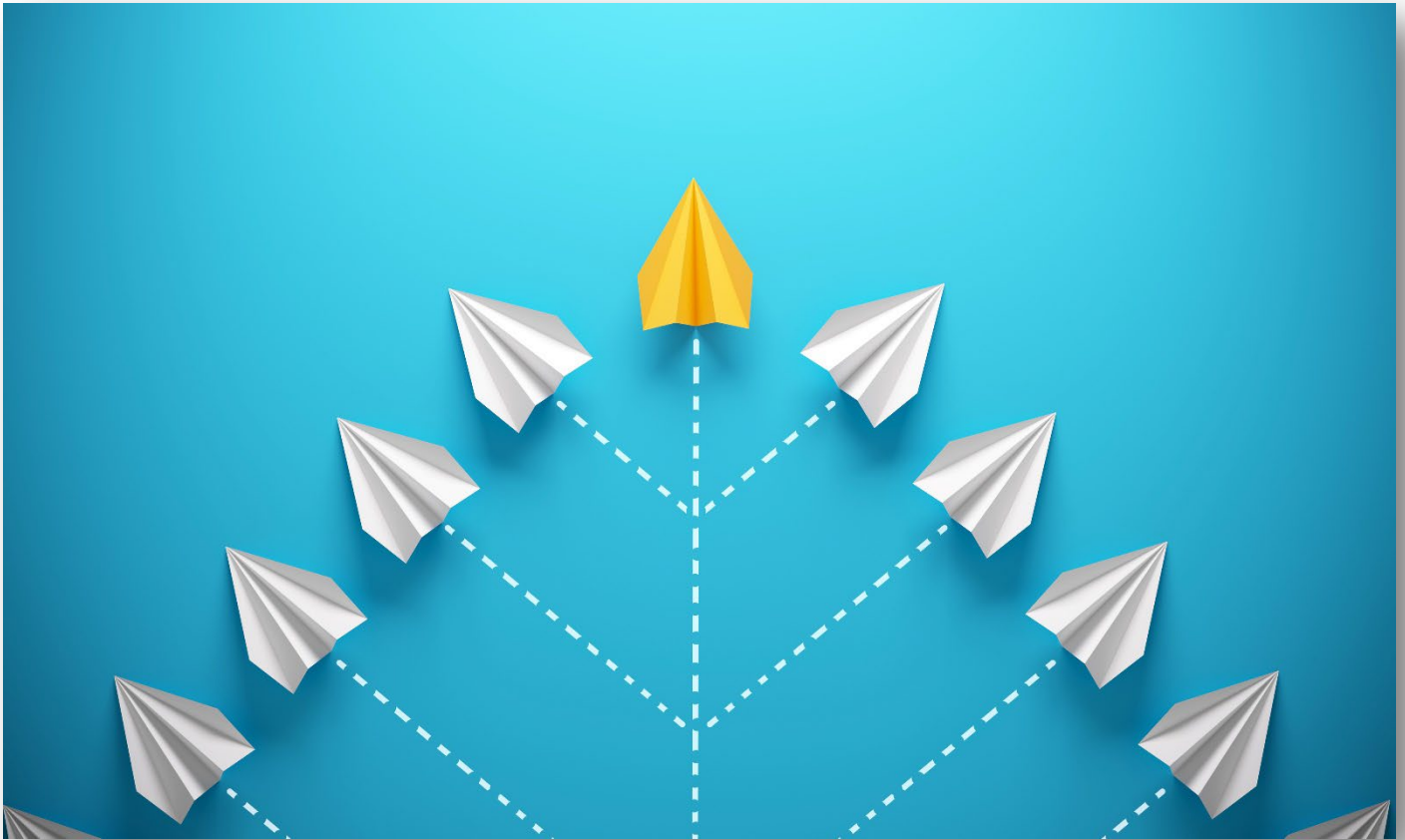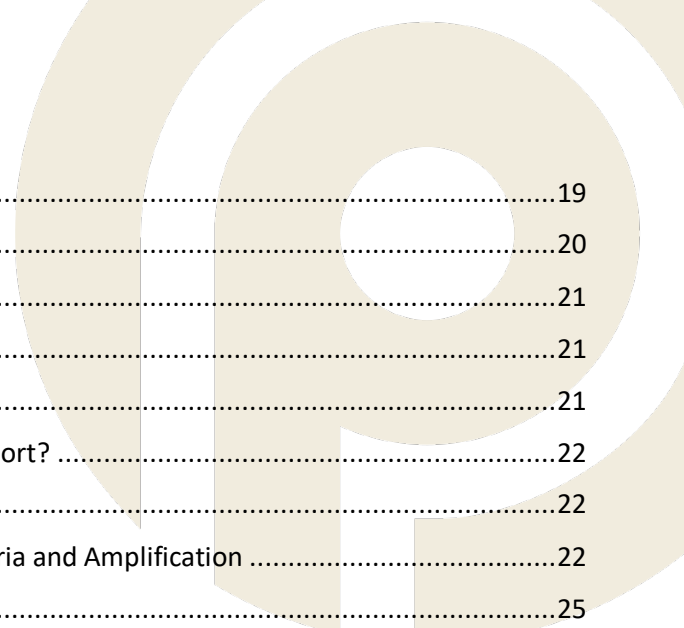# End-Point Assessment Guidance and Specification for Operations Manager ST0385 v1.4 Level 5

Contents

Summary of Revisions to End-Point Assessment Guidance and Specification

Summary of Revisions	Assessment Plan Revised Version Number	Date of Revision
None yet.		

Section 1

Overview

The Operations Manager Apprenticeship standard was revised by IfATE to version 1.4 for all on-programme starts from 19/09/2024[1].

The end-point assessment guidance in this specification relates to the Operations Manager Apprenticeship ST0385 version 1.4. The apprenticeship is at Level 5 and is for apprentices who undertake leadership and management duties with teams and senior managers where there is a requirement to ensure that teams carry out their role to meet organisational goals. They are a key component of all types of business model where there is an operational area or department with a workforce to lead, manage and support.

This occupation is found in small, medium, large, and multinational organisations in private, public and third sectors across all areas of the economy.

The broad purpose of the occupation is a leadership role, with operational and project responsibilities. An operations manager:

- ➢ Will have responsibility for managing individuals or a team.
- ➢ Will provide direction, instructions, and guidance to ensure the achievement of set goals.
- ➢ Is vital for the smooth functioning of all departments in any organisation.
- ➢ Is often responsible for ensuring their function is correctly administered and maintained in line with legislation and the organisation's policies and procedures.
- ➢ Will provide clear, and inclusive leadership and direction relating to their area of responsibility within an organisation. Typically, this involves setting, managing, and monitoring achievement of core objectives that are aligned to the overall strategic objectives of their organisation. In a smaller organisation they are also likely to contribute to the execution and achievement of the strategic objectives.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with their colleagues from other internal departments such as operational functions, human resources, finance, legal, IT, sales and marketing, and project groups.

Operations managers also interact with external stakeholders such as customers, clients, or suppliers. They may work in varied environments including in an office, onsite, or remotely and demonstrate a high level of flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of the organisation.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for leading and managing their operational function which includes:

- ➢ Accountability for developing team members.
- ➢ Managing projects.
- ➢ Planning, and reviewing workloads and resources.
- ➢ Delivering operational plans.
- ➢ Resolving problems.
- ➢ Building relationships internally and externally.

An operations manager may work as part of a network or in a team setting. They work within agreed budgets and available resources and report to senior leaders. They will be responsible for decision-making, and will guide or

---

[1] Note – IfATE revised the assessment plan from v1.3 to v1.4 on 25/09/2024, following publication of v1.3 on 19/09/2024. All apprentices starting on-programme from 19/09/2024 will be end-point assessed against v1.4 of the assessment plan by PAL.

influence the decisions of others, including business continuity principles, collecting, and interpreting data to find trends, analysing resources, and identifying ways to improve efficiencies.

Operations managers will understand how their role supports the wider organisation structure. They will apply codes of practice, legislation, and regulations in respect of their organisation's areas of operation. This will apply not only to legal and ethical responsibilities, but will also include equity, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and the sustainability impacts of the organisation.

The typical duration for this apprenticeship is 24 months but this will depend on apprentices' previous experience and their access to opportunities to gain the full range of competences. The minimum duration of training for any apprenticeship is 366 days, before entering end-point assessment.

To achieve the apprenticeship certificate, apprentices are required to successfully complete their on-programme period of learning and development and the end-point assessment. The purpose of the end-point assessment is to confirm that apprentices have met the required level of knowledge, skills and behavioural standards set by employers.

The overall apprenticeship is graded as fail, pass, or distinction.

To achieve the apprenticeship certificate, apprentices are required to successfully complete the:

- ➢ On-programme period of training and development, including achievement of English and maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.
- ➢ End-point assessment (EPA) - all components, within the assessment window.

The certificate for the apprenticeship is awarded by the Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfATE), through a process administered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

As the end-point assessment organisation, Professional Assessment Ltd (PAL) will claim for the certificate on behalf of the apprentices. Certificates are sent to the nominated employer, and it is the employer's responsibility to ensure the apprentice receives the certificate.

The standard and accompanying assessment plan can be accessed via the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Standard Title	Operations Manager
Level	5
Standard Number	ST0385 version 1.4
LARS Number	104
Named EQA organisation	Ofqual
Duration of Apprenticeship	Typically, 24 months but the actual length of the apprenticeship will be decided by the employer
Duration of End-Point Assessment	5 months
Date the Assessment Plan scheduled is for review	This apprenticeship will be reviewed in accordance with IfATE's change request policy
Mandated Qualifications within the Standard	To meet the apprenticeship standard, apprentices must achieve English and maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules
End-Point Assessment Methods	The end-point assessment is designed to test the apprentice throughout the entire standard. The assessment methods used to achieve this are as follows: ➢ Project with Report. ➢ Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence.

Introduction

This handbook contains the relevant information and guidance required of apprentices to achieve the end-point assessment for the Operations Manager Apprenticeship v1.4 and should be used in conjunction with the Operations Manager v1.4 Padlet[2] – End-Point Assessment Information for Apprentices, Providers and Employers.

The overarching aim of the end-point assessment is to ensure that the apprentice meets the standard set out by employers of the relevant sector and that they are fully competent within their job roles. An apprentice must successfully complete all the end-point assessment components to receive the apprenticeship certificate.

References to third-party material made in this specification are made in good faith. Professional Assessment Ltd does not endorse, approve, or accept responsibility for the content of materials, which may be subject to change, or any opinions expressed therein. (Material may include textbooks, journals, magazines and other publications and websites.)

All information in this specification is correct at time of publication.

PAL has worked in close collaboration with employers, other assessment organisations and experts from professional bodies and providers in developing the assessment tools for this end-point assessment. We are grateful to all who have generously shared their time and expertise to help us in the development process.

The end-point assessment (EPA) is a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours outlined in the apprenticeship standard, which have been learned throughout the apprenticeship programme. The purpose of the end-point assessment is to make sure that the apprentice meets the standard in its entirety.

All apprentices must undertake the independent end-point assessment at the end of the on-programme phase of training when their employer, and in some cases their provider, is satisfied that they have met the 'Gateway' criteria to undertake the assessment. Apprentices will not be awarded the apprenticeship certificate until they have successfully completed the end-point assessment.

The end-point assessment can be delivered only by a registered assessment organisation, which must be independent of the employer, or any party involved in the delivery of the on-programme phase of the apprenticeship. In this context, independence means without influence or bias, and the independent assessor assigned is not affiliated to the employer or any training partner involved, and notably the independent assessor has played no part in the training of the apprentice. All assessment decisions for this standard's end-point assessment must be made by the independent assessment organisation.

PAL has been working closely with occupational experts, employers, and providers in the development of end-point assessment tools to ensure that they are:

➢ Valid and appropriate to assess occupational competence in the relevant industry and will deliver reliable outcomes.
➢ Fair to all apprentices and help them to make progress in their lives.
➢ Manageable for apprentices and the industry and can be delivered effectively and efficiently in the vocational setting.

---

[2] A Padlet is an on-line wiki-based resource, made available to all PAL clients. Resources are updated centrally, so the latest information can be accessed via the Padlet

Apprenticeship Standard Objective

The overall goal of the end-point assessment is to ensure that the apprentice has met the required level of knowledge, skills and behavioural standards set by employers and approved by IfATE, and that they are confident and competent in their role to take on responsibilities to deliver clearly defined business outcomes.

Progression

On completion of the apprenticeship, the apprentice could progress into roles such as a chartered manager, a project manager or a senior leader.

Who is Professional Assessment (PAL)?

PAL provides services for providers to include colleges and employers involved in the delivery of apprenticeships and adult learning. Our offer includes:

- ➢ End-point assessment for a wide range of apprenticeship standards. Our dedicated team offers national coverage and has built up extensive experience in administering end-point assessments.
- ➢ Compliance and audit services. Our funding compliance team tailor their support to meet your specific needs; from ad-hoc advice and support to full ESFA-style audits.

The link to our website can be located by clicking here.

What is needed prior to end-point assessment?

The employer and provider must confirm that the apprentice has met the on-programme requirements, and the apprentice is ready to undertake the end-point assessment.

The employer and provider must hold a Gateway review to agree that the apprentice has gained the required level of knowledge, skills, and behaviours, along with English and maths qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules.

PAL needs evidence of **English and maths attainment**. Please check with the EPA team via info@professionalassessment.co.uk if you do not know which qualifications are accepted, or which level is required. Evidence must be in the form of a certificate.

The apprentice must have a **completed portfolio of evidence** that will underpin the professional discussion to be submitted to PAL as part of the Gateway evidence.

To confirm the Gateway review has taken place, the employer, provider, and apprentice are required to complete a Gateway Declaration Record, an example of which is included in the Appendix of this handbook[3]. Alternatively, providers and employers can use their documentation, with the caveat that the document must record the information as stipulated on the PAL Gateway record.

PAL will not confirm an end-point assessment booking until the required evidence is submitted. For auditing purposes, the Gateway Declaration Record should either be signed or dated by all parties, or email/DVR confirmation provided that all parties have agreed on readiness.

---

[3] The Gateway record may change in design and content based on revisions to standards - for the latest document please refer to the relevant Padlet that PAL will have provided training providers or can provide directly to employers and apprentices.

The recommended approach during the on-programme assessment (month 1-24) to ensure that the apprentice is on track is based on the employer's performance management process with the following key elements:

➢ Line manager uses the formal performance management process and regular 1:1s to discuss progress in the apprenticeship, provide feedback and guide development.
➢ The provider can support this (if required) by ensuring that the requirements of the apprenticeship are reflected in the performance management process and filling any gaps through their work with the apprentice.
➢ The 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 provider (aligned with the performance management 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 learning and areas for development/action points as they go through the apprenticeship - this can be used in reviews with the line manager and provider.

The Gateway decision regarding readiness will be taken by the line manager (or appropriate employer) representative and apprentice with input from the provider.

Language of assessment

All components of the end-point assessment will be conducted in English.

Apprentices may be assessed in British Sign Language where it is permitted for the purpose of reasonable adjustment.

Further information on special considerations and reasonable adjustments can be found in our Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments policy.

Section 2

How is end-point assessment delivered?

The apprentice will be assessed to the apprenticeship standard using two discrete assessment methods. The assessment is synoptic, i.e., takes a view of the overall performance of the apprentice in their job. Each assessment method should directly assess the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of the standard.

The assessment activities will be completed by the independent assessor as follows:

➢ Project with report.
➢ Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence.

There is no mandated assessment sequence. Assessments can be combined, so it is permissible to undertake more than one assessment on one day.

The content and structure of the assessment methods is provided by PAL to ensure consistency across all apprentices. The employer, with the support of the provider where appropriate, will work with the apprentice to agree how the apprentice goes about completing the components of the end-point assessment and will provide guidance along the way as required. The provider will ensure that the evidence presented for end-point assessment meets the assessment plan requirements but does not have a role in the formal end-point assessment or grade decision.

The apprentice must achieve at least a pass in all the end-point assessment methods to get an overall pass.

To achieve an overall distinction, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in both assessment methods.

If any assessment activity is failed it must be retaken. Apprentices cannot achieve the apprenticeship without gaining at least a pass in every assessment activity.

Please refer to Section 3 for more information about grading and reassessment.

The following chart sets out the sequences of the Gateway and end-point assessment.

Note – the assessments can be taken in any order.

Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider		PAL
Apprentice registered with PAL prior to the Gateway review.	⇨	- ESFA advised of EPAO. - EPAPro log-in credentials provided. - Access to a range of assessment guidance materials available.
Gateway review held between training provider, employer, and apprentice to confirm assessment readiness. - Evidence provided that English and maths requirements have been achieved. - Portfolio of evidence to underpin the professional discussion submitted.	⇨	- Declaration received that the apprentice is ready for assessment. - Gateway evidence received. - PAL approves or rejects the Gateway evidence. If rejected, the provider to resubmit as required.
PAL contacts employer and apprentice. PAL undertakes assessment planning meeting and agrees assessment schedule.	⇨	Assessment plan completed. Dates will be agreed for all methods of assessment to meet with the Operations Manager assessment plan and to allow for reasonable resit or retake activities within the assessment window, wherever possible.

Apprentice/Employer/Training Provider		PAL
Apprentice undertakes the written project report with presentation and questions. ▪ The apprentice must submit the written project report and any presentation materials to PAL by the end of week 12 of the EPA period. ▪ The independent assessor must have at least 2 weeks to review any presentation materials, and the apprentice must have at least 2 weeks' notice of the presentation assessment date.	→	▪ Presentation and questions assessment duration of 60 minutes (+10% at the independent assessor's discretion), typically 20 minutes for the presentation and 40 minutes for the questions. ▪ Presentation and questions completed, written report, presentation and response to questions assessed. Assessment graded.
Apprentice undertakes the professional discussion. ▪ The independent assessor must have at least 2 weeks to review the supporting documentation and the apprentice must have at least 2 weeks' notice of the professional discussion assessment date.	→	▪ Professional discussion assessment duration of 60 minutes (+10% at the independent assessor's discretion). ▪ Professional discussion completed, responses to questions assessed. Assessment graded.
	↓	▪ Overall grading undertaken – independent assessor confirms grades for all assessment elements and overall grade using grade descriptors and weighting as detailed in the assessment plan to PAL. ▪ Internal quality assurance (IQA) undertaken. ▪ Assessment outcome provided within the assessment window timeframe.
Employer informed of the outcome of end-point assessment via email from epasupportservices@professionalassessment.co.uk Apprentice and provider are copied into the communication.	←	▪ Assessment summary record will note the decision and grade. If a resit or retake is required, it is important the relevant parties refer to the summary record. ▪ Assessment decision data collated and used to inform standardisations processes and quality assurance. ▪ Confirmed assessment outcome provided to the provider and Apprenticeship service. ▪ Certificate requested where a pass or higher grade for all aspects of end-point assessment are achieved. ▪ Data provided to the regulator, as necessary.

Who can carry out end-point assessment?

Independent assessors/the end-point assessment organisation for this standard are required to:

➢ Have excellent knowledge and understanding of the apprenticeship standard.
➢ Have recent relevant experience of the occupation or sector to at least occupational level 5 gained in the last 5 years or significant experience of the occupation or sector, which must be maintained through Continuous Professional Development.
➢ Hold or be working towards a recognised current workplace assessment qualification.
➢ Must attend at least one standardisation event annually.
➢ Have sufficient resources to carry out the role of independent assessor i.e., time and budget.

All independent assessors that meet the above criteria are trained and approved by PAL to ensure that they are capable carrying out end-point assessments in a fair and consistent manner to make reliable judgments.

PAL will be responsible for all aspects of the end-point assessment for this standard and will review the evidence against the standard to ensure that the pass criteria have been met.

Internal Quality Assurance Requirements

PAL requires all quality assurance staff to hold a recognised internal quality assurance qualification. PAL implements validation and quality assurance policies and processes to ensure that all assessments are robust, fully align with the independent end-point assessment requirements, and are assessed consistently, reliably, and fairly by all independent assessors.

Policies can be shared upon request, please contact info@professionalassessment.co.uk. Essential policies are also available via our website.

In accordance with these policies PAL will:

➢ Develop and maintain a set of assessment tools, to be used by all independent assessors when carrying out assessments.
➢ Ensure independent assessors for this standard meet with the assessment plan competency requirements.
➢ Train and develop all independent assessors to ensure reliable and consistent assessment of the Operations Manager standard.
➢ Apply robust quality assurance and verification processes to assessments, e.g. the use of standard formats, moderation and standardisation of marking and assessment decisions.
➢ Apply and follow the appeals and disputes policy and procedure in response to any legitimate appeal or dispute.
➢ Hold standardisation and moderation activities of assessment process.
➢ Communicate with third parties any concerns or issues that may impact on assessment activities or outcomes.

External Quality Assurance Requirements

External quality assurance for the Operations Manager Apprenticeship is undertaken by Ofqual.

Standardisation and Moderation

All independent assessors are required to attend standardisation and moderation activities, to ensure the consistency of the assessment approach and to ensure assessment grading is aligned to the relevant assessment plan requirements. Standardisation activities are carried out on an on-going basis such meetings can be in the format of traditional meetings or via webinars.

IQAs may accompany or 'remote in' with independent assessors carrying out end-point assessment to ensure that it is being administered safely, securely and in line with PAL guidance.

For further information on quality assurance, standardisation and moderation please see our policies, or contact our quality team via info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Section 3

Grading

This apprenticeship includes fail, pass, and distinction grades with the final grade based on the apprentice's combined performance in each assessment activity.

- ➢ The apprentice must achieve at least a pass in all the end-point assessment methods to get an overall **pass**.
- ➢ To achieve an overall **distinction**, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in both assessment methods.

Please see **Tables 2 and 3** for grading descriptors by assessment method.

Grades from individual assessment methods should be combined in the following way to determine the grade of the end-point assessment as a whole:

Project with Report	Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence	Overall Grading
Fail	Fail	Fail
Fail	Pass	Fail
Pass	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Preparing apprentices for end-point assessment

To ensure that apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that underpin occupational competence, it is recommended that they follow a structured programme of training and development. The period of training and development must include the minimum ESFA requirements for off-job training, away from the day-to-day job. Please refer to ESFA guidance and funding rules regarding the definition of what training interventions are permissible under the ruling and responsibilities for recording and evidencing off-job training activities.

To prepare apprentices effectively, employers and/or providers should:

- ➢ Have a good understanding of the apprenticeship standard and the structure and format of the end-point assessment.
- ➢ Plan and implement a learning and development programme based on the apprenticeship standard, with regular reviews of progress and readiness, to ensure apprentices develop the required knowledge, skills, and behaviours.
- ➢ Use formative assessments and mock assessments to help prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment.

It is recommended, but not required, that the on-programme assessment includes:

- ➢ Regular performance reviews between the apprentice and a senior manager.
- ➢ Opportunities given and evidence generated to cover all assessment criteria.
- ➢ Feedback from line manager.

End-point assessment planning and scheduling

Employers and/or providers[4] must have an agreement in place to conduct end-point assessments with PAL. We regularly check the ESFA portal to review pipeline business and ensure that providers who wish to work with us, are attached to us, as EPAO for the relevant standard(s).

Apprentices must be registered and booked on to their end-point assessment in sufficient time to allow adequate planning and scheduling of the assessments. PAL encourages communication with all parties, in respect of apprenticeship progress and status and our accounts team will periodically communicate directly with other stakeholders to seek clarification and updates regarding apprentices' assessment readiness. Once the employer or provider has confirmed a Gateway date, PAL will arrange a planning meeting on receipt and validation of the Gateway evidence.

The purpose of the planning meeting is to share information with PAL to support the assessment process and to agree a plan for the upcoming assessment activities for the apprentices. The independent assessor/PAL representative will agree a plan and schedule for each assessment activity to ensure that all assessment components can be completed within the end-point assessment time. The meeting can be conducted remotely using appropriate technology.

The end-point assessment will be conducted over a period of **5 months** at the end of the apprenticeship. Assessments cannot take place if the apprentice has not served the minimum time in training and we require employers and providers to check this requirement has been met, before submitting gateway evidence.

Reassessment

PAL's resit and retake policy will apply in the event of reassessments, and we will discuss arrangements for such activities with all concerned parties.

Reassessments do incur a charge. All fees are detailed in PAL's pricing policy and outlined in the contracting process.

Reassessments wherever possible will be carried out by the original independent assessor, but if this is not possible PAL reserves the right to assign a different assessor.

---

[4] Note PAL endeavours to have agreements with both employers and training providers, to ensure all parties are aware of our service offer and role in the apprenticeship journey.

Resits and Retakes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment methods will be offered the opportunity to take a resit or a retake. A resit does not require further learning, whereas a retake does. Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for a resit or a retake. The apprentice's employer will need to agree with PAL that either a resit or retake is an appropriate course of action.

An apprentice who fails an assessment method, and therefore the EPA in the first instance, will be required to resit or retake any failed assessment method only.

A resit is typically taken within 2 months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a retake is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within 3 months of the EPA outcome notification.

Failed end-point assessment methods must be resat or retaken within a 6 month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be resat or retaken in full.

Resits and retakes are not offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to distinction.

Reassessment requirements for each component

Project with Report: if the apprentice's evidence does not meet the requirements to achieve the pass descriptors for the project assessment method on their first assessment attempt, they must amend the project output in line with the independent assessor's feedback. The apprentice will be given 4 weeks to rework and submit the amended report. A further presentation and question assessment will be carried out.

Professional Discussion: if the apprentice's evidence does not meet the requirements to achieve the pass descriptors for the professional discussion on their first assessment attempt, a further, different full professional discussion assessment of the apprentice will be carried out. The apprentice will not be permitted to add evidence to the portfolio of evidence following a resit.

Capping

Where any assessment method has to be resat or retaken, the apprentice will be awarded a maximum end-point assessment grade of pass, unless PAL determines there are exceptional circumstances requiring a resit or retake.

Booking Reassessments

The timescale for any reassessment will be agreed on a case-by-case basis, with PAL. As part of that agreement, any reassessments must not provide an apprentice with an unfair advantage over others.

Section 4

Portfolio

A completed portfolio of evidence is required to be submitted to PAL as part of the Gateway review.

The portfolio **is not directly assessed** as part of end-point assessment, it provides a structure for the professional discussion.

The independent assessor will review the portfolio evidence and use it to identify areas for the professional discussion, and it is the professional discussion that will assess the apprentice's understanding and learning.

The portfolio should be produced during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship, showcasing competence by the apprentice having first learned and applied the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard.

It is of paramount importance that all the work submitted in the portfolio has been generated by the apprentice or relates directly to the named apprentice. The independent assessor will undertake authenticity checks regarding portfolio evidence as part of the professional discussion assessment.

> The apprentice must have access to their portfolio evidence during the professional discussion assessment. To ensure that all evidence is accessible during the assessment PAL recommends that audio and/or video recordings are supported by a written summary/list of bullet points to which the apprentice can easily refer.

What is the format of the portfolio of evidence?

The portfolio will typically contain 16 discrete pieces of evidence in total. A qualitative as opposed to quantitative approach is suggested.

The portfolio must evidence all the knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to the professional discussion method of assessment (see Table 1). **At least one piece of evidence must relate to each of the criteria**; each piece of evidence can be referenced against more than one knowledge, skills, or behavioural requirement for a more holistic approach.

PAL has provided a mapping record with an employer and apprentice validation statement which can be accessed from the Operations Manager Padlet. Alternatively, training providers can use their own version, however **it is a mandatory requirement that a mapping document and employer and apprentice validation statement is submitted with the completed portfolio.**

How can an Operations Manager prepare for and complete their portfolio?

The employer and training provider will assist the apprentice in producing their portfolio to ensure that it covers all standards outlined in the assessment plan for professional discussion method of assessment.

Please refer to Table 1 for the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be assessed by the professional discussion and evidenced in the portfolio.

The portfolio **must contain**:

- A mapping document which clearly shows how the evidence is mapped against the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours that will be assessed by the professional discussion.

- A statement to confirm that the evidence provided is valid and attributable to the apprentice from the employer and the apprentice.

Please note - PAL will not accept a portfolio submitted without a completed mapping document and an employer statement of validity.

It is not required that the apprentice has evidence in all the described formats below, but the portfolio **may** contain the following items as evidence:

➢ Workplace policies and procedures.
➢ Witness statements.
➢ Annotated photographs.
➢ Video clips with a maximum total duration of 5 minutes. The apprentice must be in view and identifiable.

The portfolio should **not** contain reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment.

The professional discussion questions will be constructed to include all pass criteria, while allowing the opportunity for the apprentice to evidence the distinction criteria, either naturally in their responses or using further questions.

What is best practice in producing the portfolio?

Ensure that the evidence within the portfolio provides coverage against all the knowledge, skill and behaviours as outlined in the assessment plan for the professional discussion assessment method (see Table 1). Employers, training providers and apprentices can use this guidance to support in documenting and referencing the evidence against all of the KSBs required.

A range of evidence, methods and consistency over time is encouraged to show competence. All evidence provided within the portfolio should comply with usual assessment practices, such as:

➢ Valid, Authentic, Current, Sufficient, and Reliable (VACSR) confirmed including signatures and dates as appropriate.
➢ Have detailed annotation to describe the evidence, audio files should be referred to clearly within evidence to show where supporting recordings are located and within recordings the evidence number being discussed should be clearly confirmed. Audio files limited to a total 20 minute total duration.
➢ Be referenced to the specific criteria being claimed.
➢ All evidence recordings and files to be clearly named as appropriate to evidence type/number.

Evidence should comply with data protection and GDPR. Ideally, the portfolio evidence should be presented electronically.

Table 1: Mapping of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours for the Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio

KSB	Knowledge (K), Skills (S) and Behaviours (B)
K2	Relevant regulation and legislation requirements, and their impact on their team, the individual, their role and the organisation.
K3	Legislation and organisational policies relating to equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and their impact on the organisation and stakeholders.
K4	Approaches to people management, for example recruitment, performance management, reward, and talent management and resource planning.
K14	Conflict resolution and mediation processes.
K16	Ethics and values-based leadership theories and principles, for example employee wellbeing.
K18	Leadership and management tools and techniques.
K19	The sector in which the organisation operates and its impact on their role.
K20	The continuous development requirements and learning needs of their team.
K21	Business continuity principles, including risk assessment, contingency planning and disaster recovery.
K22	Organisational policies and procedures, for example health and safety.
K23	Responsible organisation policies and practices covering social, environmental, and economic factors, including sustainability.
K24	Coaching and mentoring techniques.
K25	The strategic direction of the organisation and the impact on operational plans.
S3	Manage and set goals and accountabilities for individuals and teams.
S4	Analyse performance data for individuals and teams to identify areas for improvement.
S6	Lead and influence the team and individuals to support an inclusive culture of equity, diversity, and the promotion of well-being.
S7	Motivate team members and individuals through collaborative activities, for example one-to-one coaching and team meetings, to achieve organisational goals.
S11	Interpret and implement the practical application of regulation, legislation and organisational policies for stakeholders.
S13	Analyse and prioritise organisation activities in response to the operating environment.
S14	Implement business continuity plans, including risk assessment, contingency planning and disaster recovery, to ensure the uninterrupted operation of critical functions.
S17	Manage relationships across multiple and diverse stakeholders.
S18	Deliver sustainable services and solutions which allow the organisation to respond to changes in social, economic and environmental factors.
S19	Manage and facilitate learning and continuous professional development for their team.
S20	Coach and mentor individuals within their team.
S21	Develop and implement operational plans that align with the strategic direction of the organisation.
B1	Acts professionally, ethically and with integrity.
B2	Supports an inclusive culture, treating colleagues and stakeholders fairly and with respect.
B4	Seeks learning opportunities and continuous professional development for self and the wider team.

Section 5

Assessment Methods

All end-point assessments should take place within the apprentice's usual working hours and will be planned by the PAL representative with the apprentice and employer at the planning meeting to comply with the assessment plan and business requirements.

The independent assessor will not communicate assessment decisions straight away, they will document and record their assessment decisions. These decisions are then shared for internal quality assurance checks prior to being communicated to the apprentice, employer, and provider. A final assessment decision cannot be made until all elements of assessment have been completed. Employers can access a record of assessment by accessing EPAPro. User guides are available for providers and employers that detail how reports can be viewed.

Sample Assessment Materials

For this standard, PAL provides:

> ➢ A mock project with report assessment record with sample questions.
> ➢ A mock professional discussion assessment record with sample questions.

All sample materials can be accessed from the Operations Manager ST0385 v1.4 Padlet.

Project with Report

Key Facts about the project with report

The written project report involves the apprentice completing a significant and defined piece of work that has a real business application and benefit. The written project report must meet the needs of the employer's business and be relevant to the apprentice's occupation and apprenticeship.

This assessment method has 2 components:

1. Written project report.
2. Presentation with questions and answers.

Together, these components give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method. They are assessed by an independent assessor.

This assessment method is being used because:

> ➢ It allows for the assessment of KSBs that take place over a long period of time.
> ➢ It allows for a broad set of KSBs to be evidenced during the post-gateway period.
> ➢ It assesses KSBs holistically.
> ➢ It can produce something that is of genuine business benefit to the apprentice's employer.
> ➢ It allows the apprentice to directly demonstrate KSBs relating to communication and presentation.
> ➢ The written project report is designed to demonstrate the application of knowledge, skills, and behaviours as they would occur in occupational practice. Producing a written project report reflects normal practice in the workplace for an operations leader, so this assessment method is appropriate for this role.
> ➢ It demonstrates the apprentice's understanding of their organisation and department.

What is the format of the written project report?

The apprentice must complete a written project report. Examples of types of projects that could be used for the written project report are:

- ➢ Introduction of a new process, service, or product to the operational area.
- ➢ Identification and implementation of a change plan to improve efficiency or direct saving (e.g. percentage decrease in direct costs, reduction in headcount).
- ➢ Implementation of a performance improvement plan for the operational area, that required significant collaboration with wider stakeholders.
- ➢ Evaluation of an internal communications project that involved communicating change to different stakeholders.

The **project is undertaken and completed on programme and pre-Gateway, prior to the end-point assessment**. The project itself is not part of the EPA.

It is the **written project report** that is the **focus of the end-point assessment**, rather than the project itself, allowing the apprentice to meet the KSBs mapped to this assessment method to the highest available grade

It is recommended that training providers refer to the assessment plan and this specification to ensure that the project completed on-programme will enable the apprentice to meet the requirements of this assessment method.

The apprentice **must start the written project report after gateway.**

The employer should ensure the apprentice has the time and resources, within the written project report period, to plan and complete their project.

The apprentice may work as part of a team to complete the project, which could include internal colleagues or technical experts. The apprentice must however, complete their written project report and presentation unaided and they must be reflective of their own role and contribution. The apprentice and their employer **must confirm** this when the written project report and any presentation materials are submitted.

The written project report must have a **word count of 4000 words**. A tolerance of 10% above or below is allowed at the apprentice's discretion. Appendices, references and diagrams are not included in this total.

The apprentice **must** produce and include a mapping in an appendix, showing how the report evidences the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

The apprentice **must complete and submit the written project report and any presentation materials** to PAL **by the end of week 12 of the EPA period**.

The written project report must include at least:

- ➢ An executive summary.
- ➢ An introduction.
- ➢ The scope and business need of the project (including key performance indicators, aims and objectives).
- ➢ Research and analysis outcomes.
- ➢ Project outcomes - did it deliver the benefits included? was it completed to time and cost?
- ➢ Discussion of findings.
- ➢ Recommendations and conclusions.

- ➢ References - from external resources.
- ➢ Appendix containing mapping of KSBs to the report.

What is the format of the presentation with questions?

Preparing the presentation
The apprentice must prepare and deliver a presentation to the independent assessor.

After the presentation, the independent assessor must ask the apprentice questions about their project, written project report and presentation.

The presentation should cover:

- ➢ An analysis of the internal and external factors that impacted the choice of project.
- ➢ A critical evaluation of the project activity justifying the reason for the project.
- ➢ Detail of the impact the project has had since it was completed.

The apprentice must **submit any presentation materials to PAL by the end of week 12 of the EPA period**.

The apprentice must notify PAL, at that point, of any technical requirements for the presentation.

The independent assessor must have at **least 2 weeks to review any presentation materials**, before the presentation is delivered by the apprentice, to allow them to prepare questions.

PAL must give the apprentice at **least 2 weeks' notice** of the presentation assessment date.

The presentation with questions must be structured to give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method to the highest available grade.

Presentation and questions assessment
The presentation with questions must last **60 minutes**. This will typically include a **presentation of 20 minutes** and **questioning lasting 40 minutes**. The independent assessor must use the full time available for questioning. The independent assessor can increase the time of the presentation and questioning by up to 10%. This time is to allow the apprentice to complete their last point or respond to a question if necessary.

The presentation with questions must take place in a suitable venue selected by PAL with the employer for example, the employer's premises. The presentation with questions can be conducted by video conferencing. PAL must verify the identity of the apprentice and ensure the apprentice is not being aided. The presentation with questions should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence.

The independent assessor must ask **at least 6 questions**. They must use the questions from PAL's question bank or create their own questions in line with PAL's training. Follow up questions are allowed where clarification is required.

The purpose of the independent assessor's questions is:

- ➢ To verify that the activity was completed by the apprentice.
- ➢ To seek clarification where required.
- ➢ To assess those KSBs that the apprentice did not have the opportunity to demonstrate with the report, although these should be kept to a minimum.
- ➢ To assess level of competence against the grading descriptors.

The apprentice may choose to end the assessment method early. The apprentice must be confident they have demonstrated competence against the assessment requirements for the assessment method. If the apprentice asks to end the assessment method early, the independent assessor:

➢ Must ensure the apprentice is fully aware of all assessment requirements.
➢ Cannot suggest or choose to end any assessment methods early (unless in an emergency).
➢ Is responsible for ensuring the apprentice understands the implications of ending an assessment early if they choose to do so.
➢ May suggest the assessment continues.
➢ Must document the apprentice's request to end any assessment early.

How can an Operations Manager prepare for the project with report?

➢ Read the guidance documents and ask questions if the information provided is not clear.
➢ Be prepared for the presentation by practicing within the required time frames – line managers can support by giving feedback against the presentation with questions standards.
➢ Undertake a mock presentation with questions with the training provider and listen and act upon to the feedback provided.
➢ Check that presentation equipment and resources are available and in good working order prior to the assessment.

How will the project with report be graded?

The independent assessor must assess the written project report, presentation and answers to questions holistically when deciding the grade.

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the pass descriptors for this method of assessment through their observation and responses to the questions asked.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the distinction descriptors for this method of assessment through their demonstration and responses to the questions asked, AND all of the pass descriptors.

Please see **Table 2** for the pass descriptors for this method of assessment, along with amplification of the key terms.

Table 2: Project with Report Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria and Amplification

Theme & KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Project scope and planning K6 K8 K10 K11 K17 S2 S15 S16	P1. Explains how they identify problems and use methods for researching, analysing interpreting, and evaluating data to inform judgements and provide solutions. (K6, S2)	n/a
	P2. Explains how they manage and prioritise stakeholder relationships and influence and negotiate with stakeholders to shape and agree goals and outcomes when identifying and managing organisational improvement opportunities. (K8, K10, S16)	D1. Evaluates the impact of their approach to influencing and negotiating with stakeholders to shape and agree goals and outcomes when identifying and managing organisational improvement opportunities. (K8, S16)

Theme & KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
	P3. Describes the **change management concepts** and the methods they use to implement change within their organisation in line with the project brief. (K17)	n/a
	P4. Explains how they identify the current and future needs of the sector and respond to any **external factors** that may influence the future landscape and evaluates their impact on the organisation. (K11, S15)	D2. Critically analyses the current and future needs of the organisation. (K11)

Amplification

Change management concepts
- ➢ Methods of problem-solving such as diagramming and breaking down strategies.
- ➢ Ways of overcoming challenges e.g. staying positive and confliction resolution.
- ➢ Organisational change such as culture, needs and drivers.
- ➢ Team changes such as job roles and organisational structure.
- ➢ Identifying and overcoming resistance or barriers to change.
- ➢ Impact of external factors such as changes to legislation and regulations, social change, political change, competitor change, consumer behaviour change.
- ➢ How change can affect the team and individuals in different ways, the negative responses to change (e.g. uncertainty, fear, increased stress etc.), the positive reactions to change (e.g. potential opportunities for development, potential to improve team working practices, personal growth etc.)
- ➢ How to manage change within a team when individuals are reacting differently, and some are resisting the change.
- ➢ Techniques that can be used to support a team through change such as:
    - How to assess change readiness.
    - Planning of change activities and support requirements.
    - Using a change management model and processes, for example, Kotter 8-step change model, Adkar 5-steop change model, McKinsey 7s (shared values, structure systems etc.), and Burke & Litwin change model.
    - Effective communication techniques.
    - Consulting and involving the team in decision making.
    - Use of empathy and emotional intelligence.
    - Use of appropriate leadership styles.
    - Regularly reviewing the required changes to fully understand the feelings of and impact on the team.

External factors
- ➢ The external factors could include:
    - Economic.
    - Social.
    - Technological.
    - Legal.

Project implementation	P4. Explains how they use IT and software tools to support the needs of the organisation, including advances in technology, and use digital tools to	n/a

Theme & KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
K5 K7 K9 K12 K13 S5 S8 S9 S12 B3 B5 B6	analyse information and monitor performance and budgets to drive the implementation and delivery of plans and projects (K5, S8)	
	P5. Explains how they apply **project and financial management tools** and techniques to manage and deliver projects within budget and resource requirements, taking accountability and ownership of their own and the team's tasks and workload. (K7, K9, S5, B3)	D3. Evaluates the impact of the project and financial management techniques they have used to deliver projects within resource requirements, suggesting improvements to facilitate the success of future projects. (K7, K9, S5)
	P6. Outlines the **problem solving, decision making, influencing, and negotiating models and techniques** they used in the project. (K12, K13)	n/a
	P7. Explains how they work collaboratively with others to research, interpret, and analyse information which informs the implementation of business plans or projects. (S9, B6)	n/a
	P8. Explains how they work flexibly and adapt to change when managing continuous improvement and change for their team and organisation. (S12, B5)	D4. Evaluates their approach to managing continuous improvement and change within the project. (S12)

Amplification

Project management tools
- Tools such as Gantt charts, Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT) charts, Process flow charts, Critical path analysis, Product breakdown structure, Work breakdown structure, RACI matrix, Project Charter, Project initiation document (PID).

Time management tools
- Tools such as critical path analysis, creating short and medium-term plans, identifying key tasks, setting objectives, Eisenhower Matrix/ Method, Stephen R Covey 4 Quadrants, Flexi-working.

Financial management tools
- Manage budgeting such as how to plan and set an accurate budget, ensuring regular reporting and planning corrective actions where necessary; 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' methods, and use of reports such as Return on capital employed (ROCE) for new projects, stores or buildings, Sales, Margins, Costs, Delphi method, Project baseline.

Problem-solving techniques such as Problem/root cause analysis**,** Cause and effect**,** Theory of inventive problem solving (TRIZ), the central analytical tool of which is the algorithm of incentive problem solving (ARIZ).

Decision-making techniques such a**s** Evaluating 'pros and cons'**,** Decision trees**,** Paired comparison analysis and grid analysis.

Theme & KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Influencing techniques such as McKinsey's Change Management model, the Cohen-Bradford Influence model, Glaser's influencing model. **Negotiating techniques** such as the Win Win model, the Win Lose Model, the Lose Lose model, the RADPAC model.		
Evaluation and recommendations K1 K15 S1 S10	P9. Selects and applies different **communication techniques** and methods to present information to stakeholders. (K1, K15, S1)	n/a
	P10. Evaluates the impact of outcomes from organisational plans or projects to drive the decision-making process. (S10)	n/a
Amplification		
Communication techniques ➢ The different forms of communication that can be used, for example, verbal, non-verbal, written, visual, digital/electronic, presentation, email, memos, team briefing, or one to one meeting. They can be formal or informal. ➢ How to choose an appropriate communication form according to the situation and the reasons for choosing the communication form.		

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Key facts about the professional discussion

In the professional discussion an independent assessor and apprentice have a two-way formal conversation. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

This assessment method is being used because:

➢ It assesses KSBs holistically and objectively.
➢ It allows for assessment of KSBs that do not occur on a regular or predictable basis.
➢ It allows for assessment of responses where there are a range of potential answers.
➢ It can be conducted remotely, potentially reducing cost.

The purpose is to assess the apprentice's competence against the following themes:

➢ Managing and leading a team.
➢ Organisational governance.
➢ Operational planning.
➢ Stakeholder relationships.

The professional discussion assessment duration is **60 minutes** (+10% at the independent assessor's discretion to allow the apprentice to respond to a question if necessary).

The independent assessor must ask **a minimum of 6 questions**. Further questions may be asked for clarification purposes and to allow the apprentice the opportunity to cover the knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to this method of assessment. The independent assessor must use the questions from PAL's question bank or can create their own questions in line with PAL's training.

What is the format of the professional discussion?

The apprentice **must** have access to their portfolio of evidence during the professional discussion.

The independent assessor must have at **least 2 weeks** to review the supporting documentation.

PAL must give an apprentice at **least 2 weeks' notice** of the professional discussion.

The professional discussion must take place in a suitable venue selected by PAL with the employer for example, the employer's premises. The professional discussion can be conducted by video conferencing. PAL must verify the identity of the apprentice and ensure the apprentice is not being aided. The professional discussion should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence.

The apprentice may choose to end the assessment method early. The apprentice must be confident they have demonstrated competence against the assessment requirements for the assessment method. If the apprentice asks to end the assessment method early, the independent assessor:

- ➢ Must ensure the apprentice is fully aware of all assessment requirements.
- ➢ Cannot suggest or choose to end any assessment methods early (unless in an emergency).
- ➢ Is responsible for ensuring the apprentice understands the implications of ending an assessment early if they choose to do so.
- ➢ May suggest the assessment continues.
- ➢ Must document the apprentice's request to end any assessment early.

How can an Operations Manager prepare for the professional discussion?

- ➢ Practice undertaking discussions with their training provider, employer, and line manager.
- ➢ Practice discussions which cover a range of topics and areas of the standard, ensuring that they can provide full answers and specific examples of tasks/situations they have been involved in.
- ➢ Review terminology in the assessment plan and consider how this links to their role.
- ➢ Take time to reflect on their performance and identified how knowledge, skills and behaviours have been applied.

How will the professional discussion be graded?

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the pass descriptors for this method of assessment through their professional discussion responses.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve ALL of the distinction descriptors for this method of assessment through their professional discussion responses, AND all of the pass descriptors.

Please see Table 3 for the pass grading descriptors for this method of assessment, and amplification of the key terms.

Table 3: Professional Discussion Pass and Distinction Grading Criteria and Amplification

Theme and KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Managing and leading a team K4 K14 K16 K18	P1. Analyses **performance data** for individuals and teams to identify areas for improvement, continuous development requirements and learning needs. (K20, S4)	n/a

Theme and KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
K20 K24 S3 S4 S7 S19 S20 B1 B4	P2. Proactively seeks, manages, and facilitates learning opportunities and continuous professional development for themselves and their wider team. (S19, B4)	n/a
	P3. Evaluates how their use of **leadership and management tools and techniques** helps them to lead and manage a team ethically, set goals and accountabilities, and mediate and resolve any conflicts. (K14, K16, K18, S3, B1)	n/a
	P4. Outlines the **people management techniques** and collaborative activities they use to **coach, mentor**, and **motivate** individuals in their team to achieve organisational goals. (K4, K24, S7, S20)	D1. Critically evaluates their people management approach to motivating team members and individuals. (K4, S7) D2. Evaluates the impact coaching and mentoring techniques have on individuals in their team. (K24, S20)

Amplification

Performance data such as achievement/non-achievement of KPIs, sales targets, individual and/or team goals, performance reviews, feedback from stakeholders, self-assessment.

Leadership, management techniques and tools
 ➢ The ways in which an operations manager may provide guidance, direction and motivation to individuals and their team.
 ➢ Leadership theories and models, for example, Adair - leadership in action; Hersey and Blanchard - situational leadership; Tannenbaum and Schmidt - continuum of leadership; Lewin – autocratic democratic, laissez faire; Fiedler - contingency theory.
 ➢ How leadership styles can be used to respond effectively to different situations. Aspects that need to be considered when selecting an appropriate leadership style:
   • The type of work.
   • Time and resource constraints.
   • Individual/team style.
   • Organisational culture and environment.
 ➢ Performance management techniques and their purpose including:
   • Setting of SMART objectives.
   • How to conduct an individual performance appraisal in line with organisational requirements.
   • How to ensure performance management processes are conducted fairly and objectively.
   • How to ensure all performance is reviewed using effective, valid and reliable information/data.
   • How to use formal and informal assessment to review performance.
   • How to ensure that all processes are two way and involve both parties.

People Management techniques to coach, mentor, and motivate
 ➢ Providing constructive feedback to individuals and teams to inform them what is going well and what needs to be improved, potentially including options for how improvements could be made.
 ➢ Motivation techniques and models, for example, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's hygiene factors, McGregor's theory X and theory Y, Vroom's Expectancy Theory.
 ➢ How coaching can support individuals in the workplace.
 ➢ The range of benefits that individual coaching can bring to the workplace (improved performance, empowerment, personal development, engagement).

Theme and KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
	- Coaching models, from [5]GROW; OSCAR, ARROW, FUEL - note in the majority of cases, GROW will be the model the apprentice is familiar with, and this is acceptable. - The potential and impact on of coaching and the simple differences between coaching, mentoring and training.	
Organisational governance K2 K3 K22 S6 S11	P5. Applies organisational policies and procedures, and relevant **regulatory and legislative requirements** while considering their impact on the team, the individual, their role, and the organisation, and interprets and communicates the practical implications of these for stakeholders. (K2, K22, S11)	n/a
	P6. Proactively applies organisational policies and legislative guidelines to lead and influence the team and individuals to support an inclusive culture of **equity, diversity**, and the promotion of well-being. (K3, S6)	D3. Evaluates their approach to supporting, delivering, and promoting **equity, diversity, inclusion**, and wellbeing in terms of impact on the workplace. (K3, S6)
Amplification		
Regulatory and legislative requirements - Legislation and regulations such as the Equality Act 2018, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Disciplinary and Grievance procedures, Working Time Regulations 1998, the Employment Rights Act 1996. - How legislation and regulations are applied in the workplace. - Compliance with organisation procedures. **Equity, diversity, and inclusion** - What is meant by equity, diversity and inclusion in a workplace context? How equality, diversity and inclusion differ. - Codes of practice regarding how to treat people equally in the workplace. Diversity issues that arise in the workplace and how these may be managed. Approaches for creating an inclusive workplace.		
Operational planning K19 K21 K23 K25 S13 S14 S18 S21	P7. Analyses and prioritises organisational activities in response to the operating environment and the impact this has on their role. (K19, S13)	n/a
	P8. Justifies the **business continuity principles** they apply to ensure the uninterrupted operation of critical functions. (K21, S14)	D4. Evaluates the extent to which business continuity principles they apply have ensured the uninterrupted operation of critical functions. (K21, S14)
	P9. Explains how organisation policies and practices were followed to deliver sustainable services and solutions which enable the organisation to respond to changes in social, economic, and environmental factors. (K23, S18)	D5. Evaluates the extent to which organisation policies and practices followed to deliver sustainable services and solutions enabled the organisation to respond to changes in social, economic, and environmental factors. (K23, S18)

---

[5] **GROW**- Goals; Reality; Options; Way Forward   **OSCAR** Outcome; Situation; Choices/Consequences; Actions; Review **FUEL** Frame conversation, Understand current state, Explore desired state, Lay-out a success plan **ARROW** Aims, Reality, Reality, Reflection, Options, Way forward

Theme and KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
	P10. Evaluates the degree to which operational plans they have developed and implemented align with the strategic direction of the organisation. (K25, S21)	n/a

Amplification

Business continuity principles such as performing a business impact analysis, identifying recovery strategies and recovery time objectives, building a business continuity plan, risk assessments, incident management.

Social sustainability such as the impact an organisation can have on communities and on the quality of life of people.

Economic sustainability such as the financial health of the organisation and the levels of customer confidence.

Environmental sustainability such as the use of natural resources and the impact the organisation can have on the ecosystem and the well-being of the planet.

Theme and KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Distinction Descriptors
Stakeholder relationships S17 B2	P11. Explains how they manage relationships across multiple and diverse stakeholders, ensuring they are treated fairly, inclusively and with respect. (S17, B2)	D6. Evaluates the impact of their approach to managing stakeholder relationships and recommends improvements. (S17, B2)

Amplification

Ways of **managing stakeholder relationships** may include communication strategies, monitoring the impact any change could have on stakeholders, and having systems in place to receive and review feedback from stakeholders.

Section 5

Fails/resits and retakes

PAL's resit and retake policy and pricing policy are available on request. The request can be made by contacting the account management team via email on info@professionalassessment.co.uk.

The apprentice, employer and provider will be advised of the outcomes, and our policy works on the specific standard assessment plan's requirements regarding resits and retakes.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which applies to assignments or other types of written or recorded work completed by apprentices, where the work is meant to have been produced independently and be of their design. Plagiarism is the substantial, unacknowledged incorporation into an apprentice's work of materials derived from published or unpublished work by another person.

PAL takes all incidents of plagiarism seriously, especially those incidents which are a determined and deliberate attempt by the apprentice to gain marks for an assignment/project/report without having done a substantial portion of the work themselves. Copying of work can include work from external published sources, as well as that of other apprentices and work colleagues.

PAL's plagiarism and cheating policy can be accessed on the PAL website or by request to info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Appeals, complaints, maladministration, and malpractice polices - centre/candidate

Where apprentices are unhappy with the results of their end-point assessment, the customer (either the employer or provider) can enquire about the results. An enquiry means that PAL will invoke its Appeals and Disputes policy and procedure. Please refer to our latest emails.

To make an appeal, please contact: epaappeals@rofessionalassessment.co.uk

To declare a conflict of interest, please contact: declaration@professionalassessment.co.uk

To report a case of malpractice or maladministration please use one of the following addresses:

➢ If it relates to the EPAO, please contact: epamalpractice@professionalassessment.co.uk

➢ If it relates to the apprentice, please contact: apprenticemalpractice@professionalassessment.co.uk

➢ If it relates to the employer or provider, please contact: eitpmalpractice@professionalassessment.co.uk

Note - access to these emails received under these addresses is restricted to personnel involved in compliance checks.

In the event of an appeal against the grade awarded PAL will carry out a further review of the evidence to confirm or modify the grade in line with their standard procedures.

Maladministration generally refers to a system or administrative mistake or failure, which has the potential or does not affect the assessment process and as such is reportable.

Malpractice is a grave offence and where proven will result in immediate sanctions, disciplinary action and possible dismissal and notification to the regulator, notifying them of the malpractice and action taken. Malpractice is the term applied to any intentional and planned act to alter an assessment or quality assurance decision by changing/removing/not recording accurately or augmenting information.

PAL's Maladministration and Malpractice policy can be accessed on the PAL website or by request to info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Reasonable adjustments/considerations/adaptations

Where reasonable adjustments have been requested, the assessor at the assessment planning meeting will finalise any such arrangements. Discussions regarding a special consideration request should be made at registration and discussed with the EPA team. It is the responsibility of the provider or employer, acting on behalf of the apprentice, to make such requests.

Special considerations in respect of the assessment process will be applied, where it does not provide any fair or unfair advantage to the individual apprentice and subsequent assessment outcome and in line with PAL's policy.

PAL's Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustment policy is in place to ensure fair access to assessment and can be accessed on the PAL website or by request to info@professionalassessment.co.uk

Certification

PAL will request the apprenticeship certificate for successful end-point assessments using the Apprenticeship service portal. PAL does not certificate the apprenticeship standard; its role is to request the certificate.

PAL will provide information and reports to the relevant regulator and funding body, in line with their conditions, and as and when requested. Notification to these bodies includes successful achievements and completions. Incomplete assessments are recorded.

Certification requests are made by PAL and the current process is the certificate is sent to the named employer. Employers must advise the EPAO of any specific location or person the certificate should be sent to if this information differs from the apprentice's workplace location and employer contact details provider on the EPAO's booking system.

Cancelling or rescinding results - PAL reserves the right to cancel results if malpractice is identified.

Validity, Authenticity, Relevancy, Currency, and Sufficiency

The evidence presented must be meet VARCS requirements.

- **Valid** - is the evidence appropriate to demonstrate the particular knowledge, skills and/or behaviours that it is intended to cover?
- **Authentic** - is the evidence proven to be the apprentice's own work; have any work products or witness testimonies been appropriately authenticated?
- **Relevant** - Is the evidence relevant to the particular knowledge, skills and/or behaviours that it is intended to cover and has a clear judgement?
- **Current** - does the evidence relate to the on programme element of the apprenticeship and does it demonstrate current competency?
- **Sufficient** - does the evidence match the level of the apprenticeship standard and is the relevant standard covered in full?

Glossary of Terms

EPA - end-point assessment.

IA - independent assessor.

Employer – A representative from the employer, this is usually a direct line manager, head chef or appropriate nominate representative who has supported the apprentice during their apprenticeship.

Gateway review – A meeting involving the apprentice, employer and on programme trainer where the readiness for end-point assessment is determined.

Planning meeting – A meeting involving the apprentice, employer and end-point assessor where the end-point assessments are clarified and planned.

PAL – Professional Assessment Limited.

IQA - Internal quality assurance/assurer, the department and/or personnel who are responsible for the quality of end-point assessment internally to Professional Assessment.

EQA – External quality assurance/assurer, the independent external body who are responsible to regulate the quality of end-point assessment plans, standards, and administration of assessment.

Standardisation/moderation – Activity completed by end-point assessors to support validity and fairness in end-point assessment decisions.

Special considerations – Any permanent or temporary disability, specific learning needs or medical condition which may require support during end-point assessment.

Reasonable adjustments – Adjustments made to the assessment process in relation to special considerations, which do not provide an unfair advantage to the apprentice but are designed to reduce any disadvantages within assessment.

Assessment plan – The document produced by the employer group, approved by the EQA which documents the requirements of the standard and assessment methods.

Appendix 1 – Gateway Declaration Record for Operations Manager ST0385 v1.4

All information received will be processed as per GDPR requirements and as detailed in Professional Assessment Ltd.'s (PAL) Data Protection Policy and Data Privacy Notice.

Please ensure the apprentice's name is spelled accurately as this is how it will appear on the results statement/ certificate.

Apprentice Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	Apprentice Contact Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Apprentice ULN	Click or tap here to enter text.	Apprentice Email Address	Click or tap here to enter text.
Direct Line Manager Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	Direct Line Manager Contact Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Direct Line Manager Email Address	Click or tap here to enter text.	Employer Organisation	Click or tap here to enter text.
Start Date of Apprenticeship	Click or tap to enter a date.	Gateway Review Date	Click or tap to enter a date.
Has the apprentice had any Breaks in Learning (BIL)?	Yes ☐ No ☐	BIL Start Date	Click or tap to enter a date.
		BIL End Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

Section 1: Confirmation of Evidence and Reasonable Adjustments

All requirements listed below must be uploaded to EPAPro at point of submitting the apprentice to gateway. Apprentices will not be permitted to proceed to their end-point assessment until all evidence is uploaded and approved by PAL.

Requirement	Evidence available
English as per ESFA funding rules	Yes ☐ No ☐
Maths as per ESFA funding rules	Yes ☐ No ☐
Does the apprentice have an exception to the regular English and maths minimum requirements which is a barrier to them achieving the English and/or maths requirements as per ESFA funding rules? Evidence of a thorough and evidence-based assessment will be required that demonstrates that even with support, reasonable adjustments to the learning programme, and stepping stone qualifications, the apprentice will not be able to achieve the regular English and maths requirements	English - Yes ☐ No ☐ Maths - Yes ☐ No ☐
Does the apprentice require a reasonable adjustment specifically for end-point assessment? (In addition to any adjustments for on-programme learning)	Yes ☐ No ☐
Portfolio of evidence completed	Yes ☐ No ☐
Fully completed portfolio mapping record, including employer and apprentice signed statement validating the portfolio evidence	Yes ☐ No ☐

On-Programme Project Confirmation	
Prior to Gateway, has the apprentice completed an on-programme project, which will form the basis of their written project report in the EPA? Note – **no** evidence of the project is required for submission at Gateway.	Yes ☐ No ☐

Section 2: Declaration

Employer and Training Provider Declaration

➢ I confirm the evidence has been reviewed and a Gateway meeting has taken place with the apprentice, employer, and training provider to confirm the apprentice's competence and readiness for end-point assessment.

➢ I confirm that the apprentice has developed, demonstrated, and achieved the required level of occupational knowledge, skills, and behaviours to satisfy the Gateway requirements in their workplace.

➢ I confirm that the apprentice is eligible for end-point assessment by undertaking the required training in line with the specific Apprenticeship Standard's requirements, including on and off the job training and experience to meet the full breadth and depth of the Apprenticeship Standard.

➢ I confirm that the assessment environments, including areas where exam conditions can be observed, have been identified and agreed.

➢ I confirm that reasonable adjustment requests have been submitted where appropriate to the apprentice.

Employer		Training Provider	
Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	**Name**	Click or tap here to enter text.
*Signature	Click or tap here to enter text.	***Signature**	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date	Click or tap to enter a date.	**Date**	Click or tap to enter a date.

Apprentice Declaration

➢ I confirm my readiness for the end-point assessment has been discussed with my employer and training provider.

➢ I confirm I am aware of the requirements of the end-point assessment.

➢ I give PAL, as the end-point assessment organisation, my consent to claim the Apprenticeship certificate on my behalf on successful completion of the end-point assessment.

Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Signature	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date	Click or tap to enter a date.

*Supporting evidence to be submitted for electronic signatures, e.g., email confirmation, voice recording.