Centre Guide to Satellite Centres, Assessment Venues, Examination Venues and Work Placement Providers

Introduction

This guide will help you determine whether your delivery or assessment arrangement should be classified as a satellite centre, an additional assessment venue, an examination venue, or a work placement provider. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for ensuring proper arrangements, quality assurance, and compliance with GA's requirements.

This guide replaces the previous Centre Guide to Partnership Types: Understanding Satellite Centres and Work Placement Providers (V1 Dec 2024).

Here is a summary of the main differences between a Satellite Centre, an Additional Assessment Venue, an Examination Venue and a Work Placement Provider.

Satellite Centre	
Definition	A satellite centre is a separate, permanent site where the main centre delivers GA qualifications on an ongoing basis, operating under the main centre's management, administrative and quality assurance systems.
Scope of Activity	Is a permanent site for ongoing centre operations and administration, as well as teaching/assessment and other functions related to learners and wider qualification delivery. May be used to deliver controlled exams, where the facilities at the venue are approved as suitable for the specific examination.
Operational Model / Staffing	Can be either a Second Branch (staff employed by the main centre) or a Franchise (run by another organisation and their staff, under a written enforceable agreement with the main centre). Must operate under appropriate, main centre-designated management, administrative and quality assurance systems, policies and procedures at all times.
Records & Materials	May hold learner records, which must be retrievable within 24 hours by the main centre.
Responsibility	The main centre is responsible for all satellite centre actions. Issues at one satellite centre can affect the approval status of the main centre and its other approved satellite centres.
Approval & Quality Assurance	Requires the main centre to submit a formal application and go through the GA satellite centre approval process (Application for a Satellite Centre form). Approval is subject to payment of the satellite centre application fee and is renewable annually (with a fee).

Additional Assessment Venue	
Definition	An additional assessment venue is a site, separate from the main or satellite site, used by the main centre solely to deliver assessments (excluding controlled examinations) to its own learners, accessible to the centre to deliver assessment as and when the centre/learners require.
Scope of Activity	Used only for assessment purposes – there is no ongoing operational centre presence (no offices, no permanently based staff, no administrative functions) the way a main or satellite centre has. Not used to deliver controlled examinations (an examination venue approval is required for this).
Operational Model / Staffing	Does not use a separate staffing, management or QA structure provided by the assessment venue. When assessment activities are taking place, these are run and staffed directly by main centre staff.
Records & Materials	Not used for storage of assessment materials or candidate records, beyond the assessment itself while assessment is taking place.
Responsibility	The main centre is responsible for the assessment delivered there and for confirming the venue is fit for purpose (health & safety, fair conditions, as well as any equipment, products or other resources provided by the venue) – not for matters belonging to the venue itself.
Approval & Quality Assurance	Requires the main centre to submit a formal application to GA (Application for an Additional Assessment Venue form) before use.

Examination Venue	
Definition	An examination venue is a venue utilised by the main centre, usually on a part-time and/or ad hoc 'room for hire' basis, or a school or other organisation, where the main centre is delivering controlled examinations (e.g. paper-based examinations which have specific timings and conditions under which the examination is taken – see GA Regulations for Delivering Controlled Examinations).
Scope of Activity	Used only to deliver controlled examinations to the main centre's own learners. There is no ongoing operational centre presence at the venue.
Operational Model / Staffing	All examinations must be delivered by staff employed directly by the main centre. The main centre must arrange to take examination materials with them to the venue – materials are not sent to the venue, and the main centre is responsible for transporting them to and from the venue.
Records & Materials	No assessment materials or candidate records must be held at the examination venue, other than for the duration of the examination delivery.
Responsibility	The main centre is responsible for the examination delivered there and for confirming the venue is fit for purpose and meets the conditions required under GA's Regulations for Delivering Controlled Examinations.
Approval & Quality Assurance	Requires the main centre to submit a formal application to GA (Application for an Examination Venue form) before use.

Work Placement Provider	
Definition	Work Placement Providers are typically independent businesses providing industry experience to learners.
Scope of Activity	The work placement provider operates independently from the main centre. Their remit is to provide hands-on industry experience. Provides support, supervision and, in some instances, mentoring of learners, rather than leading training delivery or making assessment decisions.
Operational Model / Staffing	Staff are employed by the workplace, not by the main centre. Work placement staff support learner development. Work placement staff cannot make assessment decisions or moderate assessment decisions. Their staff may act as supervisors or expert witnesses, but not as centre Tutors, Assessors or Internal Moderators.
Records & Materials	Not applicable – work placement providers do not hold GA assessment materials or candidate records.
Responsibility	Work placement providers do not typically recruit learners directly onto the centre's training courses or qualifications. They provide supportive training and work experience for the centre's learners.
Approval & Quality Assurance	GA does not require any separate application process. Arrangements are reviewed as part of the main centre's annual EQA review and/or at External Moderation visits. The work placement provider can be subject to GA EQA visits.

At a Glance

A quick-reference view of the information above, side by side.

Criterion	Satellite Centre	Additional Assessment Venue	Examination Venue	Work Placement Provider
Permanent site?	Yes	No – accessed as and when required	No – usually part-time/ad hoc, room-for-hire basis	N/A – independent business
Delivers teaching?	Yes	No	No	No
Delivers assessment / exams?	Yes (including controlled exams, if the venue is approved for that exam)	Yes (excluding controlled examinations)	Yes – controlled examinations only	No
Which staff are involved relevant to the GA qual delivery?	Main centre staff, or franchisee staff under a written enforceable agreement	Main centre staff only	Main centre staff only	The venue's / workplace's own staff, limited to supporting roles only
Requires a GA application?	Yes – Satellite Centre approval	Yes – Additional Assessment Venue approval	Yes – Examination Venue approval	No – reviewed via annual EQA review / External Moderation
Records or materials held on site?	Yes – must be retrievable within 24 hours by the main centre	No – only present for the duration of the assessment	No – only present for the duration of the examination	N/A

Decision Making Framework

Determining whether your partner organisation or site is a satellite centre, an additional assessment venue, an examination venue, or a work placement provider is crucial for maintaining quality and compliance with GA requirements. This framework provides a structured approach to help centres properly categorise their relationships with external organisations and sites.

Consider the following questions – these are designed to guide centres through the decision-making process, examining aspects ranging from training delivery and assessment responsibilities to staffing arrangements and quality assurance requirements.

This approach also helps to clarify responsibilities and expectations for all parties involved, ultimately enhancing the learning experience for students and maintaining the integrity of qualifications.

Key Questions for Classification

1. Nature of Activity:
    - Does the partner/site deliver formal training and assessment on an ongoing basis?
    - Is it used only to deliver controlled examinations?
    - Is it used only to deliver other forms of assessment (not controlled examinations)?
    - Are they solely providing work experience?
    - Do they make assessment decisions?
2. Staff Relationships:
    - Who employs the staff working with learners?
    - What qualifications do they need?
    - What decisions can they make?
3. Permanence and Control:
    - Is this a long-term, fixed/permanent arrangement, or a part-time/ad hoc 'room for hire' basis?
    - Can the arrangement be easily changed?
    - What level of control does the main centre have?
4. Records and Materials:
    - Are learner records, assessment materials or examination materials held on site on an ongoing basis?
    - Or are they only present for the duration of assessment/examination delivery?
5. Quality Assurance Requirements:
    - Does the partner/site need separate GA approval?
    - How will quality be monitored?
    - What documentation is required?

Decision-Making Flowchart

Does the site or partner:

1. Deliver full GA qualifications (teaching and assessment) on an ongoing, permanent basis, under the main centre's management and QA systems? → Yes = Satellite Centre
2. Deliver only controlled examinations, usually on a part-time/ad hoc room-for-hire basis? → Yes = Examination Venue
3. Deliver only other assessments (not controlled examinations) to the main centre's own learners, run by main centre staff? → Yes = Additional Assessment Venue
4. Only provide work experience, supervision or mentoring, without delivering formal training or making assessment decisions? → Yes = Work Placement Provider

Other Partnerships

If the proposed arrangements with a Centre's partner organisation or site do not 'fit' easily into the definitions and ways of working described in this guide, Centres should discuss the arrangements with GA directly to establish the most appropriate course of action.

Contractual Requirements

Template agreements are available for centres wishing to establish a partnership with a Franchise Satellite Centre or a Work Placement Provider.

Centres wishing to apply for satellite centre, additional assessment venue, or examination venue approval can do so by completing the relevant application form, available on the GA website.

Implementation Process

For Satellite Centres

Centres must:

1. Sign own comprehensive agreement with the provider (if not owned and operated by the main centre)
2. Establish quality assurance processes
3. Set up record keeping systems
4. Train and verify staff allocations, roles and responsibilities (including qualifications and experience held by new staff at the satellite centre)
5. Complete formal application process to GA (Application for a Satellite Centre form)
6. Pay the required GA fees

For Additional Assessment Venues

Centres must:

1. Confirm the venue is fit for purpose (health & safety, fair assessment conditions, and any equipment or resources provided by the venue)
2. Arrange for assessment materials to be transported to and from the venue as needed

3. Ensure assessment is delivered and coordinated directly by main centre staff
4. Ensure no assessment materials or candidate records are left at the venue beyond the assessment itself
5. Complete formal application process to GA (Application for an Additional Assessment Venue form)

For Examination Venues

Centres must:

1. Confirm the venue is fit for purpose and meets the conditions required under GA's Regulations for Delivering Controlled Examinations
2. Arrange for examination materials to be transported to and from the venue
3. Ensure examinations are delivered by staff employed directly by the main centre
4. Ensure no assessment materials or candidate records are left at the venue beyond the examination delivery
5. Complete formal application process to GA (Application for an Examination Venue form)

For Work Placements

Centres must:

1. Complete due diligence activities
2. Sign a work placement agreement
3. Establish supervision arrangements
4. Set up communication protocols
5. Include the work placement provider in centre's quality monitoring
6. Arrange health and safety checks