
The Cambridge Delta assessment criteria for the Professional Development Assignment explained

Here are the criteria with notes on each. If any are still unclear to you, you can post a question at www.eltconcourse.com/contact/contact.html and we will try to help.

Part A – Reflection and Action (RA)

1. Successful candidates demonstrate that they can effectively present an essay which:
 - a) is written in language which is clear, accurate, easy to follow and does not impose a strain on the reader
 - i. Proofread carefully for slips, typographical errors and syntax errors. Get someone else to proofread it if you can. Avoid comma splices
 - ii. Make sure that you are using conjunction and other discourse markers clearly. E.g., if you have a sentence beginning with *So* or *Therefore*, are you certain that what you say next really does follow?
 - iii. Use subheadings at all stages so that you can guide the reader. Make sure, however, that the headings you use match the text which follows
 - b) is cohesive and clearly ordered and in which component parts of the assignment are relevant to the topic
 - i. You don't have many words to play with at each stage of Part A, so avoid waffling and keep to the topic
 - ii. Maintain cohesion by using clear subheadings and following a conventional staging. For example, for Stage 2 you might have four sections:
 - My original targets and the reasons for them
 - The results of my actions so far
 - The ways I shall amend and/or extend my targets
 - The final table with Action, Objective and Evaluation procedures in three columns
 - c) uses appropriate terminology accurately
 - i. Do not throw in terminology for its own sake
 - ii. Terminology which is understood at an initial-training level need not be defined
 - iii. Define all other terms. Do not, for example, use a term like *interlanguage* without making it clear (by definition or example) that you know what it means
 - d) refers to and references key sources
 - i. Clearly for Part A of the PDA, you will not be referring to a very wide range but you should make reference to your reading as well as your own intuitions about your teaching strengths and weaknesses and those commented on by observers
 - ii. The final part (the Action Plan) is where you should be making some reference to theories and writers on professional development
 - e) contains a bibliography of key sources consulted

See the guide to writing a background essay and know how to reference accurately
 - f) follows widely accepted referencing conventions

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- g) respects the word limits of individual stages of the assignment and the overall word limit and states the number of words used
 - i. There is, as usual, no leeway so stay within the limits
 - ii. For Stage 2, the limit is 1000 words and for Stages 3 and 4 that is reduced to 750 words
 - iii. Overall for Part A (excluding the Diagnostic Lesson and its materials) you have 2500 words to use and you should use nearly all of them
- 2. focus on the topic of the assignment by:
 - a) selecting some key strengths and weaknesses in their teaching practices and providing a rationale for their selection
 - i. Note the term 'key' here. Try to focus on things that actually make a difference to your students' learning rather than on cosmetic changes
 - ii. Note, too that you need to provide 'a rationale' – that means saying why you want to change things
 - b) selecting approaches / procedures / techniques / materials to use to address the issues identified in 2a above
 - i. You need to link what you are going to do with the objectives you have in mind
 - ii. Note that you don't need to focus only on procedures – think about techniques, approaches and materials as well
 - c) critically evaluating the effectiveness of the selected approaches / procedures / techniques / materials
 - i. This criterion refers to what you are going to do
 - ii. Note the term 'critically' – this requires you to see the weaknesses as well as the strengths
 - d) critically evaluating the effectiveness of methods and/or documents they have selected to gather data to allow them to focus on their teaching practices
 - i. This refers to the ways you are going to measure success, not what you are going to do
 - ii. Here, too, you need to see the strengths and the possible drawbacks
 - e) providing an appropriate action plan to promote their professional development
 - i. Label it as The Action Plan
 - ii. Set it out in a table with three columns: Action (what am I going to do?), Objective (why am I doing it?), Evaluation (how will I measure how well it works?)
 - f) critically reflecting on their teaching practices and beliefs during the course of this assignment

At each stage, make sure you refer somewhere to the 'before-and-after' situation. E.g., *I used to ..., I have now changed the way I ..., I now believe even more strongly that ..., I no longer feel that ...* etc.

Part B: Experimental Practice (EP)

The requirements to write well, reference appropriately and so on are unchanged for this part of the PDA (the criteria in section 1 of Part A, 1a to 1g, apply here, too, but 1g, the word limit, is 2000 words).

The 3 criteria specifically for the EP are:

- a) demonstrating understanding of selected approaches/procedures/techniques/materials with reference to any underlying theory
 - i. Note the breadth of choice. You can focus on approaches or procedures or techniques or materials
 - ii. Note the term 'any underlying theory'. That takes account of the fact that some choices, especially a technique or a type of materials will actually not have much to say about theory. What you say here will depend on what you choose but you still have to show you understand it
- b) justifying the selected approaches/procedures/techniques/materials with reference to the teaching context, the specific group of learners and their own professional development
 - i. Refer to the teaching context (where you are teaching, the aims of the course, intensity of the teaching programme etc.) and say why what you are doing fits in with it
 - ii. Then set out how the experiment addresses the types of learners you have and their needs, styles, personalities and objectives
 - iii. Finally, refer to *your* development and how conducting the experiment will help you become a more effective teacher
- c) evaluating the success or otherwise of the experiment with reference to the planned aims and outcomes for both the learners and the teacher
 - i. Take the aims of the experiment (not the aims of the lesson) one by one and see what's been met, what is left unmet and what has been partially achieved
 - ii. Have the learners benefited? How? Why? Why not? What evidence do you have?
 - iii. Have *you* benefited? How? Why? Why not? What evidence do you have?