



AIM Qualifications Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice Specification

610/5307/7

HTQ CODE : HTQHS5072

Version 4 - October 2026



Document version history

Version number	Date	Description
1	April 2026	Document created
2	June 2026	Inclusion of Wales for Geographical coverage, for qualification details, pg4
3	August 2026	Various amendments: Amendment to grading information- portfolio of evidence pg12 New calculating overall grade and grade boundaries information pg13 Extra information for guidance for delivery pg14 Extra information regarding supervision for children and young people placements pg17 Extra appendix link added regarding qualification credit information pg26
4	October 2026	Various amendments: Chosen approach component R/651/8456 pg8 link: assessment guidance correction for AC2.3 Counselling Practice component T/651/8457 pg8 link: assessment evidence amendment for reflective journal/ tutor one-to- one & pg12 Correction to duration of Blended Practice role play pg19

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About us

Qualification specification for Higher Technical Qualification: Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice

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

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 or calling [0844 225 3377](tel:0844 225 3377). More information can be found on: <https://www.aim-group.org.uk/centre-information/>



Section 1 – Qualification overview

Purpose of this qualification

The AIM Qualifications Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice enables learners to embark on practice, working within an ethical framework. Learners are expected to make appropriate use of counselling supervision and evaluate their own work.

The content for this qualification has been developed with employers and representatives from further education, relevant professional bodies, current centres and industry professionals. This is to ensure that all content is up to date and that it includes the knowledge, skills and behaviours required in the sector and as such, has been mapped to both the SCoPEd Framework column A and the Occupational Standard for a Counsellor OCC1192.

Recognised by **Skills England** as a Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) The AIM Qualifications Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice is mapped to an employer-defined occupational standards and develops work-ready counselling practitioners. Its HTQ status signals credibility and quality, supporting entry into practice and structured routes to further study.

After learners have developed prior knowledge and understanding in the main approaches to counselling at level three, at level four they will evaluate the underlying concepts and principles of a core chosen approach to/model of counselling. Learners will learn how the chosen approach views human development and psychological change and will also understand the practical application of their chosen approach to counselling practice. The placement requirement in this qualification is essential to the personal and professional development of the practitioner.

This qualification is aimed at learners whose qualification goal is to achieve professional status in counselling. It may also be appropriate for those working in roles where counselling skills are needed.

Qualification details

AIM Qualifications Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice	
Qualification	Professional
Assessment	See Section 3 for further information
Grading	Fail, Pass, Merit, Distinction
Geographical coverage	England, Northern Ireland and Wales
Sector	1.3 Health and Social Care
Qualification number	610/5307/7
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	450
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	690
Minimum learner age	19+
Rules of combination	Learners must achieve the mandatory components and three of the optional components to achieve this qualification.

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.

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In the example of placements, supervised practical sessions, where the tutor observes a counselling session, provides feedback and discusses problems/issues/best practice with student would be included as guided learning hours. But practical sessions where the learner is in unsupervised counselling sessions with adult clients would **not** be included as guided learning hours.

Progression opportunities

Routes to recognition

Successful learners may progress to employment as trainee counsellors, further study at Level 5 or above, and apply for membership/accreditation with professional bodies on the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) Accredited Register programme e.g. BACP, NCPS, ACC. For further information refer to the current SCoPED framework document for column A -to which this qualification fully aligns.

The Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) Accredited Register programme is recognised as a prestigious quality mark for counsellors. Further information can be found for specific professional organisations that have PSA Accredited Registers on their website, or view the latest information within the current SCoPED framework.

Entry requirements

Learners must be aged 19 years or over. It is recommended that learners have Level 2 literacy skills, or English GCSE or equivalent.

It is also required that learners have completed a Level 3 counselling qualification that contains both an element of skills and theory. A purely online level 3 counselling qualification would not be acceptable.

The procedure for selection by centres (including the requirements for written application/interview etc) must be clearly explained and be consistent with the course rationale. Core staff of the counselling course must be involved in the selection process for applicants, which must include some form of structured interview.

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 need to have access to both the tools and the environment.

Assessors

Those assessing on the qualification should have either a teaching qualification at level 3 or above and previous experience in assessing criteria based components. Assessors should have the knowledge and skills for at least the level above for each individual component that they deliver. New assessors should be supported with assessment decisions by the internal verification process.

In addition, assessors must hold a counselling qualification at Level 4 or above and be a registered member of a Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) recognised counselling professional body.

Also see 'General Guidance for Delivery' section regarding the two tutor model.

Internal Verifiers

Those internally verifying on the programme must have a good understanding of the qualification and the internal verification process and must have sufficient knowledge of the components they internally verify to identify incorrect assessments or incorrect assessment decisions.

In addition, Internal Verifiers must hold a counselling qualification at Level 4 or above and be a registered member of a Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) recognised counselling professional body.



Section 2 – Qualification structure

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:		Level 4 Diploma in Counselling Practice		
	Learners must achieve the mandatory components and three of the optional components to achieve this qualification.			
Order of delivery	Component code	Component title	Level	GLH
	Mandatory			
Throughout duration of qualification	T/651/8457	Counselling Practice	Four	140
	R/651/8456	Counselling Theory: A Chosen Approach	Four	70
	M/651/8455	Counselling: Blended Practice	Four	60
	Optional			
	A/651/8007	Counselling Clients Experiencing Anxiety	Four	60
	D/651/8008	Counselling Clients Experiencing Depression	Four	60
	F/651/8009	Counselling Clients Experiencing Stress	Four	60
	K/651/8010	Introduction to Transactional Analysis	Four	60
	L/651/8011	Introduction to Counselling Children and Young People	Four	60
	M/651/8012	Introduction to Counselling Clients Experiencing Addictive Behaviour	Four	60
	K/651/8453	Introduction to Counselling Clients Experiencing Grief	Four	60
	L/651/8454	Introduction to Counselling Clients Experiencing Trauma	Four	60

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 4	Has practical, theoretical or technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well defined but complex and non-routine.	Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined.

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	Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work.	Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.
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Section 3 – Assessment



How this qualification is assessed

Guidance on our expectations is available in the [AIM Qualifications: Assessment Handbook](#).

Assessment method	Overview
Reflective Practice Study	Mandatory component Counselling Practice: AIM set Assignment brief, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass/ Merit/Distinction Through attending regular counselling supervisions and considering sessions, learners will reflect on their work with clients, their use of their chosen approach and the key professional issues that have arisen. Learners must also complete 100 hours placement log and submit a supervisor's report. Other documentation and evidence is also required. Please see the important guidance regarding learner placements.
Theory analysis essay and recorded professional discussion	Mandatory component: A Chosen Approach AIM set Assignment brief, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass/ Merit/Distinction Having studied a range of theoretical approaches, learners will need to consider and demonstrate their understanding of their chosen approach and how their chosen approach can be used in counselling practice.
Recorded observations	Mandatory components: Counselling Practice: AIM set observation sheet, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass The Counselling Practice recorded observation for 'fitness for placement' will demonstrate learners ability for the beginning, middle and end of working with a client in this simulated environment. Having gained a knowledge, understanding and skills of working with clients, learners will demonstrate this through a simulated exercise which is observed, where they must demonstrate essential skills to be 'fit for placement' Guidance is given to centres for the observation and all centres must use the AIM observation sheet. Mandatory components: Blended Practice AIM set observation sheet, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass Having gained a knowledge and understanding of working with clients using forms of communication other than traditional face to face 'in the room', learners will demonstrate this through a recorded observation. Learners must show a minimum of essential skills for this specialised simulated environment role play exercise which is observed. The learner will then use feedback from the observation to produce a reflective evaluation. Guidance is given to centres for the observation and all centres must use the AIM observation sheet.

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Written evaluation	Mandatory component: Counselling: Blended Practice AIM set observation sheet, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass The learner will use feedback from the recorded observation to produce a reflective evaluation.
Portfolio of evidence	Mandatory component: Counselling: Blended Practice: Internally set, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass Learners will gain knowledge and understanding of-blended practice and other factors in the sector today regarding online, phone therapy and emerging technologies Mandatory component: Counselling Practice: Internally set, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass Learners will gain knowledge into working in organisations and other factors of counselling practice, as they prepare for their 100 hour placement. The learner work from this portfolio and other assessment for this component will unite to give a summative grade. This evidence will also show learner development over the period of time as the component will last the duration of the course.
Reflective Journal and Tutor one – to ones	Mandatory component: Counselling Practice: Internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass The reflective journal will enable the learner and the tutor to track the progress over the duration of the qualification. Timely tutor one to ones to discuss journal entries will allow for further personalised direction and highlight areas for further study and development. (AIM guides available)
Case Study Analysis	ALL optional units AIM set case study and assignment brief, internally marked, externally verified. Graded: Fail/ Pass/Merit/Distinction Learners will consider the case study provided for optional components and discuss how they would approach the scenario.

This section should be read in parallel with this qualification’s assignment briefs and mark schemes which contain in depth information on the planning, delivery and assessment.

Some internally marked assessments are to be based on the assignment briefs provided by AIM. Where specified on the brief these may be contextualised by the centre. Centres must take a best practice approach, where appropriate, to the assessment such that learners are assessed in a real or realistic working environment.

All assessment decisions made by a centre will be externally quality assured by AIM.

Calculating the overall qualification grade

A learner's overall qualification grade is based on their performance in all units. They are awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction and learners need to have obtained a pass on all components. Learners also need to have a completed and signed off a placement record, satisfactory supervisor's report and other required evidence.

Module/Unit Title	Group	Grade and Points		
		Pass	Merit	Distinction
Counselling Practice	Mandatory	20	100	160
Counselling Theory: A Chosen Approach	Mandatory	10	50	80
Counselling: Blended Practice	Mandatory	10*	*This component grade is capped at a pass	
Counselling Clients Experiencing Anxiety	Optional	10	50	80
Counselling Clients Experiencing Depression	Optional	10	50	80
Counselling Clients Experiencing Stress	Optional	10	50	80
Introduction to Transactional Analysis	Optional	10	50	80
Introduction to Counselling Children and Young People	Optional	10	50	80
Introduction to Counselling Clients Experiencing Addictive Behaviour	Optional	10	50	80
Introduction to Counselling Clients Experiencing Grief	Optional	10	50	80
Introduction to Counselling Clients Experiencing Trauma	Optional	10	50	80

Overall Grade Boundaries

Points	Grade
70 -289	Pass
290 - 399	Merit
400- 490	Distinction

Modelled Grades

Component	Learner 1	Learner 2	Learner 3	Learner 4
Counselling Practice	Pass	Distinction	Pass	Distinction
Counselling Theory: A Chosen Approach	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Distinction
Blended Practice	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Optional 1	Pass	Pass	Distinction	Merit
Optional 2	Pass	Pass	Distinction	Merit
Optional 3	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Merit
Total	70	290	350	400
Grade	Pass	Merit	Merit	Distinction

General guidance for delivery

Teaching delivery should be a mix of in-person (face-to-face, in the classroom) and online, but only synchronous, 'live' online teaching can be counted towards the minimum hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

No less than 70% of the teaching delivery should be in- person (in the classroom). A maximum of 30% of the delivery can be online, but only synchronous, 'live' online teaching can be counted toward the minimum hours of direct teaching or instruction time.

Two tutor model

Due to the nature of the level 4 counselling qualification and the probability of self-disclosure, it is recommended that there are two tutors (who are qualified counsellors and/ or supervisors) in some sessions to manage and monitor interactions. Also, that the centre must have access to at least 2 core qualified counsellors to run the course, regarding: admissions, assessment and course management.

Chosen approach

Content is organised into approaches. Centres need only to focus on their chosen approach and are not to teach content categorised as other approaches. If integrative approach is chosen, the centre must refer to the additional guidance document 'Delivering the Integrative Approach-Guidance for Centres' before delivering.

The chosen approach is selected by the centre and must be communicated to learners. The same chosen approach must be delivered through the entirety of the course.

Assessment: Counselling Practice

Reflective Practice Study

Please contact AIM for the full assessment brief.

Overview:

This assessment consists of a study of counselling practice which is based on an AIM set assignment brief and is internally marked. Learners must complete an academic study, which includes **two** different clients. Each client must have received six-eight, one-to-one supervised counselling sessions - which will have been completed within their placement setting.

Centres must use the assignment brief and mark scheme set by AIM and may contextualise it to suit their learners.

Placement

Learners must log a minimum of 100 hours, using the Log of Counselling Practice form provided by AIM. All the hours must be working from and with clients within the UK. The majority of the placements must be face to face, rather than remote- which aligns with industry professional body guidelines. e.g. BACP, NCPS, ACC)

A Supervisor's Report must be completed by the learner's supervisor (on the AIM template provided) as confirmation that the learner has met the minimum mandatory requirement for a minimum of 100 hours of supervised practice.

Centres must have an approved list of supervisors available for their learners to use. In addition, Supervisors can be used by centres, in professional discussion assessment methods to achieve relevant assessment criteria. All evidence for professional discussions must be recorded for verification purposes.

Prior to placement

Before the learners embark on their 100 hour placement, learners must show they are 'fit for placement' by means of an observation with their tutor. This will ensure the learner has the required skills to be ready for placement. Observations are provided with guidance for centres on how to set them up and a clear AIM observation sheet, which outlines the essential and optional skills observers should be looking for. This helps to standardise essential skills tutors will look for- prior to learner placements, across all centres.

The fitness for placement observation must take place within 3 months of the learner placement commencing, or another fitness for placement observation must take place.

If a learner has multiple placements over the duration of the qualification-3 months cannot elapse between the end of one placement and another placement starting -or another fitness for placement observation must occur.

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Guidance for placement:

General

Learners are required to complete a 100 hour placement so there must be suitable placements available. It is important that these are counselling placements and not other psychotherapies such as Art therapy, Music therapy, or Hypnotherapy and which meet the requirements below:

- Are carried out with genuine clients.
- Take place in an appropriate setting with appropriate clients. Counselling services are an ideal setting. Any remote placement hours must be with adults only and in an environment suitable for remote delivery.
- Placement hours should not be through private practice or with client groups that have not been pre-assessed as suitable - such as children and young people or those with complex mental health needs where additional skills and experience are required.
- It is expected that anyone counselling children or young people will have completed the relevant optional component or that suitable 'in-house' training has been provided for this user group, by the placement provider. The minimum age for this user group, as stipulated by counselling professional bodies, is 16+ only.
- Learners must spend a minimum of 100 hours in a specified setting or a variety of settings to directly apply their work to a real working context. All the hours must be within the UK. The majority of placements must be face to face rather than remote -some hours can be delivered online or via a combination of online and phone supervised. - which aligns with industry professional body guidelines.
- Throughout the qualification and their placements, learners will be encouraged to keep a reflective journal which will be discussed in regular 1:1 tutorials which facilitates ongoing feedback. Skills which learners have demonstrated in their placements can be identified and documented by the AIM skills tracker document.

AIM learners are required to accept and abide by the house rules of any counselling agency they may be placed with. In addition, AIM specifies the following placement criteria guidance for centres and learners.

- That the counselling service works to a recognised code of practice for counselling, e.g. The BACP Ethical Framework, SCoPEd Framework or a similarly valid code of conduct.
- The counselling service assesses its clients to ensure that, as far as it is reasonable to do so, they are safe for Level 4 counsellor learners to work with, before referring them.
- Learner counsellors must have formal arrangements in place for counselling supervision, to cover all client work, prior to starting work with clients. Centres should note that individual registration

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and/or accreditation by professional bodies, e.g. BACP, NCPS, ACC may have different requirements and are advised to alert learners to these requirements via the websites of the respective organisations.

- AIM recognises that, at the beginning, practice demands a lot from the new learner counsellor. Centres may wish to consider a ratio of one hour of supervision per four hours of client work in the early stages of a placement. We would, however, strongly recommend that the ratio of supervision to client work does not exceed one hour of supervision to eight hours of client work. AIM also recommend you see your supervisor fortnightly
- All client work must take place in an appropriate setting and be one-to-one, not group work.
- The clients that are referred to AIM learners must be real clients, e.g. people genuinely seeking help from a counsellor (specifically, they must not be other learners on counsellor training programmes)
- The counselling placement is subject to an appropriate counselling contract of a four way agreement (This is also required as evidence for the Counselling Practice component).
- Clients must be told that the counsellor is in training.
- Someone in the placement organisation must take a line management responsibility for the learner i.e. to ensure that the learner is aware of health and safety regulations in the setting and discuss how appointment arrangements, cancellations and room availability will be managed.
- It is recommended that learners submit Supervisor's reports using the template provided by AIM, approximately 3 months into the placement and again at the end. These reports will enable tutors to monitor the learners' progress and address any areas for development.

Working with children and young people

- Students enrolled in adult-focused courses, may engage in placements with children and young people, even if they haven't studied the AIM optional component within this qualification 'Introduction to Counselling Children and Young People'. This is only providing, that the training or placement service provider certifies the learners basic competencies to practice safely and ethically with this demographic and provides evidence that they have done so. e.g. the placement provider might offer their own 'in-house' training. The minimum age for this user group, as stipulated by counselling professional bodies, is 16+ only. Supervision in this case must also have experience in this age group of clients.

Anonymity:

- Ensure that clients and third parties are protected and are neither identified nor identifiable within the text of study

- Use fictitious names "the client, whom I shall call ..." or codes such as "Client A" to ensure that confidentiality is not breached.

AIM recognises that a small percentage of assessment criteria in the component **Counselling Practice**, may not be naturally occurring events to evidence, within a learners placement hours. While it would be preferred for all of the assessment or grading criteria to be experienced within the work placement setting, some can be simulated as an observation of skills practice or scenario based analysis to allow the learner to show achievement of assessment or grading criteria and added to their portfolio of evidence. This should be recorded (audio/visual) for verification purposes. The AIM 'Skills Assessment Tracker' can be used to track the development of skills to ensure all assessment criteria are met and identify any areas that may need to be evidenced additionally.

Portfolio of evidence, reflective journals and tutor one to ones

This is assessed through portfolio of evidence, assignment briefs, tutor one to ones and learner reflective journals at various points throughout the qualification. It will show the learners journey of development with regards self-awareness, maturity and stability which aligns with professional industry body guidelines. It also provides a chronological record of progress, supports real-world application, and facilitates ongoing feedback, that highlights the importance of reflection in professional counselling practice.

Centres must hold evidence of timely tutor one-to one sessions and various versions of the learners' portfolio of evidence, as it develops over the duration of the qualification. This must be held for internal and external quality purposes.

Assessment: Chosen approach

Overview:

This assessment consists of two externally set tasks, a theory analysis essay and a recorded professional discussion. These are internally marked, quality assured by centres and subject to external verification by AIM.

Assessors must provide learners with constructive and useful feedback on the finished submission and this must be documented.

Guidance:

Recorded Professional discussion

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Learners must complete a minimum of 35 counselling placement hours before undertaking this task. The discussion will be based on two AIM set scenarios, one of which will be given to the learner two weeks in advance of the discussion. The task can be conducted with either their tutor or supervisor, face-to-face or via video call (see AIM 'Remote Assessment Guidance for Centres,' for further guidance). Learners are permitted to bring a page of notes into the discussion.

Assessment: Case Study Analysis optional components

Please contact AIM for the full assessment brief. and guidance on the analysis.

Overview:

This assignment consists of an externally set case study for learners to analyse, is internally marked, quality assured by centres and subject to external verification by AIM.

Centres must use the mark scheme set by AIM and may contextualise it and set tasks to suit their learners.

Assessors must provide learners with constructive and useful feedback on the finished submission and this must be documented.

Guidance:

Learners must read a case study describing a particular client and scenario (provided by AIM). They will then consider the case study presented and submit an analysis, discussing how they would approach the scenario, which meets the grading criteria.

Blended Practice- Recorded Observation and Evaluation

Please contact AIM for the full assessment brief which contains full guidance.

Overview:

This assignment consists of an AIM Assignment brief for Learning Outcome three, internally marked, quality assured by centres and subject to external verification by AIM.

Centres must use the assignment brief set by AIM for this Learning Outcome.

Assessors should provide learners with constructive and useful feedback on the finished submission

A 50 minute(+/- 10%) role play online (e.g. via Zoom) with a peer student and the tutor in the role of observer using the AIM observation sheet to provide feedback. Learners will then produce a reflective evaluation.

Internally Marked work

Deadlines

Deadlines for internally marked tasks must be set by the centre and must be clearly communicated to learners on the assessment tasks and must be in keeping with the wider assessment strategy.

Late submissions

If an assignment is submitted after the issued deadline, without an extension having been granted and the work does not meet the assessment criteria, there is no opportunity for resubmission.

Re-submission

One re-submission opportunity **is permitted** should a learner fail to meet some/all of the assessment criteria. The assessment will be returned to the learner, with feedback. Feedback can only justify why an assessment has been met or not met. The learner must only re-submit work where they have not met the assessment criteria. Any amendments to work that has already met the assessment criteria will not be taken into consideration and will not be marked.

A resubmission deadline will be no longer than a week. Learners who are not successful after the second re-submission (or first if they have not handed in on time with no agreed extension) will need to complete a new project. The external quality assurance process will consider feedback and the re-submission process.

All resubmission work must be completed independently by the learner.

Once internally marked work has been completed:

- AIM External Quality Assurers will verify the assessment of learner work and internal verification practice following standard AIM quality assurance procedures. The EV will electronically verify to confirm achievement of the learners once the EQA activity is successfully completed.

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 [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.

Marking and grading marked assessments

Learners must achieve the requisite number of components as specified in the rules of combination.

Learners must achieve a pass grade or higher in all assessments.

Assessors must judge learner performance against specified criteria and award a grade of fail, pass, merit or distinction:

- to achieve a pass, learners must have satisfied all pass criteria
- to achieve a merit, learners must have satisfied all pass and merit criteria
- to achieve a distinction, learners must have satisfied all pass, merit and distinction criteria

Learners who do not satisfy all pass criteria are given a fail grade.

Summative feedback must be provided to learners with feed-forward guidance for how to complete future submissions. The completed mark sheets must be presented alongside the learner marked work for internal and external verification.

Each assessment task carries a weighting towards the qualification grade and some tasks are worth more than others. For each assessment task, a number of points are allocated to pass, merit and distinction grades. Once all tasks are achieved, these points are totalled to arrive at the overall qualification grade. AIM calculates the overall qualification grade at the point of certification.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is permitted for reference purposes only. Learners are advised to use the same checks for validity and reliability of sources as they would with any other references used. The final work submitted must be their own original and independent work. Any AI generated material quoted as a reference must follow the referencing protocol below:

Learners must clearly reference their use by including the following information:

- The name of the AI tool used
- The date the content was generated
- A brief explanation of how the AI tool was used
- A saved screenshot showing the prompts/questions submitted and the responses received

Please note: Learners must ensure that the final product is written in their own words and not directly copied or closely paraphrased from AI-generated content or any other source. The submitted work must reflect the learner's own knowledge, skills and understanding.



Section 4 – Operational guidance

Offering this qualification

Centres wishing to offer this qualification 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.

We can advise centres of the best and most efficient methods for offering this qualification.

All procedures for the use of this qualification, 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 this qualification 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.



Section 5 – Appendices and links

Appendices and links

Select a 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](#)

[Link 5 - Qualification credit information](#)

Command verbs

Level 4	
Analyse	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.
Assess	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.
Critically analyse	As analyse in addition Learners make a judgement about the quality of evidence and include when it can and can't support the argument.
Compare and Contrast	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.
Create	To produce work in response to a brief or to apply skills and techniques to meet an intention.
Demonstrate	Learners' work or practice shows the ability to carry out and apply knowledge, understanding and/or skills in a practical situation.
Describe	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.
Discuss	Explore issues, lines of reasoning and situations, articulating different viewpoints.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge or experience.

Evaluate	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.
Explain	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.
Justify	Learners are able to give reasons or evidence to support an opinion or prove something right or reasonable.
Outline	Learners provide a general description or plan showing the essential features of something but not the detail.
Summarise	Briefly present an abstract of the main points.
Implement	Learners can put (a decision, plan, agreement, etc.) into effect.
All levels	
Calculate	Work out a numerical problem, showing how they arrived at their answer.