

End Point Assessment Plan HR Support Standard – Level 3

SUMMARY

This Assessment Plan covers the HR Support Standard that has been developed by a cross sector group of employers, together with input from several training providers and the Professional Body.

The focus of the apprenticeship is primarily on individuals who are new to the role or are progressing on their career journey through the organisation. The purpose of the end point assessment is to assess whether the apprentice has met the requirements of the standard.

Within this, the assessment should:

1. Have maximum relevance to the real job that the apprentice is doing to truly test full competence in the role
2. Give assurance to the employer that the apprenticeship is being delivered in a consistent and appropriate manner

The major components of the apprenticeship as it evolves throughout the period and the roles of each of the major parties are shown in the diagram below – the timings are an example, assuming a two year apprenticeship. Within this are contained the development of organisation specific knowledge, the skills and behaviours required to do the role, on programme assessment and the end point assessment.

Month	Apprentice	Employer	Training Provider	Independent Assessment Organisation
0	Understand job role and apprenticeship commitment	Deliver induction training and understand role in apprenticeship	Explain apprenticeship, roles, timetable and commitments. Completes ESFA admin req'ts	
1-19	Works to role objectives / KPIs / training plan Develops Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours	Manages as any other employee inc Performance Management via monthly 1to1s etc	Monitors progress; identifies gaps; delivers apprentice learning and support as required. Completes ESFA admin req'ts	
6-19	Continues building required Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours	Supports and coaches	Supports and trains	
18-19		'Gateway' to end point assessment: Employer and TP review progress and Employer decides whether Apprentice has achieved competency levels required vs the standard.		
19-20	Apprentice, Employer and TP work together to agree the content of the Consultative Project. TP signs off vs Assessment Plan requirements			Agrees content of Consultative Project
21-23	Completes Consultative Project. Submits for assessment			Assesses Consultative Project
24	Prepares for and participates in Professional Discussion.	Informs apprentice of grade achieved	When decision made, completes ESFA admin requirements	Conducts Professional Discussion. Determines grade for apprentice. Informs employer of decision.

Recommended On programme Assessment (dark blue in diagram above) – Our approach to ensuring that the apprentice is on track during the apprenticeship is based on the employer's Performance Management (PM) process with the following key elements:

- Line Manager uses the formal PM process and regular 1:1s to discuss progress in the apprenticeship, provide feedback and guide development.
- Training Provider can support this by ensuring that the requirements of the apprenticeship are reflected in the PM process and filling any gaps through their work with the apprentice.
- Training Provider can also support the apprentice on understanding the learning journey, providing advice and guidance on learning strategies and tools that will support the apprentice's preferred learning style and improve their learning agility.
- Regular check points between the Line Manager and Training Provider (aligned with the PM process) to ensure that the apprentice is on track and agree how any issues will be addressed.
- Apprentices should be strongly encouraged to create a learning record that contains examples of their work as they go through the apprenticeship - this can be used in reviews with the Line Manager and Training Provider as well as to support / contribute to the material submitted as part of the end point assessment. This learning record should be kept online wherever possible.

Gateway (yellow in the diagram above) - The decision as to when the apprentice is ready to move on to the end point assessment will be made by the Line Manager and the Training Provider based on their monitoring of apprentices' progress. The Employer will make the final decision as to whether the apprentice meets or is close to meeting the requirements of the standard and is therefore ready to move on to End Point Assessment.

On-programme assessment will include completion of L2 English and Maths if this has to be taken as part of the apprenticeship.

End point Assessment (green in the diagram above) – this contains two main components which are described in more detail in the next section:

- A Consultative Project, which contains a range of evidence demonstrating that the apprentice has met the requirements of specific Knowledge and Skills as set out in Appendix 1.
- A Professional Discussion that will explore the specific Skills and Behaviours set out in Appendix 1.

Assessment Method	Area Assessed	Assessed by	Grading	Indicative Weighting
Consultative Project	Knowledge and some Skills (see Appendix 1)	Independent Assessment Organisation	Fail / Pass / Distinction	50%
Professional Discussion	Behaviours and some Skills (see Appendix 1)	Independent Assessment Organisation		50%

END POINT ASSESSMENT

1. What is being assessed

The Independent Assessment Organisation will develop the detailed Assessment Tools, based on this Assessment Plan.

The End Point Assessment will be synoptic and therefore cover the knowledge skills and behaviours in the Standard. These are listed in Appendix 1. Some knowledge will be evidenced implicitly through the skills demonstrated by the apprentice e.g. providing advice on the organisation's HR policies and procedures can only be done if the apprentice understands those policies and procedures.

2. How will assessment be carried out

The focus of the end point assessment is on the apprentice being able to meet the requirements of the Standard and to be able to demonstrate this through the work that they have done. It takes place in the last 3-4 months of the apprenticeship, once the apprentice has met the Gateway criteria, and consists of two assessment methods:

- Consultative Project
- Professional Discussion

The Employer, Training Provider and Independent Assessment Organisation will work with the apprentice to agree the content of the Consultative Project, providing guidance as to the content, structure etc. The Independent Assessment Organisation will sign this off.

Appendix 1 details which knowledge, skills and behaviours are expected to be covered by the two assessment methods. In the event that an apprentice cannot complete a Project covering all of the required knowledge and skills, due to their organisational circumstances, then it is permissible for a maximum of three of the listed components of knowledge / skill to be assessed in the Professional Discussion instead. This will be identified by the Independent Assessment Organisation when the content of the Project is agreed.

The two assessment methods will build up a cumulative picture of how well the apprentice has met the requirements of the Standard.

2.1. Consultative Project

The Consultative Project will be a real example of work done by the apprentices in their role that will be completed after the Gateway, taking a maximum of three months.

The Project will require the apprentice to describe how they have applied their knowledge and HR related skills (as set out in Appendix 1) to deliver the services required by the role as described in the Standard. It should describe a situation where the apprentice has successfully worked with a customer (probably an internal one) to deliver a specific piece(s) of HR advice or provide an HR solution(s) for them. The content of the project should include project objectives, scope of the work, description of the situation/problem/business need, methodology used, information gathered / findings, conclusions and recommendations, implementation plan. Examples of typical projects might include: providing advice/guidance to a manager / team on a range of HR matters from recruitment through to retirement; taking a defined role in a larger project run by more senior members of the HR team; carrying out analysis of HR information and producing recommendations for action. The project should be 3000 words +/- 10%.

A more detailed brief for the Consultative Project will be provided by the Independent Assessment Organisation.

As the Consultative Project will be relevant to the actual business context and role that the apprentice is performing, it may not be possible to cover all of the knowledge and skills that are expected in the Project, as listed in Appendix 1. If this situation arises, then a maximum of three of the listed components of knowledge / skill can be assessed in the Professional Discussion instead. This will be agreed when the Project is scoped at the start of the End Point Assessment and signed off by the Independent Assessment Organisation

The Consultative Project will be sent to the Independent Assessment Organisation for a fully independent assessment against the standard. It will be marked before the Professional Discussion is carried out. The Professional Discussion should be carried out within two weeks of the Project being marked.

2.2 Professional Discussion

The Professional Discussion will be conducted after the Independent Assessor has reviewed and marked the Consultative Project. It will focus on the Skills and Behaviours specified in Appendix 1, together with any Knowledge and Skills components that have not been covered in the Consultative Project.

To ensure consistency of approach, the Independent Assessment Organisation will provide a bank of standard questions that the Independent Assessor will use. The bulk of these will be the Skills and Behaviours listed in Appendix 1 that must be tested in the Professional Discussion. In addition, the question bank will also include questions that explore the Knowledge and Skills covered by the Consultative Project. There should be 13-16 questions in each Professional Discussion carried out with an apprentice and each question should focus on a single component of Knowledge, Skill or Behaviour as listed in Appendix 1. The question bank should be reviewed by the Independent Assessment Organisation at least once in the 3 year life of this Assessment Plan.

Having marked the Consultative Project, the Independent Assessor should confirm the Knowledge and Skill components normally covered by the Consultative Project for which they do not have evidence. They should then add into the Professional Discussion any additional questions (from the question bank) that are required to cover these Knowledge and Skill components. The Professional Discussion is expected to last between 60 and 75 minutes.

The Professional Discussion may be carried out face to face, typically at the employer's premises, or remotely using e.g. video conference or Skype, depending on numbers and locations of apprentices.

The combination of these assessment methods builds a cumulative picture of performance against the Standard. They require apprentices to demonstrate the application of knowledge, skills and behaviours in an integrated manner to deliver the required outcomes, enabling the Independent Assessment Organisation to make an holistic judgement about how well the apprentice meets or exceeds the Standard.

3. Who carries out the assessment

The End Point Assessment will be carried out by an Independent Assessment Organisation. The Employer and Training Provider may have a role in ensuring that the apprentice is ready for End Point Assessment and understands what is required, but they do not play any part in the decision of the grade to be awarded. Their respective roles are as follows:

Assessor	Role
Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings a view of the apprentice from Performance Management and working with them in the workplace through the apprenticeship Has greatest clarity about whether the apprentice is fully competent in the workplace While consulting others, such as the training provider and apprentice, makes the final decision to put the apprentice through the Gateway to commence the End-Point Assessment Plays no part in the End-Point Assessment itself
Training Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings a view of the apprentice from supporting them through the apprenticeship

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings greater understanding of the assessment process than the employer and hence broader view on competence • Provides advice and guidance on the assessment process • Plays no part in the End-Point Assessment itself
Independent Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings a completely independent view to the end point assessment as they have had no engagement with the apprentice until now • Reviews and marks the Consultative Project • Conducts and marks the Professional Discussion • Determines the grade to be awarded to the apprentice

To ensure that any assessor is competent they will be trained in the assessment process (see next section) and will also have to meet certain criteria, including:

- Minimum 5 years' experience working in HR plus familiarity with the role covered by the apprenticeship.
- Current CPD activity that shows they are up to date with current developments in the sector
- Technical and management expertise to ensure they can assess all areas of the Standard.
- No conflict of interest, past or current relationship with the apprentice.

Any organisation is eligible to deliver assessment services against this Standard, by meeting the requirements of the ESFA's Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations. Individual employers must select an organisation from that Register to deliver assessment services for this Standard.

4. Independence

Within our assessment approach, independence is achieved through the end point assessment being carried out by the Independent Assessment Organisation. Their Independent Assessor will make a synoptic assessment of each apprentice's work, including the grade to be awarded, on the basis of evidence supplied.

5. Quality Assurance - Internal

The responsibility for the robustness of the assessment process is held by the Independent Assessment Organisation. This ensures that there is true independence, impartiality, validity and reliability in the assessment. The role of the Independent Assessment Organisation is summarised below:

- Develops and maintains the Assessment Tools that are used by all to carry out assessments
- Reviews the Assessment Tools at least once in the 3 year life of this Assessment Plan
- Provides a panel of individual assessors that meet the requirements set out in this assessment plan
- Trains and certifies all individual assessors to be able to assess consistently against the Standard
- Applies robust internal quality assurance and verification processes to the assessments e.g. use of standard formats, moderation and standardisation of scoring, oversight of assessment
- Runs at least annual standardisation events to ensure consistency between their assessors
- Runs the appeal process for any appeals that arise from assessment decisions

The Independent Assessment Organisation itself must have:

- Understanding of the sector and the assessment requirements for the Standard, together with the expertise to develop and administer the Assessment Tools required
- Capability to deliver assessments at the scale and with the levels of service required
- Geographical coverage required
- Capability to source assessors with the requisite background to be both credible and effective
- Robust internal verification and quality assurance processes

Within this approach, independence is achieved through the end point assessment being carried out by the Independent Assessment Organisation. They will make a synoptic assessment of each apprentice's work, including the grade to be awarded, on the basis of evidence supplied in the Consultative Project and the Professional Discussion.

The assessment methods described previously are designed to produce assessment outcomes that are consistent and reliable, allowing fair and proper comparison between apprentices employed in different types and sizes of organisations. At the core of this will be the set of Assessment Tools that are used by all assessors and to inform the training that assessors receive. The Independent Assessment Organisation will create the tools and materials to be used in assessment based on this Plan. These will be developed as soon as the Assessment Plan is approved and will be held by the Independent Assessment Organisation. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that the tools are consistent and produce comparable results. The Independent Assessment Organisation will thereafter be responsible for monitoring the work of the individual assessors to ensure continuing robustness – independent, consistent, accurate.

All assessors will be required to have the skills and experience outlined in the previous section. They will be trained and approved by the Independent Assessment Organisation to ensure that they are capable of using the tools developed for assessment in a fair and consistent manner to make reliable judgments.

The Independent Assessment Organisation will provide robust validation and quality assurance processes to ensure that all assessments are robust, that they assess fully against the Standard, are undertaken consistently and to the same standard and that the individuals carrying out the assessment have the requisite skills and industry experience. These will be developed as part of the Assessment Tools to ensure that they are consistent across all apprentices. Immediate and appropriate action will be taken where any quality concerns are identified.

6. Quality Assurance - External

External quality assurance of the end point assessment for this apprenticeship standard will be undertaken by the Institute for Apprenticeships. The rationale for selecting the Institute is as follows:

- There is no appropriate employer body and the employers do not wish to set one up
- Relevant Professional Bodies are applying to be End Point Assessment Organisations
- OfQual is not seen as appropriate by the Trailblazer group based on prior experience. OfQual have also stated that they will treat the apprenticeship as a qualification. The employers see the apprenticeship as competence in a real job in the workplace.

7. Grading

The Independent Assessment Organisation will make the decision on the grade to be awarded to the apprentice based on their scoring of the two components of the End Point Assessment, the Consultative Project and the Professional Discussion. The apprentice will be awarded a Fail, Pass or Distinction for each assessment method and for the overall apprenticeship. In order to gain a Pass the apprentice must achieve a Pass in each method – this represents full competence against those particular Knowledge, Skills or Behaviours in the Standard. The Distinction is designed to recognise the small proportion of apprentices who are seen as outstanding employees, regularly going beyond what is required to be competent in the role and seen as having greatest potential for the future.

The apprentice who achieves a Distinction can be described in broad terms as:

- Consistently exceeding the standards set for the role (both what is delivered and how it is delivered)
- Able to perform well in difficult situations or when under pressure
- Being seen as a role model by others
- Able to work upwards as well as with peers

The following table shows the combination of assessment method grades to determine the overall grade:

Grade	Consultative Project	Professional Discussion
Distinction (85 to 100 marks)	Distinction	Distinction
Pass (60 to 84 marks)	Pass	Pass
Fail (59 marks or less)	The apprentice has not achieved a minimum of a Pass in both methods	

The overall grade is arrived at using a 50:50 weighting of the two scores.

The table below outlines the scoring criteria that will be applied for each assessment method. Detailed guidance will be developed by the Independent Assessment Organisation. It is based on the following principles:

- All Pass criteria need to be achieved – in achieving this the apprentice will be demonstrating all Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours in the standard
- Distinction builds on the Pass criteria

End Point Element	Distinction Criteria	Pass Criteria	Fail Criteria
Consultative Project (100 marks)	Score 85 and above In addition to the Pass criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating insight into the issues facing the business • Meeting challenging customer needs and 	Score 60 to 84 Using Appendix 1, provides evidence of the required knowledge and skills with particular emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and application of HR legislation, policies and procedures relevant to their role 	Score 59 or below <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to provide evidence to meet all knowledge, skill and behaviour requirements as contained in Appendix 1

	<p>delivering appropriate HR advice / guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking personal initiative to consistently exceed required standards and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a clear understanding the business situation through appropriate questioning and active listening • Providing HR advice and guidance that are appropriate to the business context • Building the skills of managers in dealing with HR matters 	
Professional Discussion (100 marks)	<p>Score 85 and above</p> <p>In addition to the Pass criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating effectively with people above them in the organisation, up to senior management • Working well and delivering results when under pressure • Taking a leadership role within their team when appropriate 	<p>Score 60 to 84</p> <p>Using Appendix 1, provides evidence of the required skills and behaviours with particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating effective working relationships with customers • Showing how they have communicated effectively, using a range of media, at all required levels of the organisation • Supporting colleagues and collaborating to achieve results • Showing how they have developed themselves in the role and kept up to date with technical HR changes 	<p>Score 59 or below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to provide evidence to meet all knowledge, skill and behaviour requirements as contained in Appendix 1

In the event of a resit or a retake being required, then a fail on one of the assessment methods will require that assessment method to be repeated. If both assessment methods are failed, then the entire End Point Assessment must be repeated. A resit or a retake is at the employer's discretion. The maximum grade available for an apprentice who retakes / resits is a Pass. It is therefore important that an apprentice is not progressed through the Gateway until the employer and training provider are confident that they are ready for the End Point Assessment.

In the event of an appeal against the grade awarded, the Independent Assessment Organisation will carry out an independent review of the evidence to confirm or modify the grade in line with their standard procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION

Whilst the major focus of this Plan is to ensure that it delivers robust and high quality assessments that accurately assess competence against the Standard, the employers have also considered the practicalities of implementation carefully in the light of the number of apprenticeships and geographic coverage. Our view is that approximately 2-400 apprentices a year will use this standard. As it is difficult to estimate numbers for a profession that has had few apprenticeships in the past, we are ensuring that our assessment approach is easy to scale up. Our approach is designed to deliver a robust, cost effective and manageable assessment of competence in the role.

The main factors that will make our approach implementable and cost effective at the numbers of apprentices anticipated are:

- The use of two well proven assessment tools that will allow robust determination of competence without requiring a large number of components.
- The ability for assessors to review the Consultative Project remotely and hence not incur any travel time or costs
- The ability for assessors to conduct the Professional Discussion by phone / Skype / video conference where this is the most efficient method
- The intent to have documents created and submitted electronically wherever possible

In addition, we are confident that this approach can be used in organisations of any size within the sector, in part through flexing the role of the Training Provider to ensure the totality of the learning, on programme assessment and guidance on the end point assessment can be delivered.

As this Standard is new, we have no direct evidence of the costs of delivering this assessment approach. However, drawing on the information we have received from Training Providers and the Professional Body on the indicative costs of delivering this apprenticeship we believe that up to 20% of the costs will be spent on assessment.

Appendix 1

Assessment Methods

This Appendix details which knowledge, skills and behaviours are expected to be covered by the two assessment methods. In the event that an apprentice cannot complete a Project covering all of the required knowledge and skills, due to their organisational circumstances, then it is permissible for a maximum of three of the listed components of knowledge / skill to be assessed in the Professional Discussion instead. This will be identified by the Independent Assessment Organisation when the content of the Project is agreed.

Knowledge	What is required	Components	Assessment Method
Business understanding	Understands the structure of the organisation; the products and services it delivers; the external market and sector within which it operates; where their role fits in the organisation; the 'Values' by which it operates and how these apply to their role.	Understands the external market and sector within which their organisation operates, the products and services it delivers	Consultative Project
		Understands the structure of the organisation, where their role fits in the organisation; the 'Values' by which it operates and how these apply to their role.	Consultative Project
HR Legislation and Policy	Basic understanding of HR in their sector and any unique features. Good understanding of HR legislation and the HR Policy framework of the organisation. Sound understanding of the HR Policies that are relevant to their role. Knows where to find expert advice.	Basic understanding of HR in their sector and any unique features.	Consultative Project
		Good understanding of HR legislation and the HR Policy framework of the organisation.	Consultative Project
		Sound understanding of the HR Policies that are relevant to their role. Knows where to find expert advice.	Consultative Project
HR Function	Understands the role and focus of HR within the organisation; its business plan / priorities and how these apply to their role.	Understands the role and focus of HR within the organisation	Consultative Project
		Understands the HR business plan / priorities and how these apply to their role.	Consultative Project
HR Systems and Processes	Understands the systems, tools and processes used in the role, together with the standards to be met, including the core HR systems used by the organisation.	Understands the systems, tools and processes used in the role, including the organisation's core HR systems	Consultative Project
		Understands the standards that have to be met in the role	Consultative Project

Skills	What is required	Components	Assessment Method
Service Delivery	Delivers excellent customer service on a range of HR queries and requirements, providing solutions, advice and support primarily to managers. Builds manager's expertise in HR matters, improving their ability to	Delivers excellent customer service on a range of HR queries and requirements, providing solutions, advice and support primarily to managers	Consultative Project
		Builds manager's expertise in HR matters, improving their ability to handle repeated situations themselves where appropriate.	Consultative Project

Skills	What is required	Components	Assessment Method
	handle repeated situations themselves where appropriate. Uses agreed systems and processes to deliver service to customers. Takes the initiative to meet agreed individual and team KPIs in line with company policy, values, standards. Plans and organises their work, often without direct supervision, to meet commitments and KPIs.	Uses agreed systems and processes to deliver service to customers	Consultative Project
		Takes the initiative to meet agreed individual and team KPIs in line with company policy, values, standards	Consultative Project
		Plans and organises their work, often without direct supervision, to meet commitments and KPIs.	Consultative Project
Problem solving	Uses sound questioning and active listening skills to understand requirements and establish root causes before developing HR solutions. Takes ownership through to resolution, escalating complex situations as appropriate.	Uses sound questioning and active listening skills to understand requirements and establish root causes before developing HR solutions	Consultative Project
		Takes ownership through to resolution, escalating complex situations as appropriate.	Consultative Project
Communication & interpersonal	Deals effectively with customers/colleagues, using sound interpersonal skills and communicating well through a range of media eg phone, face to face, email, internet. Adapts their style to their audience. Builds trust and sound relationships with customers. Handles conflict and sensitive HR situations professionally and confidentially.	Deals effectively with customers/colleagues, using sound interpersonal skills and communicating well through a range of media eg phone, face to face, email, internet. Adapts their style to their audience.	Professional Discussion
		Builds trust and sound relationships with customers.	Professional Discussion
		Handles conflict and sensitive HR situations professionally and confidentially.	Professional Discussion
Teamwork	Consistently supports colleagues /collaborates within the team and HR to achieve results. Builds/maintains strong working relationships with others in the team and across HR where necessary.	Consistently supports colleagues /collaborates within the team and HR to achieve results.	Professional Discussion
		Builds/maintains strong working relationships with others in the team and across HR where necessary.	Professional Discussion
Process improvement	Identifies opportunities to improve HR performance and service; acts on them within the authority of their role. Supports implementation of HR changes/projects with the business.	Identifies opportunities to improve HR performance and service, acting on them within the authority of their role	Consultative Project
		Supports implementation of HR changes/projects with the business.	Consultative Project
Managing HR Information	Maintains required HR records as part of services delivered. Prepares reports and management information from HR data, with interpretation as required.	Maintains required HR records as part of services delivered.	Consultative Project
		Prepares reports and management information from HR data, with interpretation as required	Consultative Project

Skills	What is required	Components	Assessment Method
Personal Development	Keeps up to date with business changes and HR legal/policy/process changes relevant to their role. Seeks feedback and acts on it to improve their performance and overall capability.	Keeps up to date with business changes and HR legal/policy/process changes relevant to their role.	Professional Discussion
		Seeks feedback and acts on it to improve their performance and overall capability.	Professional Discussion

Behaviours	What is required	Components	Assessment Method
Honesty & Integrity	Truthful, sincere and trustworthy in their actions. Shows integrity by doing the right thing. Maintains appropriate confidentiality at all times. Has the courage to challenge when appropriate.	Truthful, sincere and trustworthy in their actions. Shows integrity by doing the right thing.	Professional Discussion
		Maintains appropriate confidentiality at all times.	Professional Discussion
		Has the courage to challenge when appropriate.	Professional Discussion
Flexibility	Adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns when new tasks need to be done or requirements change.	Adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns when new tasks need to be done or requirements change.	Professional Discussion
Resilience	Displays energy and enthusiasm in the way they go about their role, dealing positively with setbacks when they occur. Stays positive under pressure.	Displays energy and enthusiasm in the way they go about their role.	Professional Discussion
		Deals positively with setbacks when they occur. Stays positive under pressure.	Professional Discussion