

# AIM Qualifications Suite of Garden Design Qualifications Specification

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## Document version history

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## Suite of Garden Design Qualifications

[www.aimgroup.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.aimgroup.org.uk/qualifications)

0333 034 8833

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# About us

## Qualification specification

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is a leading Awarding Organisation supplying hundreds of centres with high-quality regulated vocational and technical qualifications. We also offer non-accredited provision and apprenticeship end-point assessments.

AIM qualifications cover a range of academic levels from Entry Level to Level 6 across a wide range of subject areas. All our UK Level 3 qualifications carry UCAS tariff points which can count towards university entry requirements.

## About this qualification specification

This specification is intended for tutors, internal quality assurers, centre managers and other staff within AIM recognised centres and/or prospective centres. It provides information about the structure and delivery of the qualification. The specification should be read in conjunction with the AIM Centre Handbook and other policy documents available on the website.

## Offering this qualification

In order to offer this qualification, you must be an AIM recognised centre and be approved to deliver this qualification. If your centre is not yet recognised, please contact our business development team to discuss becoming an AIM recognised centre. They can advise you on the best qualifications for your organisation.

You can arrange a meeting by emailing [businessdevelopment@aimgroup.org.uk](mailto:businessdevelopment@aimgroup.org.uk) or calling 0333 034 8833. More information can be found on: [www.aim-group.org.uk/newcentre](http://www.aim-group.org.uk/newcentre)



## **Section 1 – Qualification overview**



## About these qualifications

This suite of AIM Qualifications Garden Design programmes has been structured to provide learners with a realistic introduction to, and progression within the industry, encouraging the development of business understanding, and creative, technical, and practical skills required to succeed in the present-day. The approach to teaching this suite of Garden Design programmes is intentionally holistic, due to the multi-disciplinary and interconnected nature of the subject and to support learner's effective engagement at all stages of the design process. For this reason, there are clear and direct links between each of the components, acting as building blocks to scaffold learning.

Developed in conjunction with current industry practitioners, both the Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications promote the relevance and importance of the essential skills and knowledge required for learners to flourish within the garden design industry, either on a casual or more professional basis.

The qualifications are particularly suitable for those who are seeking employment in the garden design sector or who are already in the industry but are looking to develop new skills. This qualification suite is structured to facilitate flexible, tailored learning to meet individual and local requirements. It will enable learners to develop their confidence, understanding and skills to gain successful employment in the sector, and to support the development of the industry, locally, nationally, and internationally, through the provision of a more specialist skilled workforce.

Learners will explore the evolution of Garden Design and develop an understanding of its role and function. They will begin to understand what it means to work professionally in the Garden Design industry and will build a portfolio of current creative and technical skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to perform in the sector today. They will consider the fundamental elements and principles within a successful design scheme and be able to select, apply and evaluate these with increasing confidence and complexity, in response to garden design briefs. Throughout the qualification, learners will also develop confidence in the key modes of design communication, creative application, and presentation, as well as verbal and written expression of design thought.

At Level 2, learners will be introduced to the fundamental skills and knowledge required for basic level entry into the garden design industry, enabling them to undertake the primitive development of a garden scheme. Level 2 qualifications will provide learners with sufficient information and skill set for easy transition to Level 3 study, where they can develop their knowledge and competence to a more professional standard.

At Level 3, alongside the critical development of relevant design skills, learners will explore key aspects of business set up and promotion and will be expected to engage in a professionally focussed Garden Design project. Learners will also be introduced gradually to the formation of a professional design portfolio, which by the end of the qualification can be used as evidence to support application to employment and/or higher-level study at any Higher Education Institute (HEI).

Our qualifications to support a career in garden design are:

- AIM Qualifications Level 2 Diploma in Garden Design
- AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Professional Garden Design

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### Suite of Garden Design Qualifications

[www.aimgroup.org.uk/qualifications](http://www.aimgroup.org.uk/qualifications)  
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## Qualification details

AIM Qualifications Level 2 Diploma in Garden Design	
Qualification	Technical
Assessment	Internally set, internally marked and externally verified portfolio of evidence
Grading	Achieved/Not achieved
Geographical coverage	England, Northern Ireland, Wales
Operational start date	01/08/2023
Review date	31/07/2028
Sector	3.2 Horticulture and forestry
Qualification number	610/2669/4
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	222
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	372
Minimum learner age	16

AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Professional Garden Design	
Qualification	Technical
Assessment	Internally set, internally marked and externally verified portfolio of evidence
Grading	Achieved/Not achieved
Geographical coverage	England, Northern Ireland, Wales
Operational start date	01/08/2023
Review date	31/07/2028
Sector	3.2 Horticulture and forestry
Qualification number	610/2668/2
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	276
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	465
Minimum learner age	16

## Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF)

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) provides a single, simple system for cataloguing all qualifications regulated by Ofqual. Qualifications are indexed by their level and size. Levels indicate the difficulty and complexity of the knowledge and skills associated with any qualification. There are eight levels supported by three “entry levels”. Size refers to the estimated total amount of time it could typically take to study and be assessed for a qualification. Size is expressed in term of Total Qualification Time (TQT). The part of the TQT spent being taught or supervised is known as Guided Learning Hours (GLH).

## Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Total Qualification Time (TQT) is the number of notional hours it takes a typical learner to achieve the full qualification and is **made up of two elements:**

- the minimum number of Qualification Guided Learning Hours (GLH) - the number of Tutor led contact hours
- the number of hours spent on preparation, studying and the assessment that is non-guided

For example, the number of tutor-led contact hours (GLH) for a qualification is 30 and the number of hours spent by the learner (non-GLH) on preparation, studying and the assessment is 6 hours. Therefore, the Total Qualification Time (TQT) for the qualification is 36 hours.

## Progression opportunities

These qualifications have been designed as a step on the ladder for professional development for aspiring and practising garden designers. Learners can progress through the AIM Qualifications Level 2 Diploma in Garden Design and on to the AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Professional Garden Design.

## Entry requirements

There are no specific learner entry requirements for this qualification.

## Resource requirements

Learners must have access to garden design equipment and materials, including computer hardware and software, as specified within the component. The recommended reading lists are detailed in the individual components.

## Requirements to deliver this Qualification

As an Awarding Organisation, we require that:

Centres should only deliver the components that they have the human and physical resources to deliver. For example, if a learner needs to demonstrate the use of tools in a specific environment, then the centre will Tutors have relevant teaching experience and/or a qualification, and experience and/or a qualification in the relevant subject area. Suitable teaching qualifications include:

- Level 3 or 4 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) or above,
- Level 3 Education and Training or above,
- Diploma or certificate in education.

### Assessors

Assessors must have verifiable and relevant current industry experience and competence of the occupational working area at or above the level being assessed and evidence the quality of occupational experience to ensure the credibility of the assessment judgements.

Assessors have experience of assessing or have an experienced assessor who can counter sign their assessment decisions.

### Internal Verifiers

Internal Verifiers must have verifiable and relevant current industry experience and competence of the occupational working area at or above the level being verified and evidence the quality of occupational experience to ensure the credibility of the assessment judgements.



## **Section 2 – Rules of combination**

## Qualification structure and components

This section details the rules of combinations for the qualifications. Select the component titles to view the component details.

Rules of combination for:		AIM Qualifications Level 2 Diploma in Garden Design	
Learners must achieve the mandatory components to achieve this qualification.			
Component code	Component title	Level	GLH
<b>Mandatory</b>			
A/650/7108	<a href="#">Garden Design and the Role of the Designer</a>	Two	36
D/650/7109	<a href="#">Garden Design Principles</a>	Two	40
K/650/7111	<a href="#">Introduction to Site Surveys and Drawing Plans</a>	Two	36
Y/650/7116	<a href="#">Space Planning and Garden Design Development</a>	Two	36
J/650/7110	<a href="#">Hard Landscaping, Furniture, Lighting and Accessories</a>	Three	39
L/650/7112	<a href="#">Planting Design</a>	Three	35

Rules of combination for:		AIM Qualifications Level 3 Diploma in Professional Garden Design	
Learners must achieve the mandatory components to achieve this qualification.			
Component code	Component title	Level	GLH
<b>Mandatory</b>			
A/650/7108	<a href="#">Garden Design and the Role of the Designer</a>	Two	36
D/650/7109	<a href="#">Garden Design Principles</a>	Two	40
Y/650/7107	<a href="#">Exploring Site Surveys and Drawing Plans</a>	Three	32
T/650/7115	<a href="#">Space Planning and Garden Design Development in a Professional Context</a>	Three	36
J/650/7110	<a href="#">Hard Landscaping, Furniture, Lighting and Accessories</a>	Three	39
L/650/7112	<a href="#">Planting Design</a>	Three	35
R/650/7114	<a href="#">Professional Practice in Garden Design</a>	Three	25
M/650/7113	<a href="#">Professional Garden Design Project</a>	Three	33



## **Section 3 – Components**



## Level descriptors

Components are assigned a level based in the current requirements for the RQF as issued by OFQUAL

Level	Knowledge descriptor	Skills descriptor
Level 2	<p>Has knowledge and understanding of facts, procedures and ideas in an area of study or field of work to complete well-defined tasks and address straight-forward problems.</p> <p>Can interpret relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Is aware of a range of information that is relevant to the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Select and use relevant cognitive and practical skills to complete well-defined, generally routine tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions.</p> <p>Identify how effective actions have been.</p>
Level 3	<p>Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas.</p> <p>Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work.</p> <p>Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.</p>	<p>Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine.</p> <p>Use appropriate investigation to inform actions.</p> <p>Review how effective methods and actions have been.</p>



## **Section 4 – Assessment**



## How these qualifications are assessed

These qualifications are assessed through internally set, internally marked and externally verified evidence produced by the learner in response to a range of assignments.

Assessments may take the form of, but should not be limited to, the methods described in the table below. Guidance on our expectations is available in the [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#).

Assessment method	Overview
Portfolio of Development Work	The portfolio of development work should contain evidence of learner work referenced to the specified standards of a component or a range of components. This may include, but should not be limited to, learner research and investigation, exploration and analysis of ideas and concepts, developmental practical work, evidence of reflective practice, project refinement and communication of intentions. The portfolio of development work should be produced in response to an internally set assignment and will be internally marked and subject to external verification.
Technical Drawing Pack	The technical drawing pack should comprise a variety of learner's technical drawings, referenced to the specified standards of a component or a range of components. These may be produced by hand and/or using Computer Aided Design (CAD) software and may include, but should not be limited to, sketches, scale drawings, evidence of space planning, plans, sections, elevations and models. The technical drawing pack should be produced in response to an internally set assignment and will be internally marked and subject to external verification.
Professional Presentation Portfolio	The professional presentation portfolio should contain evidence of learner work referenced to the specified standards of a component or a range of components. This portfolio should contain work that is targeted at defined audiences and may include, but should not be limited to, client profile, client brief, rationale, 3D visuals, presentation boards, client and contractor packs, branding, marketing materials, evidence of reflective practice. The professional presentation portfolio should be produced in response to an internally set assignment and will be internally marked and subject to external verification.
Written Assignment	A written assignment, which should be referenced to the specified standards of a component or a range of components, may take the form of, but should not be limited to, a report, essay, case study, reflective piece, editorial, poster, presentation and/or blog. It may be supported by visual content and/or academic references. The written assignment should be produced in response to an internally set assignment and will be internally marked and subject to external verification.

Assignments are devised by the centre and verified by AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group. This enables centres to contextualise assignments to reflect local needs, for example centres may choose to incorporate industry set scenarios.

Every assignment should be fit for purpose, providing learners with sufficient scope to meet all the standards to which it is mapped. These standards must be clearly indicated on each assignment, in order that learners, assessors and verifiers have a clear understanding of the assignment focus and marking criteria. The assignment must also clearly identify the assessment method(s), so that learners, assessors and verifiers understand the format for submitting evidence.

Centres must take a best practice approach, where appropriate, to the assessment such that learners are assessed in a real or realistic working environment. Assignment briefs must include marking templates for internal assessors to use to support consistent marking, feedback and evidence for quality assurance. All assessment decisions made by a centre will be externally quality assured by AIM.

## Reasonable adjustment and special considerations

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations are available for all assessments, irrespective of whether they are internally or externally set. Where a learner or group of learners may not be able to access the assessment without reasonable adjustments, centres should ensure that they apply in good time for relevant reasonable adjustments to be made, using the [AIM Qualifications reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy](#) which gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without compromising the achievement of the assessment criteria.

## Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process of assessing and validating learning or achievement that has not been certificated or accredited previously towards the qualification being studied.

The tutor or assessor should carry out an effective interview and initial assessment of learners to establish their previous qualifications and experience.

Opportunities for recognition of prior learning can only be considered against internally assessed elements of this qualification. Please refer to the AIM website for more information.



## **Section 5 – Operational guidance**



## Offering these qualifications

Centres wishing to offer these qualifications must be an AIM recognised centre. New centres can apply to become a centre using the centre recognition application process on our website: [www.aim-group.org.uk](http://www.aim-group.org.uk).

We can advise centres of the best and most efficient methods for offering these qualifications. All procedures for the use of these qualifications, including approval, registration of learners, verification and certification will be completed through AIM and all centres will have an allocated customer experience advisor to support them.

## Approval to offer qualifications

Centres wishing to offer these qualifications must complete and submit a qualification approval request. [This can be found on the AIM website when choosing a qualification.](#) Some qualifications require centres to have specific resources in place and/or their assessors/internal verifiers should hold certain qualifications. Where this is the case, centres must provide evidence of resources/staff qualifications when completing the Qualification Approval request.

## Registration and certification

Once your centre has approval to offer a qualification, you will be able to register learners to these qualifications via our Quartzweb portal, at this point you can also select their chosen components. Please ensure that learners are registered against the correct qualification and are aware of the rules of combination required to achieve the qualification.

For all registration and certification processes, please refer to the Quartzweb guidance document which can be downloaded from our website's [centre handbooks and forms page](#). Details of assessment, internal verification and external verification can be found in the [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#).

Learners achieving a qualification will be issued with a qualification certificate detailing the achieved qualification and components. Learners who have not achieved a qualification will, on request, be issued with a component certificate detailing the components achieved.

## Scheduling learners for the online Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) assessments

Once your learners have been registered against the relevant qualification(s) using the process above, you are now able to schedule your learners for the MCQ assessments using XAMS. Please refer to the XAMS centre guidance document for details. Please note you need to schedule your learners at least 48 hours before the planned time of assessment.

## Delivering the MCQ assessments

Assessments must be delivered following the requirements in the AIM invigilation guidance for external assessments.

## At the end of the MCQ assessment

Once the learner has completed the assessment, you can check the result in the results screen on XAMS. The results are automatically sent to AIM, and where learners have met the rules of combination for the particular qualification, they will be issued with a qualification certificate with details of the qualification and components achieved. Please refer to the Being an AIM centre document for service standard times on the issuing of learner certificates.

## Fees and charges

The AIM Fees and Charges brochure includes all qualification charges and is available on our website. Please note that registrations will not be processed if centre fees have not been paid.



**Section 5 – Appendices and links**



## Appendices and links

Select an appendix or link from the list below to view the document.

### Useful links

Link 1 - [AIM Centre handbooks and forms](#)

Link 2 - [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#)

Link 3 - [Fees and Charges](#)

Link 4 - [Qualification Search](#)

## Command verbs

Level 2	
<b>Assess</b>	Give careful consideration to all the factors or events that apply and identify which are the most important or relevant. Make a judgement on the importance of something and come to a conclusion where needed.
<b>Compare</b>	Examine the subjects in detail looking at similarities and differences.
<b>Define</b>	State the meaning of a word or phrase or process.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Apply skills in a practical situation.
<b>Describe</b>	Write or speak about the topic or activity giving information. Statements in the response need to be developed as they are often linked but do not need to include a justification or reason.
<b>Estimate</b>	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge or experience.
<b>Explain</b>	Make clear. Give reasons for. An explanation requires a justification/exemplification of a point. The answer must contain some element of reasoning/justification, this can include mathematical/logical explanations.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Examine strengths and weaknesses. Make points for and against.
<b>Give (an example of...)</b>	Provide relevant examples for the topic.
<b>Identify</b>	Provide brief information about a subject, specific process, or activity.
<b>Illustrate</b>	Give clear information or descriptions with examples (e.g. spoken, written, pictures, diagrams etc).
<b>Order</b>	Place information in a logical sequence.
<b>Outline</b>	Identify or briefly describe the main points.
<b>State</b>	Give the main points in brief, clear sentences.
<b>Summarise</b>	Briefly present an abstract of the main points.

Level 3	
<b>Analyse</b>	Learners present the outcome of methodical and detailed examination either: breaking down a theme, topic, or situation in order to interpret and study the interrelationships between the parts. and/or of information or data to interpret and study key trends and interrelationships.
<b>Assess</b>	Learners present careful consideration of varied factors or events that apply to a specific situation or identify those which are the most important or relevant and arrive at a conclusion.
<b>Compare and Contrast</b>	Learners can identify the main factors relating to two or more items/situations or aspects of a subject that is extended to explain the similarities, differences, advantages, and disadvantages. This is used to show depth of knowledge through selection and isolation of characteristics.
<b>Create</b>	To produce work in response to a brief or to apply skills and techniques to meet an intention.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Learners' work or practice shows the ability to carry out and apply knowledge, understanding and/or skills in a practical situation.
<b>Describe</b>	Learners give a clear, objective account in their own words showing recall and, in some cases application, of the relevant features and information about a subject.
<b>Discuss</b>	Explore issues, lines of reasoning and situations, articulating different viewpoints.
<b>Estimate</b>	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge or experience.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Review information then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence including strengths, weaknesses, alternative actions, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.
<b>Explain</b>	Learners' work shows clear details and gives reasons and/or evidence to support an opinion, view, or argument. It could show how conclusions are drawn.
<b>Justify</b>	Learners are able to give reasons or evidence to, support an opinion, or prove something right or reasonable.
<b>Outline</b>	Learners provide a general description or plan showing the essential features of something but not the detail.
<b>Summarise</b>	Briefly present an abstract of the main points.

All levels	
<b>Calculate</b>	Work out a numerical problem, showing how they arrived at their answer.