

Candidate Identity Checks:

A Short Guide for GA Centres

This Short Guide is intended to support centre staff in meeting GA's requirement that the identity of candidates is confirmed by the centre.

1. What is a candidate identity check?

Checking the identity of a candidate is the process of verifying that your candidates are who they claim they are. Centres must verify the identity of all candidates that they enter for examinations or assessments. The most common method is to require at least one government-issued photo ID card, e.g., a driving license, ID card, a passport, or voting ID card.

2. Why is checking a candidate's identity important?

It's important to check each candidate's identity to ensure that any examination or assessment is an authentic examination or assessment, and that any results or qualifications that are awarded to the candidate have been legitimately earned.

If a centre does not check each candidate's identity, the candidate may not receive their results and/or qualification certificate and the centre might be investigated for malpractice or maladministration, with sanctions applied accordingly.

3. When should a centre check candidate's identity?

Many centres require candidates to produce their identification documents prior to enrolling on a course or programme of study, keeping a record that the documents were checked by staff members.

Candidate's identity can be checked once they have started the course or programme of study, but should always be carried out prior to being registered on the Ark and prior to any assessment taking place.

Candidate's who are registered for a controlled examination must also present their ID on the day of their exam. This will be checked by the examination invigilator.

4. What if a candidate does not have photo ID?

Not everyone has a driving licence or a passport, so centre should have alternative arrangements in place for carrying out identity checks in these situations. You can verify someone's identity without photo ID by checking at least two other forms of ID from a list of acceptable sources. These might include a utility bill, a bank statement, a letter from a doctor or hospital, HMRC-issued documents, a court notice, birth certificate or marriage certificate, or a letter from Student Finance England. It's not recommended to accept a mobile phone bill.

5. What if a candidate is under the age of 18?

It is not necessary for a candidate under the age of 18 to provide ID documentation, although many young people in the UK use a Post Office PASS Card.

Centres working with under-18s may use parental confirmation or confirmation from a school, where the school holds one. For candidates up to the age of 19 attending Further Education colleges where the ID is confirmed at the point of enrolment, a central record is sufficient. Alternatively, a member of centre staff may confirm the candidate's identity on the day of the examination or assessment.

6. What if I suspect an ID document is fake?

Identity theft and fraud are on the rise and it is possible that a candidate who wants to cheat in an exam or assessment might present a fraudulent ID document. The following steps can be taken to check the document. If there is any doubt, ask for additional ID documents and ensure that the issue is reported to GA.

- Look out for spelling mistakes
- Check that the font and typeface are consistent
- Check that there are no obvious signs that the photo or document has been tampered with
- Be aware of behavioural indicators – does the candidate appear nervous or hesitant to give their documents to you?
- Check the key security features and that they are in the correct place, for example watermarks and chips
- Don't be lulled into a false sense of security – candidate personation might be especially prevalent in 'high stakes' exams and assessments, so be aware.

7. Where can I find more information and support?

You can find full details of GA's instructions for centre staff and invigilators in the *GA Regulations for Conducting Controlled Examinations Policy*, available on the GA website.

Alternatively, you can contact your dedicated GA contact for help and support with any queries or questions relating to candidate identity checks.