

CIPD



Level 7 Senior People Professional End-point Assessment (EPA)

Guidance for the Portfolio and Professional
Discussion

Issue 2

Contents

Introduction	3
Abbreviations used	3
Requirements for assessment method 1 set out in the assessment plan	3
Portfolio guidance	4
Core recommended portfolio content.....	4
OD option recommended portfolio content	6
L&D option recommended portfolio content.....	6
HR option recommended portfolio content	7
Professional discussion guidance	8
Preparing for the professional discussion.....	8
Permitted documents.....	8
Professional discussion assessment	9
Preparation.....	9
On the day.....	9
Next steps	9
Professional discussion rating and grading	10
Structure of the professional discussion.....	11
Core professional discussion structure	12
OD option professional discussion structure.....	15
L&D option professional discussion structure	16
HR option professional discussion structure.....	17
Grading descriptors.....	19
Core grading descriptors	19
OD grading descriptors	20
L&D grading descriptors.....	21
HR grading descriptors	22
Taxonomy	23

Introduction

Assessment method 1 of the end-point assessment (EPA) is a professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for assessment method 1. It gives guidance on how to approach the portfolio of evidence and on how to prepare for the professional discussion. It will also be useful for your employer and training provider when considering how they can best support you.

You will need to submit your portfolio of evidence at the end-point assessment gateway using SmartEPA (SEPA). For further guidance on the end-point assessment gateway and submitting documents, please refer to the Level 7 Senior People Professional Gateway Submission document.

Abbreviations used

- GD(s): grading descriptors outlined in the assessment plan and at the end of this document.
- KSB(s): a knowledge, skill and/or behaviour component(s) as outlined in the apprenticeship standard.
- EPA: end-point assessment.

Requirements for assessment method 1 set out in the assessment plan

These are the requirements set out in the assessment plan for this apprenticeship. The assessment indicates how the apprenticeship will be assessed through the EPA:

- Apprentices must compile a portfolio of evidence during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship and submit it to the EPAO at gateway.
- The portfolio of evidence must contain evidence related to the GDs and KSBs assessed by the professional discussion.
- Evidence must be clearly mapped against the GDs and KSBs in an annex. . We suggest you provide your best example rather than multiple against each GD.
- Each piece of evidence can be used to demonstrate more than one GD.
- Evidence sources can include:
 - workplace documentation/records, for example, policies, frameworks and procedures
 - people plans or strategies
 - communication plans and documents, for example, presentations, emails, posts
 - annotated photographs and video clips (maximum 15 minutes' duration)
 - witness statements based on direct observation and not opinion.
- The portfolio should not include methods of self-assessment or reflective accounts (other than for the recommended portfolio content which relates to CPD).
- The portfolio evidence must be valid and attributable to the apprentice and contain a statement from the employer and apprentice confirming this.
- The assessor will review the portfolio of evidence in preparation for the professional discussion.

Portfolio guidance

The professional discussion (PD) assesses a wide range of grading descriptors (GDs) and associated knowledge, skill and behaviour components (KSBs) in two hours. It is important that you follow the recommendations when deciding what to submit in your portfolio. This will ensure your portfolio underpins the PD and gives you the best opportunity to provide evidence for all the GDs.

The portfolio template details the recommended portfolio content for each question area in the professional discussion. *The numbering of the question areas may vary depending on the portfolio evidence submitted for question area 1, this is especially true for the HR option where you may choose to present a people approach that relates to one of: wellbeing; reward/benefit; employment legislation or performance management.*

When you complete this template, you will be asked to give a brief overview of your role and the company you work for. This is important contextual information and helps your assessor to understand the evidence presented in the portfolio and PD. You will also be asked to give a brief description of the evidence you submit for each area of recommended portfolio content and how it relates to the grading descriptor. This is to help your assessor understand the pieces of evidence in context and help guide them to the most important bits.

Below is guidance on the recommended portfolio content and suggested evidence sources for each content area.

Core recommended portfolio content

Question area	Recommended portfolio content	Suggested evidence sources
1	<p>Evidence of a people* approach you have designed and/or implemented (this could be a set of practices or interventions or policy)</p> <p>Evidence of the value that this approach has created for stakeholders or your organisation</p> <p>Evidence of specific theories, concepts or models of human behaviour or organisational culture that informed your people approach (covered in 1 above)</p> <p>*The focus of the approach will depend on the apprentice's option:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the HR option - this needs to be a wellbeing/engagement, ER, performance management or reward approach • for the L&D option - this needs to be an L&D approach • for the OD option - this needs to be an organisational development and/or organisational design approach. 	<p>Presentation or communication document describing the people approach</p> <p>Evaluation report including quantitative data/metrics and qualitative evidence</p> <p>Research paper or short presentation describing the behavioural or organisational culture theories, concepts and models that informed the approach</p>

2	A budget you have created and managed for an area of work	Budget planning and management worksheets
3	Annotated excerpts from your organisation's people strategy/people plan that highlight how your work contributes to this	People strategy/plan with notes/annotations
4	Evidence of technology and/or social media used in your organisation to support people practice	Screenshots, visuals or a summary document
5	A people plan you have developed and implemented that contributes to workforce planning	A workforce plan or a related solution such as resourcing plan, talent management plan, talent/skills development plan, succession/retention plan
6	Evidence of a programme/initiative involving coaching and mentoring that you have implemented and evaluated For the L&D option you will also need evidence of how this programme/initiative embedded the value of learning and promoted a coaching and mentoring culture	Programme document or report
7	Evidence of a people change project/programme you have planned and implemented covering project and risk management and resourcing Evidence of the outcomes delivered for the above people change project/programme Evidence of how you communicated with and engaged stakeholders for the people change project/programme, showing how people were given a 'voice' Evidence of how you managed stakeholders for the people change project/programme	Project/programme plan including risk log and resourcing An outcomes/benefits report or post-implementation report A stakeholder engagement and communication plan, possibly including details/screenshots of engagement/voice tools used A completed stakeholder map including all key stakeholders or stakeholder groups
10/11*	Your continuing professional development (CPD) record describing specific professional development experiences and/or activities over the last 24 months what you learned and how this informed your practice. You should aim to include three experiences.	Completed CPD log

* CPD is the last question area in the professional discussion

OD option recommended portfolio content

Question area	Recommended portfolio content	Suggested evidence sources
1*	Evidence of a specific OD model or theory that informed the OD approach covered in <i>Question area 1</i>	Extract from a proposal, business case, or project document describing the OD model or theory that informed the approach
8	Evidence of organisational design work you have undertaken (for example re-design or restructure of roles in a team/department or an area of work) that shows when you have applied design principles and/or an OD model/theory	Project document or presentation outlining how design principles and/or an OD theory/model was applied in the organisation design work
9	Evidence of when you have used a systems thinking approach to OD work	Extract from a project document or presentation evidencing how a systems thinking approach was used

* This will be assessed alongside PDP1, PDD1 and PDP2 in Question area 1.

L&D option recommended portfolio content

Question area	Recommended portfolio content	Suggested evidence sources
9	Evidence of when and how you have applied your knowledge of adult learning and motivation to a learning programme/approach in your organisation	Learning programme plan, learning intervention plan or learning policy document
10	An L&D strategy or plan you have created using learning design principles or theories (this can be the same work example as used for <i>Question area 1</i> or <i>question area 6</i>)	Extract from an L&D strategy or plan evidencing the application of design principles
11	Evidence of using and applying a complex facilitation technique (for example using stories, pattern intelligence, appreciative inquiry, action learning or process facilitation) to enable a group to sense-make, plan or evaluate and find a new way forward	Video clip, facilitation plan or slide deck

HR option recommended portfolio content

Question area	Recommended portfolio content	Suggested evidence sources
8	Evidence of a wellbeing and/or engagement initiative you have selected, implemented and evaluated*	Project document or report
8 or 9	Evidence of a reward and/or benefit solution or approach within your organisation, which you will be asked to critically evaluate in the professional discussion*	Reward, pay or benefits documentation, brochure or proposal
9 or 10	Evidence of when/how you have interpreted and applied specific employment legislation and case law and assessed its impact*	Annotated documentation from a complex ER case or policy review highlighting the specific legislation and case law
10	Evidence of a performance management approach or process in your organisation, which you will be asked to critically evaluate in the professional discussion*	Documentation describing a performance management approach or process in your organisation

* This could be the same example as you have used for *question area 1* depending on the nature of the people approach you shared.

The number of the question area to which the HR Option grading descriptors relates may change depending on which descriptor(s) is assessed alongside PDP1, PDD1 and PDP2 in Question area 1.

Professional discussion guidance

The professional discussion is a structured two-hour discussion that assesses competence and excellence in relation to the core and option GDs and associated KSBs being assessed.

The purpose of the PD is to give you the opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of your evidence for the GDs assessed in assessment method 1. The PD will be led by the assessor but there will be opportunities for you to make proactive contributions.

An outline of the structure of the question areas for the professional discussion (including the assessed GDs and KSBs) is provided below to help you prepare the examples you would like to share.

Preparing for the professional discussion

In the professional discussion, you will be asked to explain your approach and the thinking behind the work examples you submitted in your portfolio. You can prepare by re-familiarising yourself with your portfolio of evidence. It is important that you are ready to discuss the work included in your portfolio in more detail.

We do not expect you to bring additional examples to the PD; however, if, after gateway, you have work experiences that reinforce the examples presented in their portfolio, you can bring these to be discussed in the PD if there is time.

You can also prepare by reviewing the core and option GDs for this assessment method. Think carefully about what these are asking for and prepare the examples you want to share as evidence in the professional discussion.

As time is limited to two hours for the professional discussion, it is important that you are prepared to answer questions clearly and concisely. This preparation will mean you are able to provide evidence for all the GDs in the time available.

Permitted documents

You should bring your portfolio of evidence to refer to when responding to your assessor's questions.

You may also bring:

- notes you have made in preparation
- blank paper for making notes during the assessment.

You will not be permitted to use electronic communication devices other than that with which you are accessing the assessment for security purposes.

Professional discussion assessment

The professional discussion is conducted over a video call. The video call will be scheduled for 2 hours and 15 minutes. This will allow 2 hours for the assessment and 15 minutes for introductions and goodbyes.

Preparation

We recommend that you find a suitable room that you can have exclusive use of to ensure the assessment is uninterrupted.

You will be able to log into the video call 5 minutes before the scheduled start time.

We recommend that you check your hardware, software and the meeting link the day before the assessment. Checks may include checking the meeting link, your microphone, speakers and camera.

A comfortable headset with microphone is useful and often preferable, as it can help eliminate external noises.

You will need to bring photographic ID to confirm your identity at the start of the assessment.

On the day

The professional discussion will start with an introduction from the assessor, who will also invite you to introduce yourself.

The assessor will outline the structure of the assessment, when breaks are scheduled and what will be covered.

The assessor will explain that the assessment will be recorded for quality assurance purposes, ask to see your photographic ID, and confirm your chosen option: HR, L&D or OD.

The assessor will ask whether you have any questions before you start the assessment.

The assessor will usually ask an overall question, then probe for more information as necessary. Their role is to make sure they ask questions that allow you the opportunity to demonstrate your evidence for the grading descriptors.

If they feel they have enough evidence, or if you are giving evidence that isn't directly relevant to the question being asked, they may stop you and ask a different question. Please don't worry about this; it's just to ensure that the time is being utilised to give you the best opportunity to showcase your evidence.

At the end of the assessment, the assessor will explain the next steps.

If there are any technical difficulties on the day of the assessment, the assessor will call you on your preferred telephone number to find a solution and complete your assessment.

Next steps

The assessor will review the evidence provided in the professional discussion and make their ratings against the grading descriptors. They will submit their ratings, which are subject to internal quality assurance procedures.

Once internal quality assurance is complete, results will be released to the SmartEPA (SEPA) platform.

Results will usually be released within three weeks of the assessment.

Professional discussion rating and grading

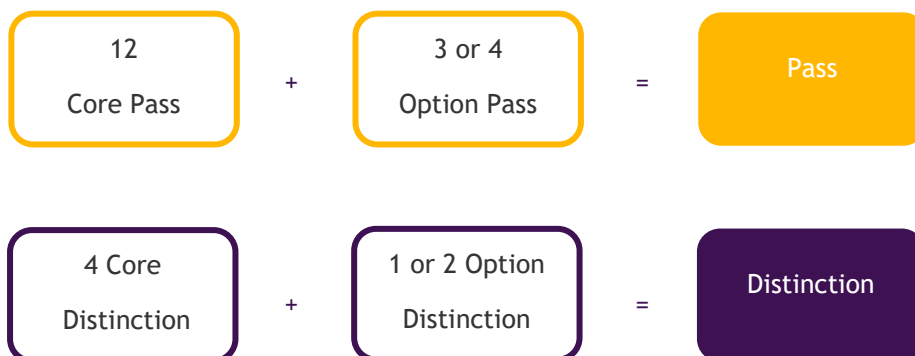
After the assessment, the assessor will evaluate all the evidence presented in the professional discussion and provide a rating for each grading descriptor.

They will give one of four ratings to each GD.

Not met
Partially met
Met
Exceeded

To achieve a pass grade for the professional discussion, you will need a rating of 'met' or 'exceeded' in **every** pass level grading descriptor.

To achieve a distinction grade for the professional discussion, you will need a rating of 'met' or 'exceeded' in **every** grading descriptor across both pass and distinction levels.



This assessment method contains both core and option grading descriptors. You will need to achieve a rating of 'met' or 'exceeded' for both the core and option grading descriptors for your chosen pathway.

Apprentices will not be assessed against the option grading descriptors for the pathways they have not chosen.

Evidence presented in assessment method 2 cannot be used to rate GDs in this assessment method. All evidence must come from the professional discussion.

Structure of the professional discussion

The professional discussion will contain 10 or 11 question areas depending on the option you have selected. The HR and L&D pathways will both contain 11 question areas, and the OD pathway will contain 10. For each of these areas, your assessor will ask a set of questions and prompts to elicit evidence against the targeted grading descriptors.

All professional discussions will follow the same structure. There will be natural variation to the questions asked based on the nature of the evidence submitted in the portfolio and the option selected. There will also be intentional variation introduced by the assessor to avoid predictability.

The structure of the professional discussion is outlined in the table below.

The professional discussion will start by exploring areas connected to the core GDs. These questions may also relate to option GDs where there is a clear relationship. This is indicated in the table below. These questions will be covered in approximately 85-95 minutes.

The later questions will focus on the GDs that are specific to each option. These will be covered in approximately 25-35 minutes depending on the option chosen.

Core professional discussion structure

Question area	Grading descriptors	What to expect
Introduction		Your assessor will welcome you to the professional discussion, they will ask for your photographic ID and will outline what will be covered in your professional discussion.
1	Core: PDP1 PDD1 PDP2	<p>This question area will explore the people approach* that you have designed and implemented and that you have exemplified in your portfolio. The focus of the people approach will depend on your chosen option.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to know what value this people approach has created for different stakeholders and how it aligns to your organisation's culture, wider people practices and your organisation's strategic goals. It is not necessary that you have fully implemented the people approach however you will need to show the value it has brought and will bring and how you will measure that.</p> <p>The assessor will also explore what behavioural or cultural theories or models you drew on to inform this people approach.</p> <p>You should be prepared to discuss any regulations or legislation you needed to consider when implementing this people approach. (If this is not applicable, you will need to talk about legislation or regulation that is relevant to your wider work.)</p>
	For HR option: PDP20/PDD20 or PDP21 or PDP22 or PRP23	<p>Dependent on the focus of the people approach, you will be asked further questions to cover the relevant HR option GD. This could relate to one of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wellbeing/engagement • reward/benefit • legislation • performance management.
	For OD option: PDP13 PDD13	<p>You will be asked to critically evaluate the OD model/theory that informed your approach and how your approach enabled cultural development to cover the relevant OD option GD.</p>
2	PDP3	<p>This question area will explore your competence in preparing and managing budgets.</p> <p>You should prepare to discuss the budget that you submitted as part of your portfolio, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the information you used when creating the budget • the tools/techniques you used to monitor the budget • the decisions you needed to make when managing the budget and what impact these had.

3	PDP4 PDD4	<p>This question area will explore your understanding and analysis of your organisation’s people strategy/people plan and your contribution to it.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key aspects of the people strategy and links to the wider organisation strategy • external influences on your organisation’s strategy • how/what you contribute to the people strategy/plan.
4	PDP5	<p>This question area explores the technology that you and your organisation use to support people practices.</p> <p>Your assessor will be interested in the benefits and risks you see in using this technology and whether there are different approaches you have considered.</p> <p>Your assessor will ask about how you use social media or how social media impacts your role or people practice more broadly.</p>
5	PDP6 PDD6	<p>This question area will explore how you have implemented a people plan (that contributes to workforce planning). Your assessor will explore the people plan that you submitted as part of your portfolio and will be interested to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reasons why you took this approach • how your plan contributed to workforce planning • your knowledge of strategic workforce planning.
6	Core: PDP7 PDD7	<p>This question area will explore the programme or initiative you have implemented that involves coaching and mentoring.</p> <p>You will need to explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the approach that you took • the coaching and mentoring methods/tools used • the impact the programme/initiative had • your organisation’s wider approach to coaching and mentoring.
	For L&D option: PDP16	<p>You will be also asked to critically evaluate the coaching and mentoring programme and the extent to which it embedded the value of learning and enabled a coaching and mentoring culture.</p>
Break		<p>At this point you are likely to have a short break.</p>

7	PDP8 PDP9 PDP10 PDP11	<p>This question area will explore the change project that you have planned and implemented.</p> <p>Your assessor will ask you about the project that you have exemplified in your portfolio.</p> <p>The assessor will specifically want to know about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the approach and methods you used to plan and implement this project • the outcomes you were hoping to deliver and the outcomes you achieved, drawing on evidence • the wider organisational context and how you took this into account • how you communicated to and engaged with stakeholders and gave them a voice • how you negotiated with or influenced stakeholders and why.
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OD option professional discussion structure

Question area	Grading descriptors	What to expect
8	PDP14	<p>This question area will explore how you have applied organisation design principles and/or an OD theory/model to organisation design work included in your portfolio.</p> <p>Your assessor will be interested in why you selected these principles and/or models/theories and how these were appropriate to your work and added value.</p>
9	PDP15	<p>This question area will explore how you have used systems thinking in your work and evaluated its effectiveness.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to understand your knowledge of systems thinking (and relevant concepts and models) and what impact this had on your approach.</p>
10	PDP12	<p>This question area will explore your approach to continuous professional development (CPD), drawing on your CPD record in your portfolio.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to understand how you plan your development, what learning experiences you have had and how you have used these experiences in your work.</p>
Close		<p>Your assessor will let you know that the professional discussion is finished.</p> <p>They will ask if you have anything further you would like to add to support your assessment and, if there is time, you will be able to discuss this.</p> <p>Your assessor will explain next steps.</p>

L&D option professional discussion structure

Question area	Grading descriptors	What to expect
8	PDP17	<p>This question area will explore how you have applied your knowledge of adult learning and motivation to a learning programme or approach.</p> <p>Your assessor will be interested in what principles or theories you have used and which ones you have found effective, and also how you could further improve or develop the learning programme/approach.</p>
9	PDP18 PDD18	<p>This question area will explore a learning plan/strategy that you have created and included in your portfolio.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to understand your knowledge of learning design principles/methods, which you used in the plan/strategy and why.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to explore what impact using these principles/methods has had on your ability to meet your organisation's learning needs.</p>
10	PDP19 PDD19	<p>This question area will explore complex facilitation techniques and how you have used these in your work.</p> <p>Your assessor will be interested in why you used these techniques and how you could improve your application of these techniques.</p>
11	PDP12	<p>This question area will explore your approach to continuous professional development (CPD), drawing on your CPD record in your portfolio.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to understand how you plan your development, what learning experiences you have had and how you have used these experiences in your work.</p>
Close		<p>Your assessor will let you know that the professional discussion is finished.</p> <p>They will ask if you have anything further you would like to add to support your assessment and, if there is time, you will be able to discuss this.</p> <p>Your assessor will explain next steps.</p>

HR option professional discussion structure

For the HR option, questions 8-10 will depend on the people approach discussed in core question 1. For example, if the apprentice uses a wellbeing/engagement approach for question 1, this will not be covered again in questions 8-10 (likewise, if a reward, ER or performance management approach is used for question 1).

Question area	Grading descriptors	What to expect
8	PDP20/PDD20	<p>This question area will explore a wellbeing and/or engagement initiative you have implemented in your organisation as included in your portfolio.</p> <p>Your assessor will ask you to explain your rationale for implementing the initiative and also to critically evaluate it (including suggestions as to how it could be further developed or improved).</p>
8 or 9	PDP21	<p>This question area will ask you to critically evaluate a reward and/or benefit approach in your organisation (provided in your portfolio), including the extent to which it meets organisation needs.</p> <p>Your assessor will also want to understand how you think the reward and/or benefit approach could be improved.</p>
9 or 10	PDP22/PDD22	<p>This question area will explore how you applied and interpreted employment legislation and case law in your work as included in your portfolio This will include asking you to critically evaluate your approach.</p> <p>Your assessor will be interested in how you assessed the implications of the legislation/regulation on people policy, practice and strategy.</p>
10	PDP23	<p>This question area will ask you to critically evaluate a performance management approach in your organisation (provided in your portfolio), including the extent to which it aligns with your organisation's plans/strategy.</p> <p>Your assessor will also want to explore your understanding of performance management data and how it can be used to drive improvement.</p>
11	PDP12	<p>This question area will explore your approach to continuous professional development (CPD), drawing on your CPD record in your portfolio.</p> <p>Your assessor will want to understand how you plan your development, what learning experiences you have had and how you have used these experiences in your work.</p>

Close		<p>Your assessor will let you know that the professional discussion is finished.</p> <p>They will ask if you have anything further you would like to add to support your assessment and, if there is time, you will be able to discuss this.</p> <p>Your assessor will explain next steps.</p>
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Grading descriptors

The following grading descriptors are assessed in this assessment method.

Core grading descriptors

Code	Grade	KSBs	Grading descriptor
PDP1	Pass	K1 S1 B8	Describes people policies, processes and approaches they have designed and/or implemented, explaining how they are related to the employee lifecycle and culture in their organisation as well as relevant regulation and law and evaluating how they have created value for the organisation and its people.
PDD1	Distinction	K1 S1	Evaluates how their own organisation provides people practices across a range of specialisms and how they integrate these to create a holistic people offering.
PDP2	Pass	K2 S2	Justifies their use of organisational culture, theories, concepts and models of human behaviour when identifying and recognising the interventions needed in their organisation to create the desired culture and behaviours.
PDP3	Pass	K3 S3	Justifies the process taken when they created and managed budgets and strategy, making commercial decisions where they needed to balance competing demands and assess financial and organisational data.
PDP4	Pass	S4	Analyses their contribution to their organisation's people strategy, evidencing how this aligns to the wider organisational strategy and takes into account the wider business context.
PDD4	Distinction	S4	Evaluates and critically analyses their own organisation's strategy and how external influences impact on their organisation's performance and potential future trends in their sector and beyond.
PDP5	Pass	K5 S6	Identifies how technology is used to support people practice in their organisation, including social media, identifying benefits and risks and evaluating impact on ways of working.
PDP6	Pass	K7 S8	Justifies the approach taken to developing and implementing a people plan/integrated people practice with reference to the elements that contribute to strategic workforce planning.
PDD6	Distinction	K7 S8	Demonstrates how their approach in developing and implementing a people plan makes a positive contribution to wider workforce planning.

PDP7	Pass	K9 S10	Details how they implemented a programme or initiative involving coaching and mentoring, evaluating the impact on colleagues and the organisation.
PDD7	Distinction	S10	Evaluates and critically analyses the organisation's approach to coaching and mentoring.
PDP8	Pass	K12 S12 B3	Evaluates how their use of worker voice tools and associated outputs enables people to have a meaningful voice and feel valued and explains why this is important.
PDP9	Pass	S14ii B1 B2	Justifies their use of negotiating and influencing techniques in the management of multiple stakeholders to build trust and enhance their organisation's brand reputation, challenging constructively when necessary.
PDP10	Pass	K11 S7ii S13	Evaluates a complex change management programme they have implemented, justifying the tools and project methodologies they have used to deliver outcomes and manage risks.
PDP11	Pass	S15	Presents complex information clearly and concisely, adopting channels tailored to segmented stakeholder groups including across organisational boundaries and cultures.
PDP12	Pass	B5	Demonstrates evidence of a commitment to CPD and that incorporates sharing insights, using a reflective mind-set to support their personal development.

OD grading descriptors

Code	Grade	KSBs	Grading descriptor
PDP13	Pass	K13 K15 S16 S18	Critically evaluates how and why they chose a particular organisational development and design model or theory over others when implementing interventions and analyses the considerations that need to be taken into account to ensure cultural development.
PDD13	Distinction	K13 S16	Leads the implementation of different organisational development models and analyses how that impacted on the culture of the organisation.
PDP14	Pass	K14 S17	Justifies how they select, evaluate and apply an organisational design model or theory appropriate to their organisation.
PDP15	Pass	K16 S19	Evaluates how they have used a systems thinking approach to organisational development and its impact.

L&D grading descriptors

Code	Grade	KSBs	Grading descriptor
PDP16	Pass	K17 S20	Critically evaluates an intervention they have implemented that helped embed the value of learning in the organisation and promote a coaching and mentoring culture.
PDP17	Pass	K18 S21	Critically analyses the effectiveness of their use of new/updated principles for adult learning/motivation in changing an existing programme or implementing a new programme, and integrating these into their organisation's learning approach.
PDP18	Pass	K19 S23	Justifies how they create a successful organisational learning strategy through their selection and application of design principles.
PDD18	Distinction	K19 S23	Critically evaluates how they implement organisational learning principles to meet the future capability needs of the organisation.
PDP19	Pass	K20 S22	Critically analyses when they have used a complex facilitation technique giving the rationale for using that technique over others.
PDD19	Distinction	K20 S22	Evaluates complex facilitation techniques and details the considerations that need to be taken into account when employing these techniques.

HR grading descriptors

Code	Grade	KSBs	Grading descriptor
PDP20	Pass	K21 S24	Critically evaluates when they have selected and applied a wellbeing and/or engagement initiative, giving the rationale for their decisions.
PDD20	Distinction	S24	Critically evaluates the strategies they used to integrate employee wellbeing and engagement.
PDP21	Pass	K22 S25	Critically evaluates a reward and/or benefit solution/approach within their organisation, explaining why the approach was taken, how it was implemented and how it meets the organisation's current and future needs.
PDP22	Pass	K23 S26	Critically evaluates when they have recognised, interpreted and applied both specific legislation and current case law and the impact of this on the organisation and HR strategy.
PDD22	Distinction	K23 S26	Evaluates how they assess the organisation impact of employment legal decisions in shaping employee relations strategy, policy and practice.
PDP23	Pass	K24 S27	Critically evaluates the selection and application of a performance management process in their organisation and how this process aligns with organisation strategy and plans. Utilises this data to drive improvement.

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 GD content to understand the evidence expectations.

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 a detailed account of something, such as steps in a process or characteristics.
Details	As Describes, but with greater detail and specifics.
Presents/Demonstrates	Communicates clearly (and accurately) the key features, elements or messages.
Explains	Provides reasons and/or evidence to justify their points, covering 'why' rather than just 'how' or 'what'.
Evaluates	Considers and weighs up a range of evidence* to provide reasoned recommendation(s)/conclusion(s) and, if appropriate, balances advantages and disadvantages.
Analyses	Examines, explores and interprets each component or area of evidence to identify trends, themes or connections between them.
Justifies	Gives valid reasons for why an approach/action is undertaken.
Critically Analyses	As Analyses, but also articulates the limitations of the components or evidence areas and suggests how these could be improved or developed.
Critically Evaluates	Articulates the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of the approach/tool/model and provides specific suggestions as to how it could be improved.
Critically Reflects	Reviews past actions/approaches with perspective to identify learning that can inform future practice and alternative approaches.
Synthesises	Presents, connects and balances a range of evidence* to identify insights.

* Evidence sources include:

- scientific literature
- organisational data
- expertise and judgement of practitioners, managers, consultants and business leaders
- 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.