

Assessment philosophy for the certificate-level programmes (for educational centres)

1 Philosophy, level and positioning of the CIPD Professional Standards at certificate level

These Standards attempt to answer the question 'What is a CIPD professional?' The CIPD's Professional Standards are an articulation of the knowledge and competence required to undertake a professional personnel or training and development role. The 'business partner' role represents a model to which CIPD professionals should aspire. In the future, roles will not exist for people who are not able to add value to the business objectives of the organisations for which they work. The level of the qualification has been compared both with those of other professional bodies and with development opportunities in other countries around the world.

2 Certificate-level programmes

There are four alternative routes for those entering the HR profession at the support level. The certificate-level programmes reflect the range of job roles for support staff:

- Certificate in Personnel Practice
- Certificate in Training Practice
- Certificate in Recruitment and Selection
- Certificate in Employment Relations, Law and Practice.

These educational programmes, based on the CIPD's Professional Standards, provide the route whereby the majority of new members of the Institute at support level gain their certificate qualifications. The certificate

programmes aim to produce people who meet in full the Standards defined by the Institute, both:

- the operational indicators, which state clearly what practitioners must be able to do, and
- the knowledge indicators, which state what practitioners must be able to understand and explain.

Personnel and development is an open-access profession, and the certificate-level programmes represent a valuable mechanism, enabling entrance into the profession to meet the standards required in business and commerce for those who wish to operate in the management and development of people.

3 Assessment philosophy

The philosophy of assessment of the certificate programmes is to assess whether candidates have demonstrated that they have met the Standards specified by the Institute. The aim of the programmes is not only to enable individuals to achieve effective and efficient performance in their current roles, but also to prepare them for continuing professional development.

4 Principles of assessment

In order to ensure that consistency of assessment is maintained across all centres, the following three principles are central:

- There must be some external assessment in any programme leading to the CIPD certificate

Standards – the external assessment of the project proposal.

- The assessment must stretch across the range of the certificate-level Standards.
- While the programme is a development programme which enables considerable personal growth, no centre should compromise the validity of the assessment by providing inappropriate guidance or other advantage to individual candidates to enable them to meet the CIPD Standards.

5 The level of the assessment

The certificate-level programmes are set and assessed at a technical level – level 3 in the National Qualifications Framework – and the criteria that all candidates are expected to meet are:

- understanding and knowledge as defined within the Standards in the specific area defined
- an understanding of the techniques of the profession
- an ability to critically evaluate both their own organisation and details reported in other organisations.

Assessment for certificate programmes includes the following:

- All candidates must complete a minimum of four work-based or work-related assignments. Two of them should be written and two skills-based. The written assignments should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words.

- All candidates must complete a work-based or work-related project that is written up using a management report style of 3,000 to 3,500 words. They should prepare a project proposal, including the terms of reference and an action plan. These proposals will be assessed by the external moderators based on set assessment criteria.
- All candidates must maintain a CPD/learning log and development plan.
- All candidates must compile a portfolio to include all assessments and feedback and any other relevant material.

We will expect centres to emphasise:

- assessment of knowledge and understanding
- assessment of skills under simulated conditions
- the ability to apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a workplace environment.

Assessment criteria can be found in the *Moderation Handbook*.

6 Consistency of assessment across centres

With the introduction of the new Standards there has been a change to the national moderation process. External moderators are appointed to centres by the CIPD on a regional basis and undertake the role under the direction of regional and chief moderators to ensure that all centres meet the Institute's Standards.

Assessment across all centres includes:

- external assessment of the project proposal by the external moderator against set criteria, which brings an important element of externality to the assessment process
- internal assessment – locally set and marked assignments and a project, which are moderated by the external moderator.

7 Barriers to the achievement of the CIPD Standards

Some of the most common shortcomings in assessed work exhibit some of the following features:

- excessive reliance on perspectives acquired from a single sector or single organisation
- lack of awareness of up-to-date developments in the management and development of people
- uncritical acceptance of the status quo
- an inability to relate learning acquired to business and corporate purposes.

8 Programme delivery

The content of the programme must cover the Standards as detailed in this publication.

- You must provide a minimum of 120 tutor contact hours, and candidates should spend an additional minimum 120 on

individual study.

- You must provide opportunities for the development and assessment of skills. In the case of programmes offered only in the evenings there needs to be extended learning opportunities, ie one to two full days, to support the development of core skills.
- Tutorial time should be embedded into programme delivery but excluded from the 120 taught hours.

9 Skills development

A major objective of certificate-level programmes is to develop students' operational competence and confidence as well as to provide a basis for future development. It is therefore essential that the knowledge gained is supplemented by the inclusion of core skills that will be required by entrants to the profession at a support level. The development of core skills should proceed as an integral part of the study programme and should lead naturally from the study of the relevant theory and practice.

In order to provide the opportunity to develop and practise these skills, sufficient programme time should be allocated to skills development, which should in turn be supported by tutorial coaching and feedback.