

CIPD



Level 5 People Professional End-point Assessment (EPA)

Specification

Issue 3

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Introduction

The CIPD is the professional body for experts in people at work. For more than 100 years, we've been championing better work and working lives by setting professional standards for HR and people development, as well as driving positive change in the world of work.

With hubs in the UK, Ireland, the Middle East and Asia, we're the career partner of choice for over 160,000 members around the world. We're the only body in the world that can award chartered status to individual HR and learning and development (L&D) professionals, and our independent research and insights make us trusted advisers to governments and employers.

The CIPD has been closely involved in the development of the apprenticeship standards within HR and L&D and is a registered end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) for these standards.

As an EPAO, it is our job to ensure that we uphold the rigorous standards of independent assessment to ensure all apprentices demonstrate occupational competence on completing their apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship standard and assessment plan

The Level 5 People Professional Apprenticeship ST0238 and the associated assessment plan were developed by a trailblazer group. A trailblazer group is a group of employers recognised by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and is reflective of those who employ people in the occupation. The standard is maintained by IfATE along with the trailblazer group.

Full details can be found on the [Institute's website](#).

Maximum funding: £11,000

External quality assurance (EQA) provider: Ofqual

Typical on-programme duration: 22 months

Typical EPA period: 3 months

Grades: Fail, Pass, Merit, Distinction

This apprenticeship has an integrated qualification, which means both the qualification and apprenticeship need to be completed, passed and awarded during the same period.

Assessment methods:

- Presentation with questions
- Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence
- Integrated assessment (unit 5CO03)

The assignment for unit 5CO03 is the integrated assessment method for the L5 Associate Diploma in People Management qualification.

Occupation summary

This role can be found in organisations of any size, in any sector. In smaller organisations, this type of role is likely to have a broader remit. People professionals play a key role in supporting the business to meet its strategic objectives by driving forward the people agenda. People professionals are responsible for various activities, from attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining talent, to managing payroll and benefits, supporting positive employee relations, and ensuring compliance with employment law.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to support the business to meet its objectives through the people agenda and relative initiatives. People expertise will be used to provide advice, views and challenge to the business, enabling the role to be involved in a wide range of projects and tasks.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation will give specific advice and coaching on the interpretation of applicable policies and employment law to the business. They will also support on people-related elements of business projects. They will work with stakeholders inside the people function, internal stakeholders and external stakeholders as appropriate.

An employee in this role will interact with various roles at differing levels of the organisation, from within HR to other business areas. The ability to communicate, influence and negotiate is key, while also adopting evidence-based decision-making.

An employee in this occupation could be responsible for: supporting the business to deliver their objectives through development of a people plan; making recommendations on what the business can or should do in specific situations; supporting managers and leaders to implement their people strategies; using data to provide insights into people trends and issues and creating solutions to deal with them; maintaining knowledge of both the internal and external environment and how this impacts roles; contributing to the review, design and update of any people policies and processes, ensuring they are in line with legislative requirements; and keeping up to date with emerging thinking and people trends.

Gateway

The EPA period should start only once the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard - that is to say, they are deemed to have achieved occupational competence. In making this decision, the employer may take advice from the apprentice's training provider(s), but the decision must ultimately be made solely by the employer. In addition to the employer's confirmation that the apprentice is working at or above the level of the occupational standard, the apprentice must:

- consideration as to if the apprentice is competent in maths and English must also be made. Please refer to and complete our '[Functional Skills Flexibility Agreement](#)' document where appropriate
- have passed the required units from the CIPD L5 Associate Diploma in People Management
- submit a presentation scoping brief
- submit a portfolio of evidence.

For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and mathematics minimum requirement is entry level 3.

British Sign Language (BSL) qualifications are an alternative to English qualifications for those who have BSL as their primary language.

Assessment methods

Presentation with questions

For this assessment the apprentice delivers a presentation to an independent assessor on a piece of work they have designed and/or delivered that enables them to demonstrate competence against the grading descriptors and associated knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) mapped to this assessment method. The independent assessor asks questions after the presentation to draw out further evidence against the grading descriptors and associated KSBs not evidenced through the presentation. The apprentice must submit their presentation slides and any supporting materials to the EPAO one week before the day of assessment.

Total duration: 50 minutes: 20 minutes (approximately) for the presentation and 30 minutes (approximately) for the questioning

Location: Remote, via videoconferencing

Participants: Apprentice and assessor

Grades: Fail, Pass, Distinction

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

The professional discussion is a structured conversation between the apprentice and assessor based on the portfolio of evidence that is submitted at gateway. The questions asked by the independent assessor will give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the grading descriptors and associated KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

Duration: 75 minutes (+10%)

Location: Remote, via videoconferencing

Participants: Assessor, Apprentice

Grades: Fail, Pass, Distinction

Integrated assessment (5C003)

This integrated assessment method forms part of the EPA as well as the award of the L5 Associate Diploma in People Management.

The written assignment for unit 5C003 involves the apprentice answering set questions that align with the requirements of the integrated qualification.

Location: Completed independently by the apprentice

Participants: CIPD-approved centre, Awarding body (CIPD), Apprentice

Grades: Fail, Pass

The apprentice signs a declaration of authenticity confirming the written responses are their own work with any sources properly referenced.

Rating

For the presentation and questioning and the professional discussion, assessors will give each grading descriptor (GD) a rating. Each grading descriptor will be rated using the following categories:

Not met
Partially met
Met
Exceeded

The descriptors indicate how the ratings will be applied for each grading descriptor.

Rating	Descriptor
Not met	The apprentice has provided no or very little evidence that is relevant to the grading descriptor.
Partially met	The apprentice has provided limited evidence relevant to the grading descriptor. There are key evidence gaps, so the evidence does not demonstrate the breadth and depth of competence expected.
Met	The apprentice has provided acceptable evidence for the grading descriptor. There is some evidence for all elements of the grading descriptor and most of the elements are fully evidenced, demonstrating the breadth and depth of competence expected.
Exceeded	The apprentice has provided strong evidence for the grading descriptor. All the elements of the grading descriptor are fully evidenced and some are exceeded, demonstrating a breadth and depth of competence beyond the level of competence expected.

The grading descriptors are divided into pass-level and distinction-level descriptors. Each grading descriptor is only assessed in one assessment method. The table shows the number of descriptors assessed in each assessment method.

Assessment method	Pass GDs	Distinction GDs
Assessment method 1	6	2
Assessment method 2	8	3

To pass the integrated assessment, the apprentice must achieve the requirements of the pass criteria of the mandated qualification.

Grading

Grading the assessment methods

This EPA is composed of three assessment methods. Each assessment method is graded individually, and these grades are combined to reach an overall EPA grade. The following grades are available for the presentation and questioning, and professional discussion.

Fail
Pass
Distinction

To achieve a pass grade for each of these assessment methods, apprentices must achieve a rating of 'met' or 'exceeded' in **every** pass-level grading descriptor for that assessment method.

To achieve a distinction grade for each assessment method, apprentices must achieve a rating of 'met' or 'exceeded' in **every** grading descriptor across both pass and distinction levels for that assessment method.

Presentation and questioning



Professional discussion



Each assessment method is graded individually. Evidence presented in one assessment method cannot be used to rate grading descriptors in the other assessment method.

Integrated assessment (5CO03)

The integrated assessment is graded pass or fail according to the grading rules of the mandated qualification CIPD Level 5 Diploma in People Management. Any passing grade in 5CO03 equates to a pass for the integrated assessment of the EPA.

Grading the overall EPA

Apprentices must pass the integrated assessment to achieve a pass merit or distinction in the overall EPA.

The presentation and questioning and the professional discussion are weighted equally. Apprentices must achieve a pass in both in order to pass and a distinction in both in order to be awarded a distinction. A distinction in one and a pass in the other will achieve a merit.

The grading rules are shown in the following matrix.

Assessment method 1 grade	Assessment method 2 grade	Assessment method 3 grade	EPA grade
Fail	Any grade	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Any grade	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass	Merit
Pass	Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Pass	Distinction

EPA timeline

The table below shows an approximate end-point assessment (EPA) timeline for this standard. The key requirements of this timeline are that the assessment for 5CO03 should be completed after gateway and the grade for this unit should not be claimed until after the other two assessment methods have been attempted.

Week(s)	Activity
Week 0	<p>Gateway</p> <p>At this point the training provider will submit gateway evidence to the CIPD, which will check this to confirm the apprentice can proceed to EPA.</p>
Week 1-4	<p>EPA period</p> <p>During these weeks the apprentice will be completing their assessment for 5CO03 and preparing their presentation. The apprentice will submit their presentation materials to the CIPD one week before their day of EPA.</p>
Week 5	<p>Day of EPA</p> <p>The presentation and questioning and the professional discussion will take place on one day over a video call.</p>
Week 6	<p>Claim 5CO03</p> <p>Once the other two assessment methods have been attempted, the training provider can claim 5CO03.</p>
Week 7	<p>Moderation begins</p> <p>Moderation typically takes eight weeks, but specific dates will be published on the moderation schedule.</p>
Week 8	<p>Initial results</p> <p>The apprentice will receive the results for the presentation and questioning and professional discussion two to three weeks after their day of EPA.</p>
Week 14	<p>Moderation ends</p> <p>Results for all claimed units will be published at the end of the moderation window. At this point training providers can provide evidence of completion to the CIPD.</p>
Week 15	<p>Final result</p> <p>Once the result of 5CO03 has been submitted, the CIPD will publish the final result and claim the apprenticeship certificate from IfATE.</p>

Support material

More information and guidance is contained within the Level 5 People Professional support materials, which include:

- Level 5 PP Guidance for the presentation and questioning
- Level 5 PP Guidance for the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence
- Level 5 PP Apprentice resource pack
- Apprentice frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- SmartEPA support documents.

Resits/retakes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method(s) will be offered the opportunity to take a resit or a retake at the employer's discretion. The apprentice's employer will need to agree that either a resit or retake is an appropriate course of action and will be responsible for the reassessment fees and any additional training costs. A resit does not require further learning, whereas a retake does.

Where apprentices have failed one assessment method but have the necessary evidence or can acquire the necessary evidence within the resit period, they may resit that assessment method only.

Where apprentices have failed both the presentation and questioning and the professional discussion, a retake is advised.

Employers should develop a supportive action plan with the apprentice, drawing on the assessment feedback, to help their apprentice prepare for either a resit or a retake.

The employer and EPAO agree the timescale for a resit or retake. A resit is typically taken within two months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a retake is dependent on how much retraining is required and is typically taken within four months of the EPA outcome notification.

If the apprentice fails the presentation and questioning, they must amend the presentation in line with feedback. The apprentice will typically be given four weeks to rework and submit the amended presentation.

The apprentice can choose to complete a new presentation scope and presentation, which must be approved by the EPAO in advance of any work beginning. Once approval is granted, the apprentice has a further four weeks to develop their new presentation.

Failed assessment methods must be resat or retaken within a six-month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be resat or retaken in full.

The apprentice will get a maximum EPA grade of merit for a resit or retake.

Resits and retakes are not available for apprentices who have achieved a pass grade.

EPA fees

The maximum funding for this apprenticeship is £11,000 and EPA fees have been set bearing in mind Education and Skills Funding Agency funding rules. EPA fees for the first assessment of the Level 5 People Professional Apprenticeship are:

- First assessment: £ 1,760
- Resit (either assessment method): £350
- Retake is the full cost of EPA £1,760

Grading descriptors and associated KSBs

Presentation and questioning

The following grading descriptors are assessed in the presentation and questioning.

Code	Grade	KSBs	Grading descriptor
PQP1	Pass	K1 K16 K21 S20	Applies data analysis techniques with internal and external sources of data for people management to benchmark improvement in people policies or procedures, or people initiatives.
PQD1	Distinction	K1 K16 K21 S20	Critically analyses internal and external data to make justified proposals for improvements to people policies or procedures, or new people initiatives.
PQP2	Pass	K15 S15	Manages workload to meet objectives, by applying prioritisation tools and techniques.
PQP3	Pass	K2	Outlines how people systems are used for business value.
PQP4	Pass	K10 S4 S6 S18	Interprets people and management data using problem-solving and decision-making techniques to reach conclusions and present recommendations which mitigate risk or highlight opportunities.

PQD4	Distinction	K10 S4 S6 S18	Synthesises people management data from internal and external sources to identify trends and uses problem-solving and decision-making techniques to make proposals that mitigate risk or highlight opportunities.
PQP5	Pass	K11 B1	Explains project management practices they used to plan or deliver people-related change and how they have managed challenging situations.
PQP6	Pass	K18 S1 B5	Communicates information through appropriate channels, working collaboratively and using a range of techniques to present information which enables stakeholders to understand what is required.

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

The following grading descriptors are assessed in the professional discussion between the apprentice and the assessor.

Code	Grade	KSBs	Grading descriptor
PDP1	Pass	K3 K4 S7	Describes the functions within the people profession and how each delivers people solutions for the business in the context of different people operating models and theories.
PDP2	Pass	K5 S9 B2	Explains how they adapted to changing circumstances when managing and delivering people-related projects to meet business aims and objectives.
PDD2	Distinction	K5 S9	Justifies their approach when managing and delivering people-related projects to meet business aims and objectives.

PDP3	Pass	K13 K14 S12	Applies commercial awareness of the business and the external environment to analyse commercial and financial implications of people management and solutions, ensuring value for money.
PDP4	Pass	K22 B6	Applies current sustainable working practice, taking personal responsibility for sustainability in their own work and staying up to date with developments in the sector.
PDD4	Distinction	K22 B6	Evaluates sustainable working practices within the business and proposes ways these might be improved.
PDP5	Pass	K12 S13	Explains their use of technology and innovation to support the delivery of people strategies in line with regulations and policies, including how emerging digital trends can be embedded in their practice.
PDD5	Distinction	K12 S13	Evaluates the delivery of people strategies using digital trends, technology and innovation in accordance with regulations and policies, and recommends improvements.
PDP6	Pass	K8 S10	Applies legislative requirements when handling and processing people data.
PDP7	Pass	K9 S3 S14	Explains the impact of how they apply employment legislation and policies to advise and make decisions on HR issues as well as escalating concerns outside own area of responsibility.
PDP8	Pass	S8 S17	Leads and improves people capability in the business, contributing to the development of policy, procedures or initiatives.

Taxonomy

This taxonomy outlines the expected style and depth of response that should be given when different command words are used within a grading descriptor (GD). Command words are an indication only and must be considered in conjunction with the KSBs to understand the evidence requirements.

This taxonomy is based on a hierarchy of cognitive skills: generally, the higher the cognitive skill, the greater the complexity expected in the response.

Command word	Definition
Identifies	Recognises or indicates the main features or purpose of the given topic.
Describes	Gives an account of something, such as steps in a process or characteristics.
Outlines	Gives an overview of something, including key elements, characteristics and/or processes.
Applies	Uses knowledge, skills and/or behaviours effectively and appropriately in practice.
Manages	Plans and takes action to deliver objectives or address issues.
Communicates	Shares key messages clearly and accurately and in a way that engages the audience(s).
Explains	Provides reasons for their approach, covering ‘why’ as well as ‘how’ or ‘what’.
Interprets	Draws valid conclusions from data or evidence.
Analyses	Examines a range of data and information to create insights.
Evaluates	Considers and weighs up evidence* on an issue/area to provide recommendations; if appropriate, articulates advantages and disadvantages.
Justifies	Gives valid reasons supported by evidence* for why an approach/action is undertaken.
Critically analyses	As ‘analyses’, but also explores the limitations of the data or analytical techniques and suggests how these could be improved or developed.
Synthesises	Balances insights from different data sources to make connections, identify trends and explore themes.

* Evidence sources can include:

- published research or scientific literature
- organisational data, including metrics/measures
- professional expertise and judgement of practitioners, subject-matter experts and/or consultants
- views of stakeholders, both internal (employees, managers, board members) and external (suppliers, investors, shareholders).

Further information on evidence-based practice can be found in the Apprentice Resource Pack.