

HR EPAs Grading Guidance

Issue 1

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Introduction

This document outlines how the grades are awarded to the apprentice based on the scoring of the two assessment methods of end-point assessment (EPA), the Consultative Project (CP) and the Professional Discussion (PD) for the Level 3 HR Support and Level 5 HR Consultant Partner standards.

The assessments for the HR apprenticeship standards are rigorous and require a score of at least 3 in 100% of the components to achieve a pass. This is for both the CP & PD where the apprentices must demonstrate all the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) outlined in the standards.

EPA Grade

The EPA outcome for the HR Apprenticeships has three potential grades.

Fail
Pass
Distinction

Fail – this means the assessor has not yet seen sufficient evidence against all of the components of the standard. Apprentices will need to *resit or **retake the EPA in order to complete their apprenticeship.

Pass - indicates apprentices are occupationally competent and they have provided evidence of the required KSB in the standards and is a huge achievement. This is regarded as a significant achievement due to the requirement to reach a minimum of 3 in all components.

Distinction – indicates that apprentices consistently exceed the standards set for the role. This grade recognises the small proportion of apprentices who have provided evidence that is outstanding and consistently exceeds the required standard for competence.

*Resit – the repeat of an end-point assessment activity where only one EPA (either the consultative project or the professional discussion) has been failed and where additional learning does not take place.

**Retake – the repeat of the entire EPA where:

- (a) the apprentice has failed both the consultative project and the professional discussion, or
- (b) the apprentice has failed their second resit of an EPA.

For further information please refer to the Resit /Retake policy in the HR toolkit.

Assessment Methods

The EPAs for the HR Standards have two assessment methods:

- Consultative Project
- Professional Discussion

Each assessment method is graded Fail, Pass or Distinction, just like the overall EPA. The grade for the assessment methods are then used to calculate the overall EPA grade.

The table shows how the overall EPA grade is calculated:

Consultative Project	Professional Discussion	EPA Grade
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction
Distinction	Pass	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail

To achieve a Distinction overall, an apprentice needs to achieve a Distinction in both assessment methods.

To achieve an Pass overall, the apprentice must achieve at least a Pass in both assessment methods.

A fail in either assessment method will mean a fail overall and the apprentice will need to resit that assessment method.

For example, if an apprentice fails the CP but passes the PD, they will only need to resit the CP and will bank the grade for the PD.

Due to the nature of the resit process, the highest mark awarded at resit is an overall pass.

Scoring the Assessment Methods

The scoring used for the two assessment methods is from a scale of 0-5. A score of 3 indicates that the apprentice has presented evidence at the level expected. Scores of 4 or 5 are achieved when an apprentice provides extensive range of evidence and/or demonstrates an exceedingly high level of competence. To score a 5 an apprentice needs to present a wide range of evidence at a level that demonstrated exceptional competence.

This table shows the scoring scale 0-5:

0	The apprentice provided no evidence against this component
1-2	Apprentice provides partial evidence
3	Apprentice provides sufficient evidence and meets the requirements
4-5	Apprentice provides extensive range of evidence/demonstrates high level of competence or exceedingly high-level competence.

Grading each Assessment Methods

This table shows how each assessment method is graded based on the scores for each component.

Assessment Method	To achieve a Pass	To achieve a Distinction
Consultative Project	Score 60-84% and Score a minimum of 3 across all components	Score 85% and above Score a minimum of 3 across all components Level 3 HR Support: Score 4 or 5 in all 6 distinction components Level 5 HR Consultant Partner: Score 4 or 5 in all 8 distinction components
Professional Discussion	Score 60-84% and Score a minimum of 3 across all components including any components transferred from CP to PD	Score 85% and above Score a minimum of 3 across all components including any components transferred from CP to PD Level 3 HR Support: Score 4 or 5 in all 6 distinction components Level 5 HR Consultant Partner Score 4 or 5 in all 4 distinction components

Please refer to Appendix 1 & 2 for details of the distinction components

Scores and Grades

Pass

At pass grade the apprentice is deemed to be occupationally competent.

The apprentice who achieves a pass can be describe as

- Consistently meeting the standards set for the role.

The expectations of what a score of 3 looks like for each component are outlined in the assessment standard. Where appropriate, we have provided further expansion in the grading amplification documents for both levels 3 & 5.

Distinction

The assessment plan outlines what is expected to achieve a distinction. Distinction has been designed to recognise the small proportion of apprentices who are seen as outstanding apprentices 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 KSBs required to be occupationally competent and achieve a pass are outlined in the apprenticeship standard and are expanded on in the grading amplification. In order to achieve a distinction, apprentices need to consistently present evidence with greater breadth and depth.

Examples Level 3

Consultative Project

Below are examples of how apprentices can meet and exceed expectations in breadth and depth for a component in the Consultative Project.

Example 1 - Pass

L3 CP/S1.3 Uses agreed systems and processes to deliver service to customers.

We normally expect to see sufficient demonstration of skills required to tailor and adapt HR service delivery to meet different requirements of the business within the remit of their HR role. This could be supporting employees and managers on HR policy understanding, contracts, guiding on HR processes, etc.

Example 2 - Distinction

L3 CP/S1.3 Uses agreed systems and processes to deliver service to customers.

We normally expect to see clear evidence to show how the apprentice applies the skills needed for agreed systems and processes to deliver HR services to customers such as employees, managers, stakeholders or others. The range is not exhaustive but could include Service Level Agreements, Standard Operational Procedures, traditionally agreed approaches by way of providing a complete satisfactory service on people related issues and HR advice. Explanation should be considered to show how expectations are achieved to maintain acceptable performance standards and address and correct minimum standards as shown by metrics.

Professional Discussion

Below are examples of how apprentices can meet and exceed expectations in breadth and depth for a component in the Professional Discussion.

Example 1 - Pass

Level 3/ PD S3.1 Deals effectively with customers / colleagues, using sound interpersonal skills and communicating well through a range of media e.g., phone, face to face, email, internet. Adapts their style to their audience.

We would normally expect the response to capture how the apprentice applies effective communications and interpersonal skills to customers - which could be employees, line managers, senior leaders, external clients etc through a range of media. In addition, how the apprentice adapts their style to their audience, for example, differentiate the difference between communicating with a work colleague which might be friendly, helpful, conducted in a less formal relaxed tone. For line managers it might be conducted in a professional manner, to the point, information and advice giving, updating, advice on dealing with conflict, etc.

Example 2 - Distinction

Level 3/ PD S3.1 Deals effectively with customers / colleagues, using sound interpersonal skills and communicating well through a range of media e.g. phone, face to face, email, internet. Adapts their style to their audience.

The apprentice presents the evidence in a confident manner by capturing all of the pass qualities but includes further differentiation between the communication skills and attributes applied against examples given which might include, dependant on the answer: command of basic facts, relevant professional knowledge, sensitivity to events, social skills needed for each situation, emotional resilience, etc. It might also include for face-to-face, online meetings, professionalism, sound preparation and command of the facts, semiotics, body language.

Examples Level 5

Consultative Project

Below are examples of how apprentices can meet and exceed expectations in breadth and depth for a component in the Consultative Project.

Example 1 - Pass

L5 CP/ K1.1 Good understanding across all HR disciplines, HR legislation and an excellent working knowledge of the organisations HR policies and procedures.

We normally expect to see... A sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding that explains the main areas of HR activity with explanation of these across the HR function. The apprentice needs to explain the range of HR practices that operate within their organisation and include how the overall HR strategy defines direction of the HR policies, practices and how related employment law compliance is maintained and delivered to the employees of the organisation.

Example 2 - Distinction

L5 CP/ K1.1 Good understanding across all HR disciplines, HR legislation and an excellent working knowledge of the organisations HR policies and procedures.

We would expect to see a thorough depth of knowledge and understanding in highlighting the main areas of HR activity and practices in the apprentice's organisation. This is likely to vary and will be dependent on the HR system that is employed but it needs to include detail of the overall HR architecture or function. This could include practices of how the organisation deploys HR in resourcing, learning and development, performance and reward, employee relations. Wider approaches to encompass how engagement, well-being, metrics, corporate social responsibility, ethics and communications would be also considered. Underpinning this would be clear and systematic explanation of how the HR strategies, policies, relevant laws and practices, beyond just those highlighted in the consultative project, support the organisation's employees to achieve its business capability performance.

Professional Discussion

Below are examples of how apprentices can meet and exceed expectations in breadth and depth for a component in the Professional Discussion.

Example 1 - Pass

Level 5 PD 7.1 Builds effective working relationships with business managers (using the language of the business), peers and other HR functions, together with relevant external organisations

We would normally expect the response to capture how the apprentice demonstrates effective working relationships with line and senior managers, colleagues and other HR functions which could be internally or externally. The response needs to explain how they collaborate and apply social skills and abilities whilst using relevant professional knowledge with stakeholders to show how they build and form successful professional relationships and partnerships.

Example 2 - Distinction

Level 5 PD 7.1 Builds effective working relationships with business managers (using the language of the business), peers and other HR functions, together with relevant external organisations

The apprentice presents the evidence in a lucid and confident manner by capturing all of the pass qualities but includes examples across the range of internal or external stakeholders that the apprentice deals with. Clearly explains how working relationships are formed and maintained through sound interpersonal skills and attributes whilst demonstrating meta qualities that could include creativity, mental agility, self-knowledge, balanced learning habits and skills.

Appendix 1 Level 3

The table below outlines the Level 3 Consultative Project distinction components.

If an apprentice has scored 85% or more and achieved scores higher than '3' in the following components, they will achieve a distinction.

Component Title	Code	Description
Business Understanding	K1.1	Understands the external market and sector within which their organisation operates, the products and services it delivers.
Service Delivery	S1.1	Delivers excellent customer service on a range of HR queries and requirements, providing solutions, advice and support primarily to managers.
	S1.3	Uses agreed systems and processes to deliver service to customers.
	S1.4	Takes the initiative to meet agreed individual and team KPIs in line with company policy, values, standards.
	S1.5	Plans and organises their work, often without direct supervision, to meet commitments and KPIs.
Problem Solving	S2.1	Uses sound questioning and active listening skills to understand requirements and establish root causes before developing HR solutions.

The table below outlines the Level 3 Professional Discussion distinction components.

If an apprentice has scored 85% or more and achieved scores higher than '3' in the following components, they will achieve a distinction.

Component Title	Code	Description
Communication & Interpersonal	S3.1	Deals effectively with customers / colleagues, using sound interpersonal skills and communicating well through a range of media e.g. phone, face to face, email, internet. Adapts their style to their audience.
Teamwork	S4.1	Consistently supports colleagues / collaborates within the team and HR to achieve results
	S4.2	Builds / maintains strong working relationships with others in the team and across HR where necessary
Honesty and Integrity	B1.1	Truthful, sincere and trustworthy in their actions. Shows integrity by doing the right thing.
Flexibility	B2.1	Adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns when new tasks need to be done or requirements change.
Resilience	B3.2	Deals positively with setbacks as they occur. Stays positive when under pressure

Appendix 2 Level 5

The table below outlines the Level 5 Consultative Project distinction components.

If an apprentice has scored 85% or more and achieved scores higher than '3' in the following components, they will achieve a distinction.

Component Title	Code	Description
HR Technical Expertise	K1.3	Up to date with best practice and emerging thinking – able to use this in their dealings with the business.
HR Consultancy	S1.1	Develops and delivers HR solutions to the business that are appropriate to the organisational context.
	S1.2	Influences leaders and managers to adopt appropriate solutions.
	S1.3	Provides tailored HR services to the business as required by their role.
	S1.4	Contributes to the development of relevant HR policies and procedures and / or HR initiatives.
Providing Support and Advice	S2.2	Makes sound judgements based on business need, ensuring the business operates within the boundaries of employment law.
Contributes to Business Change	S3.1	Leads the HR contribution to business projects and change programmes to support positive behavioural, business or organisational change.
Building HR Capability	S4.1	Leads the improvement of people capability within the business or own team.

The table below outlines the Level 5 Professional Discussion distinction components.

If an apprentice has scored 85% or more and achieved scores higher than '3' in the following components, they will achieve a distinction.

Component Title	Code	Description
Personal Development	S6.3	Plans their own development; shows commitment to the job and the profession.
Relationship Management	S7.1	Builds effective working relationships with business managers (using the language of the business), peers and other HR functions, together with relevant external organisations.
	S7.2	Communicates confidently with people at all levels, including senior management.
Flexibility	B1.1	Adapts positively to changing work priorities and patterns, ensuring key business and HR deadlines continue to be met.
	B1.2	Curious about HR/business trends and developments, incorporating them into their work.