enzymes and gut microbiota.
	4.4 Discuss nutritional absorption and metabolism.
5. Understand the nervous and endocrine systems in canines and equines	5.1 Describe the structure and function of the central and peripheral nervous systems.
	5.2 Explain the roles of key endocrine and exocrine glands and the substances they produce.
	5.3 Discuss the integration between nervous and endocrine control systems.
	5.4 Analyse reflexes and behavioural responses.
6. Understand the urinary and reproductive systems in canines and equines	6.1 Identify the components and functions of the urinary system.
	6.2 Explain the process of urine formation and waste elimination.

	6.3 Outline the structure and function of male and female reproductive systems in both species.
	6.4 Describe the reproductive cycles in canines and equines.
7. Relate anatomy and physiology to health and disease in canines and equine	7.1 Explain how the integration of body systems contribute to overall health.
	7.2 Identify common disorders and diseases affecting each system.
	7.3 Discuss the physiological indicators of health and ill health in canine and equines.
	7.4 Discuss how anatomical knowledge supports practical animal care.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
3	Canine First Aid	14	2	R/651/4973
In this unit, learners will develop a comprehensive understanding of key legislation such as the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and the legal limitations and circumstances under which canine first aid can be administered by laypersons, such as for alleviating pain, preserving life, and preventing deterioration. The learner will explore the importance of risk assessment to identify hazards to humans, animals, and the environment, emphasising biosecurity practices, PPE and hygiene to control and prevent infection and maintain safety. The learner will explore communication skills to be used during emergencies, focusing on calm, clear interactions and accurate information relay. The learner will gain knowledge of emergency signs in canines, such as collapse, poisoning, and choking, and vital signs like heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature. They will practice stabilising techniques until veterinary care is available. Additionally, learners will understand how to assess canine behaviour to ensure safe handling, restraint, and transport using appropriate methods and equipment such as muzzles and crates. The learner will also develop their knowledge and understanding of the importance of a well-maintained first aid kit and the function of its items. Finally, the learner will demonstrate canine first aid procedures, including undertaking behaviour and risk assessments, vital signs evaluation, effective communication, and record-keeping, ensuring biosecurity and correct follow-up care.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions Assessment Criteria 4.4 Requirements Learners must address a minimum of 5 conditions from the following range: ● Collapse ● Choking ● Drowning ● Bleeding (Haemorrhage) ● Shock				

- Seizures
- Burns
- Fractures
- Eye Injuries
- Poisoning
- Heatstroke
- Hypothermia
- Electrocution
- Bites and Stings
- Gastric Dilatation Volvulus (Bloat)
- Birthing Difficulties (Dystocia)

Learning Outcome 7 Requirements

Learning Outcome 7 must be assessed via simulated activities.

The simulated scenario used for Learning Outcome 7 must involve one of the conditions listed above.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand current legislation and the roles and responsibilities of a canine first aider	1.1 Summarise current legislation in providing first aid.
	1.2 Explain the roles and responsibilities of a first aider.
	1.3 Explain the limitations of providing first aid.
2. Understand the importance of safety in canine first aid situations	2.1 Explain the importance of risk assessment before providing first aid.
	2.2 Identify hazards associated when providing first aid.

	2.3 Describe the importance of biosecurity prior, during and after first aid treatment.
3. Understand the importance of appropriate communication and staying calm in emergency situations	3.1 Explain the importance of remaining calm in an emergency.
	3.2 Explain how to communicate with others during a first aid emergency.
4. Understand the assessment of canine first aid conditions, their classifications and treatment	4.1 Summarise the signs of first aid conditions.
	4.2 Describe the classification of emergencies.
	4.3 Describe the signs of acute and secondary drowning.
	4.4 Describe the signs of and considerations for first aid treatment of electrocution.
	4.5 Identify vital signs of a canine during first aid.
	4.6 Describe how to treat first aid conditions.
5. Understand appropriate handling, restraint and movement in first aid scenarios	5.1 Describe how to assess canine behaviour prior to handling.
	5.2 Explain methods of handling and restraining canines during first aid.
	5.3 Describe how to safely move and transport canines during first aid situations.
	5.4 Identify equipment used when handling, restraining and moving canines for first aid.
	6.1 Identify items contained within an animal emergency first aid kit.

6. Know items contained within a canine first aid kit and the use of each.	6.2 Summarise the use of each item contained within a canine first aid kit.
	6.3 Explain the importance of regular maintenance for a canine first aid kit.
7. Be able to assess and demonstrate first aid procedures in emergency situations.	7.1 Assess a first aid situation.
	7.2 Evaluate vital signs.
	7.3 Demonstrate first aid procedures.
	7.4 Demonstrate effective communication.
	7.5 Demonstrate handling, restraining and moving canines appropriately.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
4	Equine First Aid	14	2	T/651/4974
In this unit, learners will develop a comprehensive understanding of key legislation such as the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and the legal limitations and circumstances under which equine first aid can be administered by laypersons, such as for alleviating pain, preserving life, and preventing deterioration. The learner will explore the importance of risk assessment to identify hazards to humans, equines, and the environment, emphasising biosecurity practices, PPE and hygiene to control and prevent infection and maintain safety. The learner will explore communication skills to be used during emergencies, focusing on calm, clear interactions and accurate information relay. The learner will gain knowledge of emergency signs in equines, such as collapse, profuse bleeding, wounds, poisoning and choking, and vital signs like heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature. They will practice stabilising techniques until veterinary care is available. Additionally, learners will understand how to assess equine behaviour to ensure safe handling, restraint, and transport using appropriate methods and equipment. The learner will also develop their knowledge and understanding of the importance of a well-maintained first aid kit and the function of its items. Finally, the learner will demonstrate equine first aid procedures, including undertaking behaviour and risk assessments, vital signs evaluation, effective communication, and record-keeping, ensuring biosecurity and correct follow-up care.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions Assessment Criteria 4.4 Requirements Learners must address a minimum of 5 conditions from the following range: • Collapse • Respiratory Distress • Poisoning / Toxicity • Severe Lameness • Profuse Bleeding				

- Severe Trauma
- Fractures
- Penetrating Wounds
- Heat Stroke / Hyperthermia
- Hypothermia
- Sudden Onset of Laminitis
- Colic
- Choke
- Inability to Urinate
- Severe or Continuous Diarrhoea
- Ingestion of a Foreign Body
- Change of Mentation (Altered Mental State)
- Seizures or Neurological Symptoms
- Dystocia (Birthing Difficulties)
- Anaphylaxis
- Eye Injuries
- Burns and scalds
- Electrocution

Learning Outcome 7 Requirements

Learning Outcome 7 must be assessed via simulated activities.

The simulated scenario used for Learning Outcome 7 must involve one of the conditions listed above.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand current legislation and the roles and responsibilities of an equine first aider	1.1 Summarise current legislation in providing first aid.
	1.2 Explain the roles and responsibilities of a first aider.
	1.3 Explain the limitations of providing first aid.

2. Understand the importance of safety in equine first aid situations	2.1 Explain the importance of risk assessment before providing first aid.
	2.2 Identify hazards associated when providing first aid.
	2.3 Describe the importance of biosecurity prior, during and after first aid treatment.
3. Understand the importance of appropriate communication and staying calm in emergency situations	3.1 Explain the importance of remaining calm in an emergency.
	3.2 Explain how to communicate with others during a first aid emergency.
4. Understand the assessment of equine first aid conditions, their classifications and treatment	4.1 Summarise the signs of first aid conditions.
	4.2 Describe the classification of emergencies.
	4.3 Identify vital signs of an equine during first aid.
	4.4 Describe how to treat first aid conditions.
5. Understand appropriate handling, restraint and movement in first aid scenarios	5.1 Describe how to assess equine behaviour prior to handling.
	5.2 Explain methods of handling and restraining equines during first aid.
	5.3 Describe how to safely move and transport equines during first aid situations.
	5.4 Identify equipment used when handling, restraining and moving equines for first aid.
	6.1 Identify items contained within an equine emergency first aid kit.

6. Know items contained within an equine first aid kit and the use of each.	6.2 Summarise the use of each item contained within an equine first aid kit.
	6.3 Explain the importance of regular maintenance for an equine first aid kit.
7. Be able to assess and demonstrate first aid procedures in emergency situations.	7.1 Assess a first aid situation.
	7.2 Evaluate vital signs.
	7.3 Demonstrate first aid procedures.
	7.4 Demonstrate effective communication.
	7.5 Demonstrate handling, restraining and moving small animals appropriately.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
5	Canine and Equine Behaviour	35	5	Y/651/6982
In this unit, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of canine and equine behaviour and how selective breeding and domestication have shaped behavioural traits and behavioural adaptations for survival. Learners will develop their understanding of how to recognise and interpret animal communication, including body language, vocal signals, and behavioural indicators of stress, comfort, and social dynamics. They will understand the natural social structures of these species and how pack and herd behaviours influence individual animal welfare and management practices. Learners will develop knowledge of environmental influence on behaviour and how habitat, enrichment and availability of resources can alter behaviour. Learners will also develop their knowledge and understanding of the differences between wild and domesticated animals, common behavioural problems, and how appropriate husbandry supports natural behaviour patterns. Human-animal interaction is also a key consideration within this unit, supporting learners to develop knowledge and understanding of how behaviours influence, and are influenced by, canine and equine handling and training.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content				
Assessment Requirements All learning outcomes must focus on canine and equine species, with reference to their wild ancestors (wolves, wild horses) where appropriate for comparison. LO1 - Must include examples of specific breeds and their behavioural traits (e.g., herding behaviours in Border Collies, prey drive variations, flight responses in different horse breeds). LO2 - Should cover species-specific communication including canine calming signals, equine ear positions, tail carriage, and facial expressions. Chemical communication through scent marking should be included.				

LO3 - Pack dynamics should reference wolf pack structure and its application to domestic dogs. Herd behaviour should cover leadership, hierarchy, and social bonds in horses.

LO4 - Environmental enrichment must be species-appropriate and evidence-based. Stressors should include confinement, inappropriate housing, and lack of social contact.

LO6 - Learning theory should cover operant and classical conditioning, positive reinforcement principles, and their practical application. Safe handling must address species-specific flight/fight responses.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the development of behaviour in canines and equines	1.1 Describe key theories relating to the evolution of animal behaviour.
	1.2 Explain how selective breeding has influenced behavioural traits in dogs and horses.
	1.3 Describe breed-specific behavioural characteristics and their purposes.
	1.4 Discuss how domestication has modified natural behaviours.
	1.5 Explain the role of genetics and environment in behavioural development.
2. Understand body language and communication in canines and equines	2.1 Identify and interpret common body language signals and their meanings in canines and equines.
	2.2 Describe stress signals, calming signals, and threat displays in dogs and horses.
	2.3 Explain how animals use vocal, chemical, and physical signals to communicate.

	2.4 Explain the role of communication in social structures, hierarchy and conflict resolution.
3. Understand social behaviour and group dynamics in canines and equines	3.1 Describe natural social structures in wild canines and equines.
	3.2 Explain pack dynamics in dogs and herd behaviour in horses.
	3.3 Discuss how social behaviour influences individual animal welfare.
	3.4 Analyse the effects of isolation and inappropriate social groupings.
4. Understand environmental influences on behaviour in canines and equines	4.1 Explain how environmental factors influence behavioural adaptations.
	4.2 Describe behavioural responses to changes in habitat, resources, and seasonal variations.
	4.3 Evaluate the impact of environmental enrichment in captive environments.
5. Understand behavioural differences between wild and domesticated animals	5.1 Compare behavioural traits of wild animals with those of domesticated canines and equines
	5.2 Explain how domestication has influenced natural behaviours
	5.3 Explain behavioural challenges in domesticated animals and their underlying causes
	5.4 Explain how appropriate care and husbandry practices support animals in expressing their natural behaviour
6. Understand human-animal interaction and behaviour modification	6.1 Describe different contexts of human-animal interaction, including work, companionship and therapy.
	6.2 Explain principles of learning theory and their application to animal training.

	6.3 Discuss the impact of handling, socialisation and training on canine and equine welfare and behaviour.
	6.4 Explain safe handling practices based on knowledge of canine and equine behaviours.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
6	Canine and Equine Husbandry	20	4	A/651/6983
In this unit, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of canine and equine husbandry, focusing on the daily care and management practices required to maintain animal health and welfare. Learners will explore the principles of low and high interaction animal keeping systems, comparing their characteristics, requirements, advantages, disadvantages, welfare considerations, and handling techniques. The unit covers comprehensive daily care routines including housing management, grooming, exercise provision, and environmental enrichment. Learners will understand the importance of systematic health monitoring, record keeping, biosecurity measures, and current welfare legislation and industry standards that govern animal care practices. Nutrition and feeding management forms a key component, with learners developing knowledge of species-specific dietary requirements across different life stages, feeding schedules, and the identification of potentially harmful foods and substances. The unit emphasises recognising signs of illness, injury, and distress in both species, conducting basic visual health checks, and knowing when and how to seek professional veterinary assistance. Learners will also gain understanding of the various professionals involved in animal care and how effective communication, record-keeping, and a multi-disciplinary approach support optimal animal welfare and health outcomes.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance & Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions All learning outcomes must focus primarily on canine and equine species, with reference to other species only where they effectively demonstrate contrasting management approaches. LO1 - Management systems should include low and high interaction husbandry; stabled horses vs. pasture management, kennel facilities vs. home environments, working dog accommodations vs. companion animal housing. Other species may be included in coverage of other management systems. LO2 - Daily care routines must be species-specific and include cleaning, feeding schedules, health checks, and maintenance tasks. Welfare legislation should reference current animal				

welfare laws and industry standards from organisations such as RSPCA, BHS and other reputable charities and organisations.

LO3 - Grooming techniques should be practical and species-appropriate. Exercise requirements must consider breed variations, age, fitness levels, and intended use (working vs. companion animals).

LO4 - Nutritional requirements should cover energy, protein, vitamins, and minerals for different life stages. Harmful substances must include toxic plants accessible through grazing, household items, and inappropriate human foods. Harmful foods to also include substances that may make their way into the diet such as grazing or substances not deliberately given.

LO5 - Health indicators should include vital signs, behavioural changes, and physical examination points. Pain recognition should be species-specific.

LO6 - Professional roles should include veterinarians, veterinary nurses, farriers, equine therapists, physiotherapists, chiropractors, hydrotherapists, canine behaviourists, nutritionists, and groomers.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the principles of low and high interaction animal keeping	1.1 Explain the characteristics and requirements of low interaction animal husbandry.
	1.2 Explain the characteristics and requirements of high interaction animal husbandry.
	1.3 Compare the advantages, disadvantages, welfare considerations and handling techniques used in both systems.
2. Understand the principles of animal care and husbandry	2.1 Describe key responsibilities involved in daily care routines for canines and equines.
	2.2 Explain housing requirements including space, ventilation, bedding, and environmental needs.

	2.3 Discuss the importance of biosecurity and disease prevention measures.
	2.4 Explain welfare legislation and industry standards relevant to animal care.
3. Understand animal feeding and nutrition	3.1 Identify the main nutritional requirements for canines and equines at different life stages.
	3.2 Explain feeding plans, portion control, and dietary adjustment practices.
	3.3 Describe proper feed storage, hygiene, and water provision.
	3.4 State the consequences of poor nutrition and inappropriate feeding practices.
	3.5 Identify potentially harmful foods and substances, including toxic plants and inappropriate feeds for dogs and horses.
4. Understand grooming, exercise, and enrichment requirements for canines and equines	4.1 Describe appropriate grooming techniques and schedules for canines and equines.
	4.2 Explain exercise requirements for different breeds, ages, and purposes.
	4.3 Describe environmental enrichment needs for canines and equines.
	4.4 Describe routine health monitoring and record keeping for canines and equines.
5. Recognise signs of injury and poor health in canines and equines	5.1 Describe common signs and symptoms of illness and injury in canines and equines.
	5.2 Compare how canines and equines express pain, stress, and discomfort.
	5.3 Explain how to conduct a basic visual health check.

	5.4 Explain when and how to seek veterinary assistance.
6. Understand the role of veterinary and other animal care professionals	5.1 Describe the roles and responsibilities of veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and paraprofessionals.
	6.2 Explain the functions of specialised professionals including farriers, equine therapists, canine behaviourists, and animal nutritionists.
	5.2 Explain the importance of effective communication and record-keeping when working with professionals.
	5.3 Discuss how a multi-disciplinary approach supports animal welfare and health outcomes

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
7	Canine and Equine Parasitology	32	6	D/651/6984
In this unit, learners will develop comprehensive knowledge of the biology, life cycles, and impact of internal and external parasites that affect canine and equine species. The knowledge gained will provide essential understanding for animal welfare, health management, and disease prevention in professional animal care settings. Learners will explore how common parasites including roundworms, tapeworms, fleas, ticks, mites, and protozoa infect their hosts, examining the clinical signs they produce and the diagnostic, control, and management strategies employed by animal care professionals. The unit covers both the direct health impacts on infected animals and the broader implications for animal welfare and performance. Environmental and seasonal factors that influence parasite prevalence and transmission will be examined, enabling learners to understand how management practices can reduce infection risks. The potential for zoonotic transmission is also covered, emphasising the importance of parasite control for both animal and human health. Particular emphasis is placed on prevention strategies and integrated approaches to parasite management, preparing learners to implement effective control programs in various animal care settings.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions LO1 - Main parasite groups must include nematodes (roundworms), cestodes (tapeworms), trematodes (flukes), arthropods (fleas, ticks, mites, lice), and protozoa. Examples should be species-specific to canines and equines. LO2 - AC 2.3 "performance" should encompass animals used in sporting disciplines, recreational activities, working roles, and general daily performance including appetite, behaviour, and physical condition. LO3 - AC 3.1 diagnostic techniques must include: faecal analysis (flotation, sedimentation), skin scrapings, blood tests, hair sampling, urinalysis, and visual examination methods.				

LO4 - Environmental factors should include temperature, humidity, soil conditions, grazing management, and housing systems. Seasonal patterns should cover regional variations in parasite activity.

LO5 - AC 5.1 treatment options must include anthelmintics for endoparasites and ectoparasiticides for external parasites, with consideration of drug classes and mechanisms of action.

LO5 - AC 5.3 treatments should include strategic deworming and targeted selective treatment, faecal egg count reduction tests, and resistance monitoring protocols.

Common parasites to be covered include: roundworms (*Toxocara*, *Parascaris*), tapeworms (*Anoplocephala*, *Dipylidium*), fleas (*Ctenocephalides*), ticks (*Ixodes*), and relevant protozoa.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the types and classification of parasites affecting canines and equines	1.1 Define the term "parasite" and explain its relevance in veterinary contexts.
	1.2 Classify parasites into ectoparasites and endoparasites, providing examples relevant to canines and equines.
	1.3 Describe the main groups of parasites affecting canines and equines, including helminths, arthropods, and protozoa.
	1.4 Compare parasite lifecycles and their adaptations for survival and transmission.
2. Understand the impact of parasitic infestation on canine and equine health	2.1 Describe the clinical signs and symptoms of common parasitic infestations in canines and equines.
	2.2 Explain the health risks and complications associated with untreated parasitic infections.

	2.3 Evaluate the effects of parasitic infestations on animal welfare, performance, and quality of life.
	2.4 Discuss zoonotic risks associated with parasites common to canines and equines.
3. Know how veterinary professionals diagnose and identify common canine and equine parasites	3.1 Describe common diagnostic techniques used to detect parasitic infections in canines and equines.
	3.2 Identify common parasites and their life stages using microscopy and visual identification techniques.
	3.3 Explain the importance of accurate diagnosis in developing effective treatment plans.
	3.4 Record and interpret findings from test results and observations.
4. Understand environmental and seasonal factors affecting parasites	4.1 Explain how environmental conditions influence parasite survival and transmission.
	4.2 Describe seasonal variations in parasite prevalence and activity.
	4.3 Evaluate environmental risk factors for parasitic infections.
5. Understand prevention, control, and treatment of parasitic infestations	5.1 Describe treatment options for common parasitic infections in canines and equines.
	5.2 Explain best practices for preventing parasitic infestations through environmental and management controls.
	5.3 Evaluate the use of parasite control treatment including resistance management.
	5.4 Discuss the role of routine health checks, owner education, and integrated pest management in parasite prevention.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
8	Canine and Equine Pharmacology	20	4	F/651/6985
In this unit, learners will develop fundamental knowledge of pharmacology principles and their application in canine and equine medicine. The unit introduces learners to key pharmacological terminology, major routes of drug administration, and the pharmacokinetic processes of absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion (ADME), with particular emphasis on species-specific factors that influence drug efficacy, safety, and metabolism in dogs and horses. Learners will explore the main categories of drugs used in canine and equine treatment, including antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, sedatives, and vaccines, understanding their mechanisms of action, therapeutic uses, contraindications, and potential side effects and adverse reactions. The unit covers legal and ethical responsibilities, including VMD regulations, prescription classifications, controlled drug legislation, the cascade system, withdrawal periods, and record-keeping requirements. Learners will understand procedures for reporting adverse reactions and the importance of informed consent and client communication regarding medication use. Practical knowledge of safe handling and storage of veterinary medicines is developed, including correct storage conditions, personal protective equipment requirements, proper disposal methods, and emergency procedures. Learners will understand how to safely assist in medication administration through appropriate restraint techniques, risk identification, and health and safety considerations, while developing skills in reflecting on and improving their own practice.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions LO1 - Routes of administration must include oral, topical, injection (subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous), and inhalation. Species differences should emphasise metabolic variations between canines and equines.				

LO2 - AC 2.1 drug classes must include antibiotics, NSAIDs, corticosteroids, anthelmintics, sedatives, analgesics, and vaccines. Examples should be commonly used preparations in each species.

LO3 - AC 3.1 legal frameworks must include Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) regulations, Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR), Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, prescription-only medicine (POM-V) classifications, and the cascade system.

LO3 - Record keeping must cover administration records, adverse reaction reporting (VMD Yellow Card scheme), batch numbers, expiry dates, and withdrawal periods.

LO4 - Storage requirements should address temperature control, light protection, security requirements for controlled drugs, and segregation of different drug types.

LO5 - Administration assistance should emphasise appropriate restraint for each species, and recognition of situations requiring immediate veterinary intervention.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the principles of pharmacology in canine and equine species	1.1 Define key pharmacological terminology relevant to veterinary practice.
	1.2 Describe the major routes of drug administration and their applications in canines and equines.
	1.3 Explain the pharmacokinetic processes of absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion (ADME) in canines and equines.
	1.4 Discuss species-specific factors that influence drug efficacy, safety and metabolism in canines and equines.
2. Know the main categories of drugs used in canine and equine treatment	2.1 Identify common drug classes used in canine and equine medicine, including antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, sedatives and vaccines.
	2.2 Describe the mechanism of action for key examples from each drug class.

	2.3 Summarise the therapeutic uses, contraindications and species-specific considerations for commonly prescribed veterinary drugs.
	2.4 Explain potential side effects and adverse reactions specific to canines and equines.
3. Understand legal and ethical responsibilities for veterinary medicines	3.1 Outline legal frameworks governing veterinary medicines including VMD regulations, prescription classifications, and controlled drug legislation.
	3.2 Explain the cascade system, withdrawal periods, and record-keeping requirements.
	3.3 Describe procedures for reporting adverse reactions and maintaining confidentiality.
	3.4 Discuss informed consent and client communication regarding medication use.
4. Understand safe handling and storage of veterinary medicines	4.1 Describe correct storage conditions for different types of veterinary medicine.
	4.2 Explain safe handling procedures including personal protective equipment requirements.
	4.3 Outline proper disposal methods for expired and unused medications.
	4.4 Identify emergency procedures for accidental exposure or adverse reactions.
5. Understand how to safely assist in medication administration to canines and equines	5.1 Describe appropriate restraint techniques for medication administration in canines and equines.
	5.2 Identify potential risks and health and safety considerations during medication administration.
	5.3 Reflect on and suggest ways to improve own practice.

Mandatory Unit		GLH	Credits	Unit Reference
9	Canine and Equine Genetics and Reproductive Physiology	35	5	H/651/6986
In this unit, learners will explore the fundamental principles of genetics and reproductive physiology as they apply to canine and equine species. The unit examines key genetic terminology, basic principles of inheritance including Mendelian genetics, and how traits are inherited using Punnett squares and genetic diagrams. Learners will investigate common inherited disorders and the role of genetic testing in modern breeding decisions and health screening. The unit covers the structure and function of male and female reproductive systems in both species, examining anatomical differences, physiological functions, and hormonal regulation. Learners will understand oestrous cycles, natural mating behaviours, artificial breeding practices, and the processes of fertilisation, embryo development, and factors affecting fertility. The unit concludes with pregnancy and parturition, covering gestation periods, birth management, and when to seek veterinary intervention for complications. Neonatal development and early care includes essential care requirements for newborns, health monitoring, identifying signs of healthy development and common problems, and understanding weaning processes and early socialisation requirements for both species.				
Assessment Instructions, Guidance and Indicative Content				
Assessment Instructions LO1 - AC 1.1 genetic terminology must include genes, alleles, genotype, phenotype, chromosomes, homozygous, heterozygous, dominant, recessive, carrier, and inheritance patterns. LO1 - AC 1.4 common inherited disorders should include examples such as hip dysplasia, progressive retinal atrophy, osteochondritis dissecans, polysaccharide storage myopathy, and coat colour dilution disorders. LO2 - AC 2.4 key reproductive hormones must include FSH, LH, oestrogen, progesterone, testosterone, oxytocin, and prolactin.				

LO3 - AC 3.1 oestrous cycle timing: dogs (6–12-month intervals, non-seasonal) vs horses (21-day cycles, seasonal breeding March-October in Northern Hemisphere).

LO4 - Gestation periods: dogs (58-68 days), horses (320-370 days, average 340 days).

LO5 - Neonatal care should emphasise critical first hours, colostrum intake, temperature regulation, and early health assessments.

Additional Assessment Guidance and Indicative Content is available to GA approved centres.

Learning Outcomes The learner will be able to	Assessment Criteria The learner can
1. Understand the principles of genetics in canine and equine species	1.1 Define key genetic terms.
	1.2 Explain the basic principles of inheritance, including Mendelian genetics and modes of inheritance.
	1.3 Describe how traits are inherited in canines and equines using Punnett squares and genetic diagrams.
	1.4 Identify common inherited disorders in canines and equines and describe their patterns of inheritance.
	1.5 Discuss the role of genetic testing in modern breeding decisions and health screening.
2. Understand the structure and function of the reproductive systems in canines and equines	2.1 Describe the anatomy of the male and female reproductive systems in canines and equines.
	2.2 Explain the physiological functions of the main reproductive organs.
	2.3 Compare the structural and functional differences between canine and equine reproductive systems.
	2.4 Describe the hormonal regulation of reproduction in both males and females.

3. Understand reproductive cycles and breeding management in canines and equines	3.1 Describe the oestrous cycles of bitches and mares, including key stages, timing, and hormonal changes.
	3.2 Explain natural mating behaviours and artificial breeding practices for both species.
	3.3 Outline the process of fertilisation, embryo development, and implantation in canines and equines.
	3.4 Identify factors affecting fertility and successful reproduction in canines and equines.
4. Understand pregnancy and parturition	4.1 Describe the stages of pregnancy and gestation periods for canines and equines.
	4.2 Explain the signs, stages and management of parturition in canine and equine species.
	4.3 Identify complications during pregnancy and birth, and when to seek veterinary intervention.
5. Understand neonatal development and early care	5.1 Outline key stages of neonatal development in puppies and foals.
	5.2 Describe essential care requirements for newborns including feeding, warmth, and health monitoring.
	5.3 Identify signs of healthy development and common neonatal problems.
	5.4 Explain weaning processes and early socialisation requirements for both species.

Appendix 1: Internal Moderation and Quality Assurance Regulations and Guidance

1.1 Introduction to Internal Moderation

Internal Moderation is a centre's internal system that ensures learner evidence is complete and genuinely meets all the required criteria by which the learner is judged to have met in order to be awarded a qualification. The process involves regularly sampling and evaluating the centre's assessment practices and decisions, and it is the Internal Moderator's responsibility to act on their findings to ensure consistency and fairness.

Ensuring quality standards are maintained and are consistent within and across a centre's provision is the responsibility of the head of centre, who must ensure that suitable staff are in place to act as Internal Moderator(s) and provide full support and standards scrutiny of the centre's Assessment decisions.

1.2 Internal Moderation Processes

Internal Moderation involves three key processes: co-ordination of the assessment process, standardisation of assessment practice, and sampling of assessed work.

These processes are conducted by one Internal Moderator or, if there is more than one, a team of Internal Moderators who are under the direction of a Lead Internal Moderator.

Information about the experience and qualification requirements for Internal Moderators is provided in the *Qualification Specification*.

1.3. Co-ordination of the Assessment Process

Prior to delivery commencing, it is the Internal Moderator who will confirm that assessment tasks are appropriate. This may involve checking that proposed assessment activities, plans for practical assessments, or the briefs of any assignments or reports are fit for purpose. It may also include checking that internal tests or examination materials are fit for purpose.

In order to ensure that the planned assessment activities and materials are fit for purpose, the Internal Moderator will consider and judge whether the activities and materials provide inclusive opportunities for all learners to meet the assessment objectives and generate evidence which is current, reliable, authentic, valid, able to be evaluated and sufficient to meet the requirements of the qualification.

During delivery of assessment, Internal Moderators will work with the Assessment team, ensuring that assessment practices are being carried out correctly. This may involve observing assessment taking place.

1.4 Standardisation of Assessment

The standardisation process helps to ensure that all centre staff involved in the delivery, assessment and quality assurance are consistent and fair to all learners and interpret and follow the requirements of the qualification in the same way.

Internal Moderators are expected to ensure high levels of consistency across Assessors and centre delivery sites through sharing good practice and providing feedback and support, doing so accurately and in good time. The internal Moderator may highlight areas for further CPD or additional training as necessary.

1.5. Sampling Process

When planning and carrying out internal moderation activities, it is important that the Internal Moderator works to a sound sampling strategy to ensure that standardisation of assessment decisions can take place.

A centre's sampling strategy involves reviewing the quality of Assessor's judgements, which will include reviewing learner work.

The learner work may be sampled before the learner has completed the full qualification, for example by sampling one or two assignments, topic areas or units, as the learner completes them.

The Internal Moderator should check that planning and reviewing has taken place and feedback is given to learners by the Assessor. The Internal Moderator will also check and confirm the accuracy of the application of any mark schemes, guidance and overall assessment decisions.

The Internal Moderator will therefore be able to evaluate the quality and consistency of the Assessor's assessment decisions and be able to identify any problems at an early stage. It will highlight individual Assessor training and development needs, which in turn can inform the programme of CPD for the assessment team as a whole.

The Internal Moderator must plan their sampling activities as outlined below.

1.6 Establishing a Sampling Strategy

Sampling should enable the Internal Moderator to evaluate how Assessors have reached their decisions. They must be able to follow documentation which clearly shows that Assessors have checked that the evidence presented meets the rules of evidence.

Evidence must be confirmed by Assessors as **'CRAVES'**

- **Current:** the work is relevant at the time of the assessment
- **Reliable:** the work is consistent with that produced by other learners
- **Authentic:** the work is the learner's own work
- **Valid:** the work is relevant and appropriate to the subject being assessed and is at the required level
- **Evaluated:** where the learner has not been assessed as competent, the deficiencies have been clearly and accurately identified via feedback to the learner resulting in improvements in knowledge or competency leading to the award
- **Sufficient:** the work covers the expected learning outcomes and any range statements as specified in the criteria or requirements in the assessment strategy.

1.7 Planning Sampling Activities

The Internal Moderator should consider the following when considering the volume of work that they should sample:

- the learners' ethnic origin, age and gender to ensure a representative range of learners are sampled
- the Assessors' experience and qualifications, workload and their occupational competence. For example, if Assessors are qualified and experienced it may not be necessary to look at everything in a learner's portfolio. If Assessors have less than 12 months' experience, are new to the centre or a particular qualification, or perhaps have not assessed for a length of time, the Internal Moderator will need to sample substantially more of their decisions for the first 6 - 12 months
- the full range of assessment methods used for any one qualification, for example observation, witness testimony, professional discussion, reflective accounts, questioning, assignments, products, RPL, simulation, etc and ensure a good, representative range of assessment evidence is sampled
- previous feedback to Assessors regarding good practice and/or involved highlighting development needs, for example If the Internal Moderator has a particular concern regarding the assessment decisions of a particular Assessor they should focus on increasing the volume of work from that Assessor to continue increased monitoring and evaluation of risk
- whether any changes have been implemented relating to the assessment of the qualification or its units, for example if there have been amendments to the

qualification specification, or instances where industry practice or legislation has changed

- the range of locations where assessments have taken place
- the sampling process must not be determined by any rule of thumb such as '10%.'

1.8 Producing a Sampling Plan

The Internal Moderator must develop a sampling plan at the beginning of the learner's (or cohort's) programme and record, on the plan, which topic areas/assessment methods they plan to sample, and when.

Copies of sampling plans should be made available to other Internal Moderators and the assessment team, and sampling carried out according to the plan.

Where variations are made, these should be recorded on the plan.

1.9 Completing a Sample Record

The Internal Moderator should record the quality assurance sampling activities on a Sample Record. As a minimum, this record must indicate the Assessor's decision, the content of the sample, the Internal Moderator's decision and relevant feedback to the Assessor.

Where the Internal Moderator agrees with the assessment decisions, certification claims can go ahead.

Where the Internal Moderator does not agree with the assessment decisions, full feedback must be given to the Assessor, with action points agreed which relate to the Assessor's areas for improvement and instructions for how the learner can be supported to produce the required evidence of knowledge and skills.

Sampling must take place before any certification claims are made by the centre and all records, including those of standardisation meetings, feedback to Assessors and CPD activity should be made available to the GA-appointed External Moderator (also referred to as the EQA) upon request.

Document Specification:					
Purpose:	To detail the specification for the GA Level 3 Diploma in Animal Science (Canine and Equine) (610/5997/3) qualification.				
Accountability:	GA Governance Committee		Responsibility :	GA Senior Product Development Manager	
Version:	1	Effective From:	7 th July 2025	Indicative Review Date:	July 2030
Links to Ofqual GCR	E3; G6; G7; H2	Other relevant documents:	GA Centre Handbook GA Candidate Access Policy GA Malpractice & Maladministration Policy GA CASS & General Moderation Policy		