End-Point Assessment
Improvement Leader Level 6 (V1.0)
Support Pack

nqual.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the requirements, advice and guidance for the End-Point Assessment (EPA) of the Improvement Leader Level 6 apprenticeship standard. This document is designed for apprentices, employers and training providers involved within the End-Point Assessment of an apprentice studying the Improvement Leader standard.

An apprentice for Improvement Leader Level 6 should typically spend 14 - 18 months on programme and must spend at least 12 months on programme. The EPA must be completed within 20 weeks of meeting the EPA gateway requirements.

This support pack is divided into sections covering all the relevant aspects of EPA for the Improvement Leader Level 6.
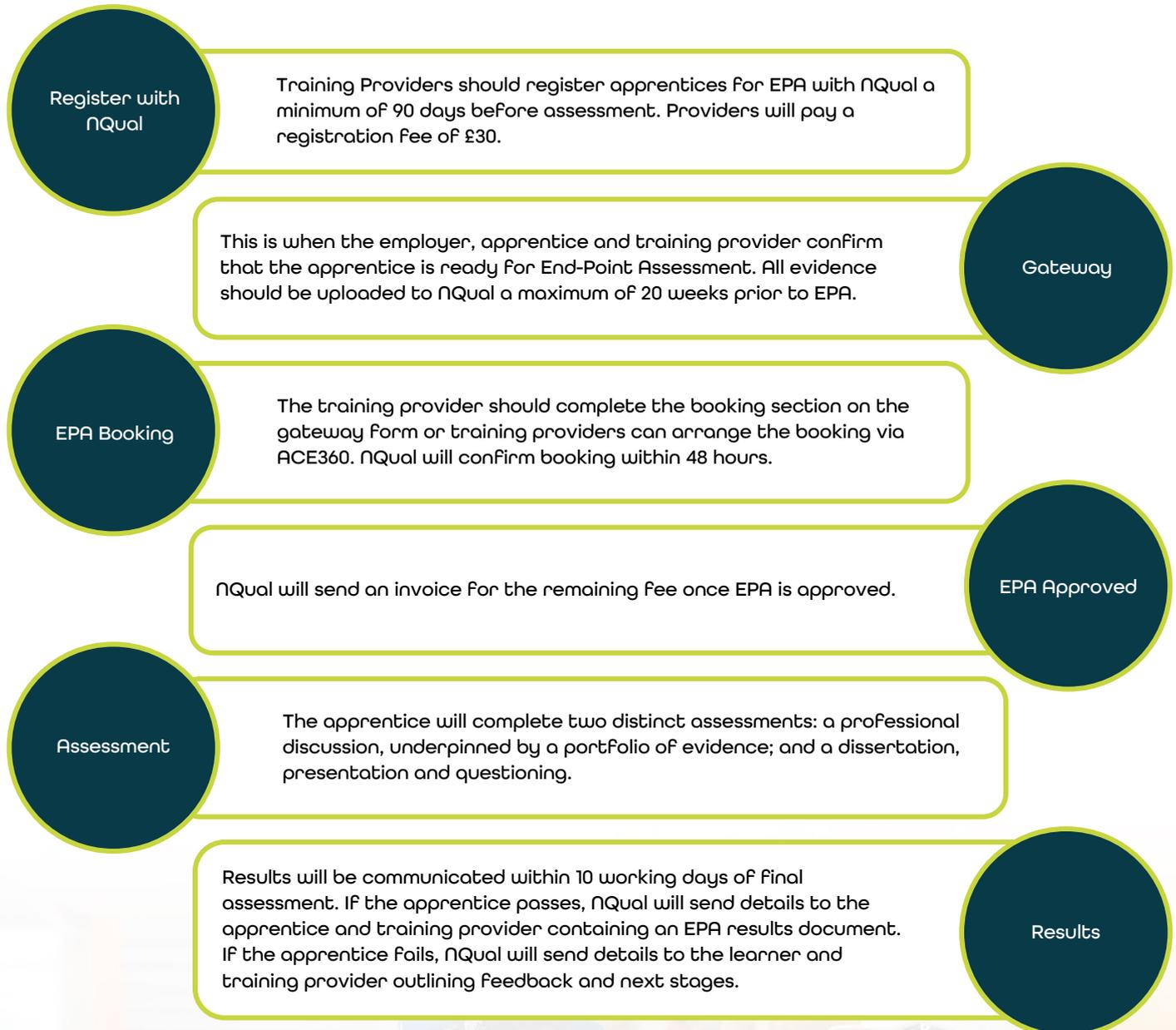
Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact admin@nqual.co.uk

Within this guide you will find references to End-Point Assessments. This information has been outlined in the Skills England Improvement Leader Level 6 Assessment Plan. For reference, you can find this document by clicking below:

Improvement Leader L6 EPA Plan (Skills England)

EPA TIMESCALE

Register with NQual

Training Providers should register apprentices for EPA with NQual a minimum of 90 days before assessment. Providers will pay a registration fee of £30.

This is when the employer, apprentice and training provider confirm that the apprentice is ready for End-Point Assessment. All evidence should be uploaded to NQual a maximum of 20 weeks prior to EPA.

Gateway

EPA Booking

The training provider should complete the booking section on the gateway form or training providers can arrange the booking via ACE360. NQual will confirm booking within 48 hours.

NQual will send an invoice for the remaining fee once EPA is approved.

EPA Approved

Assessment

The apprentice will complete two distinct assessments: a professional discussion, underpinned by a portfolio of evidence; and a dissertation, presentation and questioning.

Results will be communicated within 10 working days of final assessment. If the apprentice passes, NQual will send details to the apprentice and training provider containing an EPA results document. If the apprentice fails, NQual will send details to the learner and training provider outlining feedback and next stages.

Results

GATEWAY

This section outlines the requirements an apprentice must have met in order to complete their End-Point Assessment.

Once the employer is fully satisfied that the apprentice has the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out within this standard, the employer can formally confirm that the apprentice is ready for EPA via the Gateway.

Gateway requirements for Improvement Leader Level 6 outline the apprentice must have:

- **Achieved maths and English in line with funding rules**
- **Submitted a portfolio of evidence**
- **Submitted a dissertation title, rationale and scope that has been agreed by both their employer and NQual (at Gateway)**

The Gateway form must be sent to NQual a maximum of 20 weeks before End-Point Assessment is carried out, along with the evidence listed above.

All EPA activity must be completed within 20 weeks of meeting Gateway requirements.

You can access the NQual Gateway form by emailing: *admin@nqual.co.uk*

*For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeships English and mathematics minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 and British Sign Language qualification are an alternative to English qualifications for those whom this is their primary language

PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

As part of the apprenticeship, apprentices are required to prepare a Portfolio of Evidence which will be developed on programme to demonstrate their practice in achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) associated with the Professional Discussion. The evidence requirements for the Improvement Leader Level 6 standard are very specific, and apprentices <u>must</u> ensure that their Portfolio of Evidence includes the following:

- A minimum of one set of evidence for each of the topic areas assessed by the Professional Discussion, as shown in the End-Point Assessment Methods Table (page8).

   - This evidence <u>must</u> be directly relevant to the KSBs being assessed, such as, for example, Minitab screen shots of regression analysis, coaching reports and a one page summary from the Lean strategy

- Evidence relating to the preparation and delivery of a training session which can have been delivered during the on-programme phase of the apprenticeship with Level 5 learning outcomes linked to one or two improvement topics.

   - The training session <u>must</u> cover a subject selected from the following list: Project and Change Management, Lean Principles and Tools, Measurement System Analysis and Data Collection Planning, Graphical Analysis and Statistical Analysis, Data Transformation and Process Capability, Experimentation, Optimisation and Modelling, Failure Mode Avoidance

   - The training materials must be prepared by the apprentice. They must not deliver published training material prepared by someone else and this requirement will be authenticated by a signed statement provided by the apprentice's employer which must be included in the portfolio

   - The training session must be delivered to a group of Level 5 delegates in their normal working environment and last 45-50 minutes in duration

   - A continuous video recording of the session must be included in the portfolio of evidence

   - Training materials may include for example PowerPoint presentation, lesson plan, training notes, photographs of white boards, handouts, flipcharts

   - All training materials and records of delegate feedback must be included in the portfolio of evidence

- The evidence must be mapped holistically to ensure complete coverage against the KSBs for the Professional Discussion, as shown in the End Point Assessment Methods Table below

- Apprentices should focus on the quality of evidence rather than quantity

- The evidence must be generated by the apprentice (either independently or in a team-based environment) with the apprentice's role and that of a team clearly identified and authenticated by a signed statement provided by the apprentice's employer, which should be included in the portfolio of evidence

- The portfolio of evidence will be used to underpin the Professional Discussion in the EPA and is not assessed as part of the EPA

- The completed Portfolio of Evidence is a Gateway requirement and must be uploaded at Gateway for NQual to review and prepare for the EPA

COMPONENTS OF END-POINT ASSESSMENT

The Improvement Leader standard requires 2 distinct assessment methods,
a Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence and a Dissertation, presentation and questioning. The assessment methods can be taken in any order.

Professional Discussion Underpinned by a Portfolio of Evidence

This will be a discussion between the independent assessor and the apprentice.

The discussion will give the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate their competency across the KSBs for this assessment method, as shown in the End Point Assessment Methods Table below.

The apprentice can refer to and illustrate their answers with evidence from their Portfolio of Evidence.

The Professional Discussion must last between 2 hours and 2 hours 20 minutes.

The assessor will ask a sufficient number of questions to cover the KBSs for this assessment method and enable them to make a sound grading judgement in line with the criteria stated in the Grading & Criteria section stated below.

Dissertation, Presentation and Questioning

Dissertation

Apprentices must produce a dissertation during the EPA period, which will be the basis of a presentation to the apprentice's assessor with follow up questioning immediately after the presentation.

The main body of the dissertation must be 4,000 to 4,500 words. A summary and appendices must be included, additional to the word count. The summary must be a concise one-page of A4, visual, follow the principles of 'A3 Thinking' and convey key points in a way that enables messages to be grasped 'within 3 seconds.' Appendices must contain supporting evidence, such as

- Meeting minutes,
- Extracts from business strategy,
- Key performance indicator dashboards,
- Risk log
- Organisation charts.

The dissertation must focus on the development and deployment of improvement strategy in their business and of sufficient scope to demonstrate the knowledge and skills as set out in the End Point Assessment Methods Table below. For example, 'A Continuous Improvement Strategy and Deployment plan for department x'.

The title and scope of the dissertation must be agreed between NQual and the employer as a gateway requirement. NQual will have the final say on the title and scope.

The dissertation must be submitted to NQual 3 weeks prior to the presentation and questioning components, to allow the assessor to review the contents and prepare for the questioning component.

.

Presentation and Questioning

The presentation on the dissertation must be delivered by the apprentice to an assessor.

Apprentices can use presentation aides as they see fit and the presentation must be 45 to 50 minutes in duration.

The presentation must outline the focus of the dissertation, approach, outcomes and evaluation.

The presentation will be followed by questioning lasting 35 to 40 minutes.

Apprentices can refer to their dissertation and/or presentation materials in answering the questions

The assessor will ask a sufficient number of questions to cover the KBSs for this assessment method and enable them to make a sound grading judgement in line with the criteria stated in the Grading & Criteria section stated below.

END-POINT ASSESSMENT METHODS TABLE

The below highlights criteria that will be covered in each assessment component. Please review these details as it will provide guidance on what will be covered in each assessment component.

Learning Outcomes	What is Required	Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence	Dissertation, Presentation and Questioning
Knowledge			
K1	**Strategy Development:** Policy deployment principles and Hoshin Kanri Porter's 5 forces, Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT)/Political Economic Social Technological Legal Economic (PESTLE), Ansoff's growth matrix, Boston Consulting Group growth share matrix, GE-McKinsey matrix		✓
K2	**Business Benefits:** Net present value, activity based costing		✓
K3	**Team Formation & Leadership:** Team types and constraints, dysfunctional teams, emotional intelligence, Neuro-linguistic programming techniques, reinforcement strategies		✓
K4	**Self-Development:** Latest thinking in Continuous Improvement and Operational Excellence		✓
K5	**Presentation and Reporting:** Single page reporting – A3 thinking		✓
K6	**Project Selection and Scoping:** Business performance metrics		✓
K7	**Measurement Systems:** Audit Measurement System	✓	
K8	**Data Analysis – Statistical Methods:** Regression (multiple & binary logistic), forecasting and queuing theory	✓	
K9	**Experimentation and Optimisation:** Monte Carlo and Discrete Event simulation. Balanced and unbalanced designs, General Linear Model	✓	

Skills			
S1	**Strategic Deployment of Continuous Improvement:** Contribute to the business planning cycle and lead the development of improvement strategy. Analyse current state and identify opportunities. Develop deployment plans considering key enablers. Contribute to the development of an improvement culture. Maintain engagement through effective communication		✓
S2	**Business Benefits:** Identify, quantify and communicate financial and non-financial benefits		✓
S3	**Team Formation and Leadership:** Use appropriate tools and techniques to identify, diagnose and resolve sources of under-performance and conflict within teams		✓
S4	**Capability Development:** Design, source and evaluate learning interventions. Facilitate multi-functional workshops. Advise on selection of individuals for different levels of training		✓
S5	**Project Management:** Plan and manage an improvement programme with appropriate levels of governance. Apply processes for managing a portfolio of improvement projects including reporting, escalation, audit and risk management/mitigation		✓
S6	**Reviewing Projects and Coaching Others:** Provide guidance for structured project reviews. Conduct group coaching reviews. Identify, diagnose and resolve project performance issues	✓	
S7	**Presentation and Reporting:** Critique own and others' improvement reports/presentations	✓	
S8	**Change Management:** Assess the effectiveness of change and identify opportunities to improve outcomes, guiding and supporting others to deliver results		✓
S9	**Principles and Methods:** Clearly communicate the importance of appropriate method-selection to others, and enable the organisation to make appropriate decisions through learning and tools	✓	

S10	**Project Selection and Scoping:** Establish guidelines for project identification and prioritisation. Assess effectiveness of identification and prioritisation processes and implement counter-measures to enhance outcomes. Engage leadership team to identify improvement opportunities		✓
S11	**Problem Definition:** Promote importance of evidence-driven problem definition in everyday work	✓	
S12	**Voice of Customer (VOC):** Coach others on the importance of understanding VOC. Identify ways that an organisation can improve customer insight through feedback loops to enable improvement activities to be focused appropriately	✓	
S13	**Process Mapping and Analysis:** Apply process thinking to identify opportunities to improve business and process performance and maintain ongoing process control	✓	
S14	**Lean Concepts and Tools:** Easily translate and communicate fundamental Lean concepts for application to a wide range of business functions. Assess the effectiveness of a Lean strategy and make recommendations for improving outcomes	✓	
S15	**Data Acquisition for Analysis:** Assess data acquisition conducted by others in terms of tool selection and application, conclusions and recommendations	✓	
S16	**Statistics and Graphical Analysis:** Assess and guide graphical and statistical analysis conducted by others in terms of tool selection and application, conclusions and recommendations. Communicate opportunities for robust application of basic data analysis methods and engage others to extend/embed the application of data-driven approaches. Investigate and evaluate measurement and analysis approaches which extend the capabilities of the organisation. Establish strategies for gathering and analysing life-cycle data	✓	

S17	**Process Capability and Performance:** Make recommendations on how an organisation can drive improvement through the selection of tools and metrics for process capability analysis		✓
S18	**Root Cause Analysis:** Guide and coach others in planning to ensure efficiency of approach	✓	
S19	**Experimentation, Optimisation and Simulation:** Support the building of mathematical models and exploitation of these	✓	
S20	**Identification & Prioritisation:** Develop a Creative Thinking strategy to support improvements	✓	
S21	**Failure Mode Avoidance:** Communicate the business case, aims, methods & key tools. Identify opportunities for application within product and project life cycles including Lean Design		✓
S22	**Data Analysis – Statistical Process Control:** Make recommendation on how an organisation can drive sustained improvement through the application of Statistical Process Control	✓	
S23	**Benchmarking:** Develop a benchmarking strategy to support an improvement programme	✓	
Behaviours			
B1	**Drive for Results:** Be a primary advocate for Improvement and Operational Excellence acting as a role model for others, focused on improving customer experience and delivering benefits	✓	
B2	**Team Working:** Actively seeks opportunities for improving team performance and coaches others to resolve under-performance issues	✓	
B3	**Professionalism:** Demonstrates personal resilience. Challenge, influence & engage seniors	✓	

B4	**Strategic Thinking:** Drives future thinking for themselves and others. Actively seeks out new ideas, opportunities methods and tools. Build a knowledge and best practice sharing network	✓	
B5	**Safe Working:** Recognises opportunities to improve safe working practices	✓	

GRADING & CRITERIA

Assessments will result in the apprentice achieving an overall grade of Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction. This decision is dependent on whether they have met the standard and its End-Point Assessment criteria.

Grading results will be communicated to the apprentice within 10 working days of completion of the final component.

Assessment Breakdown

An apprentice must achieve a minimum of a Pass in both assessment methods to achieve a Pass overall. To achieve an overall grade of Distinction, the apprentice must achieve a Distinction in both assessment methods. The overall grade will be decided by the following combinations.

Assessment Methods 1: Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence	Assessment Methods 2: Dissertation, Presentation and Questioning	Overall Grade
Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Merit	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Merit
Merit	Pass	Pass
Merit	Merit	Merit
Merit	Distinction	Merit
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Merit	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

nqual.

The Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria can be found in the tables below, separated into the Professional Discussion underpinned by portfolio of evidence and the Dissertation, presentation and questioning.

Grading Descriptors for the Professional Discussion Underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence

The table below includes 22 specific Merit criteria (numbered 3 to 25 simply to match the original Skills England Assessment Plan). To achieve a Merit for this assessment method, the apprentice must display all Pass criteria and 14 of the Merit criteria, including a minimum of 1 behaviour criteria. To achieve a Distinction for this assessment method, the apprentice must demonstrate an additional 8 Merit criteria in addition to the 14 gained for the Merit, i.e. a total of 22 Merit criteria.

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Merit/Distinction Descriptors	Guidance Notes
Knowledge			
K7. Measurement Systems: Audit Measurement System	Complete a measurement system audit and draw conclusions and recommendations.	3. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms Measurement System Analysis.	**Pass:** Show that you completed a full measurement system audit, interpreted the results accurately and provided two or more recommendations to improve the reliability, consistency and validity of the organisation's measurement systems. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you built the organisation's knowledge and skills in Measurement System Analysis by helping others understand how to assess, validate and improve measurement systems as part of routine operational and improvement work.

K8. Data Analysis – Statistical Methods: Regression (multiple & binary logistic), forecasting and queuing theory	Complete a multiple regression or Binary Logistic Regression analysis study and draw accurate conclusions and recommendations.	4. Guide others on the completion of multiple regression or Binary Logistic Regression analysis studies. 5. Promote the principles and benefits of statistical modelling to the wider organisation.	**Pass:** Show that you completed a multiple regression or binary logistic regression analysis study, interpreted the results accurately and provided two or more recommendations based on your findings. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you guided others in completing regression analysis studies and actively promoted the principles and benefits of statistical modelling across the organisation, helping to build wider analytical capability.
K9. Experimentation and Optimisation: Monte Carlo and Discrete Event simulation. Balanced and unbalanced designs, General Linear Model	Set-up and complete a designed experiment and draw conclusions and recommendations.	6.Guide others in the use of appropriate experimentation tools.	**Pass:** Show that you set up and completed a designed experiment using appropriate experimentation and optimisation tools (e.g., Monte Carlo, Discrete Event Simulation, balanced/unbalanced designs or the General Linear Model), and that you drew clear conclusions and two or more recommendations based on the results. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you guided others in selecting and using appropriate experimentation tools, helping them understand how to design experiments, interpret outputs and apply findings to support improvement and optimisation work

Skills

Skills			
S6. Reviewing Projects and Coaching Others: Provide guidance for structured project reviews. Conduct group coaching reviews. Identify, diagnose and resolve project performance issues	Coach at least 3 L5 improvement projects and at least 3 L5 coaches (coaching a L4 improvement project) to deliver business benefits, providing specific and accurate feedback to coaches such there is a clear understanding of gaps and next steps required. Mitigates risk of project performance issues.	7. Promote the principles and benefits of coaching to the wider organisation. 8. Assess the organisation's approach to conducting coaching reviews and make recommendations for improvement.	**Pass:** Show that you provided structured coaching across at least three L5 improvement projects and three L5 coaches, giving specific, accurate and actionable feedback so that gaps and next steps were clearly understood. Demonstrate how you helped mitigate project performance risks through effective guidance and review. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you promoted the principles and benefits of coaching across the wider organisation and assessed the organisation's approach to coaching reviews, providing two or more recommendations to strengthen and improve coaching processes.
S7. Presentation and Reporting: Critique own and others' improvement reports/presentations	Listen and respond positively to questions and feedback. Give structured and constructive feedback to others.		**Pass:** Show that you listen and respond positively to questions and feedback, and that you provide structured, constructive feedback on your own and others' improvement reports or presentations, demonstrating clear communication and reflection on opportunities to improve.

S9. Principles and Methods: Clearly communicate the importance of appropriate method-selection to others, and enable the organisation to make appropriate decisions through learning and tools	Clearly communicate the importance of: • Selecting appropriate methods and tools • Linking the inputs to one tool to the outputs of another (and vice versa). Select and accurately apply appropriate methods and tools to deliver business benefits.	9. Establish or improve the organisation's approach to method and tool selection.	**Pass**: Show that you clearly communicated the importance of selecting appropriate methods and tools, and demonstrated how inputs and outputs link across tools. Provide evidence that you selected and accurately applied suitable methods to deliver business benefits. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you established or improved the organisation's overall approach to method and tool selection, enabling more consistent, informed and effective decision-making across improvement activities.
S11. Problem Definition: Promote importance of evidence-driven problem definition in everyday work	Promote the importance of evidence-driven problem definition in everyday work.	10. Assess the organisation's approach to problem definition and make recommendations for improvement.	**Pass:** Show that you actively promote the importance of structured, evidence-driven problem definition in everyday work and demonstrate how this approach improves clarity, focus and decision-making. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you assessed the organisation's current approach to problem definition and provided two or more recommendations for improving how problems are defined, scoped and validated across the business

S12. Voice of Customer (VOC): Coach others on the importance of understanding VOC. Identify ways that an organisation can improve customer insight through feedback loops to enable improvement activities to be focused appropriately	Coach others on the importance of understanding VOC in everyday work. Identify ways that the organisation can improve customer insight through feedback loops to provide focus for improvement activities.	11. Develop and build a plan to enable the organisation to improve customer insight through feedback loops.	**Pass:** Show that you coached others on the importance of understanding the Voice of the Customer in everyday work and identified practical ways the organisation can improve customer insight through effective feedback loops that guide improvement activity. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you developed and built a structured plan to strengthen customer insight, including enhanced feedback loops, and enabled the organisation to improve how VOC is gathered, interpreted and used to focus improvement efforts
S13. Process Mapping and Analysis: Apply process thinking to identify opportunities to improve business and process performance and maintain ongoing process control	Apply process thinking and tools to identify opportunities to improve everyday business and process performance and to maintain ongoing process control.	12. Assess the organisation's approach to mapping and analysing processes and make recommendations for improvement.	**Pass:** Show that you applied process thinking and used appropriate mapping and analysis tools to identify opportunities to improve everyday business and process performance, and demonstrated how ongoing process control can be maintained. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you assessed the organisation's overall approach to process mapping and analysis and provided two or more recommendations for improving how processes are understood, controlled and enhanced across the business.

| S14. Lean Concepts and Tools:

Easily translate and communicate fundamental Lean concepts for application to a wide range of business functions.
Assess the effectiveness of a Lean strategy and make recommendations for improving outcomes | Clearly communicate fundamental Lean concepts and how Lean tools can be applied to deliver business benefits using completed Lean improvement projects as evidence, in at least two different business functions.
Assess the organisation's approach to Lean strategy and deployment and make recommendations for improving outcomes (or if a strategy does not currently exist then develop a Lean strategy). Links to the business planning cycle

• Includes analysis of the current state and opportunities

• Considers development of an improvement culture

Includes deployment and communication plans. | 13. Engage with the external enterprise to extend and strengthen the organisation's Lean strategy.
14. Benchmark approaches used by others to deploy Lean and identify opportunities to enhance the businesses Lean strategy. | **Pass:**

Show that you can clearly explain fundamental Lean concepts and demonstrate how Lean tools have been applied to deliver business benefits, using evidence from at least two different business functions. Assess the organisation's Lean strategy and deployment, provide two or more recommendations for improving outcomes, and ensure your assessment links to the business planning cycle, current-state analysis, improvement culture and deployment/communication plans.

Merit/Distinction:

Demonstrate that you have engaged with the external enterprise to extend and strengthen the organisation's Lean strategy, and that you have benchmarked how other organisations deploy Lean to identify opportunities that enhance your own organisation's Lean strategy. |
| S15.Data Acquisition for Analysis:

Assess data acquisition conducted by others in terms of tool selection and application, conclusions and recommendations | Accurately assess and provide constructive feedback on data acquisition conducted by others in terms of tool selection and application, conclusions and recommendations. | 15. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms of data-driven decision-making. | **Pass:**

Show that you accurately assessed and provided constructive feedback on data acquisition carried out by others, including evaluating tool selection, correct application, conclusions and two or more recommendations to strengthen data-driven decision-making.

Merit/Distinction:

Demonstrate that you have built the organisation's knowledge and skills in |

			data-driven decision-making by helping others understand, apply and improve data acquisition and analysis practices across the business.
S16. Statistics and Graphical Analysis: Assess and guide graphical and statistical analysis conducted by others in terms of tool selection and application, conclusions and recommendations. Communicate opportunities for robust application of basic data analysis methods and engage others to extend/embed the application of data-driven approaches. Investigate and evaluate measurement and analysis approaches that extend the capabilities of the organisation. Establish strategies for gathering and analysing life-cycle data	Accurately assess and provide constructive feedback on graphical and statistical analysis conducted by others in terms of tool selection and application, conclusions and recommendations. Assess the organisation's approach to measurement and data analysis and make recommendations for improvement that extend the capabilities of the organisation	16. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms of graphical and statistical analysis. 17. Identify strategies for gathering and analysing life-cycle data in the context of a key product, process or service.	**Pass:** Show that you accurately assessed and provided constructive feedback on the graphical and statistical analysis carried out by others, ensuring correct tool selection, correct application and sound conclusions. Demonstrate that you assessed the organisation's current approach to measurement and data analysis and made recommendations that extend its analytical capability. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you have built the organisation's knowledge and skills in graphical and statistical analysis, and that you identified and established strategies for gathering and analysing life-cycle data for a key product, process or service, enabling more robust and data-driven decision-making across the organisation.

S18. Root Cause Analysis: Guide and coach others in planning to ensure efficiency of approach	Guide and coach others in the selection and application of tools for root causes analysis to ensure efficiency of approach.	18. Assess the organisation's approach to root cause analysis and make recommendations for improvement.	**Pass:** Show that you guided and coached others in selecting and applying root cause analysis tools such as 5 Whys or fishbone diagrams, ensuring an efficient and structured approach to problem-solving. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you assessed the organisation's overall approach to root cause analysis, identified gaps or weaknesses, and provided recommendations to improve how RCA is applied across the business.
S19. Experimentation, Optimisation and Simulation: Support the building of mathematical models and exploitation of these	Assess the organisation's approach to mathematical modelling and make recommendations for improvement.	19. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms of mathematical modelling.	**Pass:** Show that you assessed the organisation's current approach to mathematical modelling, evaluated how models are used to understand relationships between inputs and outputs, and made recommendations for improving modelling practice. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you have built the organisation's capability in mathematical modelling by developing knowledge, skills or tools that help others create, use or interpret models effectively as part of improvement and optimisation work

S20. Identification & Prioritisation: Develop a Creative Thinking strategy to support improvements	Develop a Creative Thinking strategy to support improvement activities.	20. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms of Creative Thinking principles and tools.	**Pass:** Show that you developed a Creative Thinking strategy that supports improvement activities and demonstrates the value of Creative Thinking within improvement projects. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you have built the organisation's knowledge and skills in Creative Thinking by helping others understand and use Creative Thinking principles and tools as part of improvement work.
S22. Data Analysis – Statistical Process Control: Make recommendation on how an organisation can drive sustained improvement through the application of Statistical Process Control	Assess the organisation's approach to on-going process control and make recommendations for improvement with reference to the application of Statistical Process Control	21. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms of on-going process control with reference to Statistical Process Control	**Pass:** Show that you evaluated how the organisation currently uses Statistical Process Control, identified gaps or weaknesses, and made recommendations on how SPC could be applied to drive sustained improvement. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you have actively built the organisation's capability in ongoing process control by developing knowledge, skills or tools related to SPC, enabling others to apply SPC effectively as part of everyday operations

S23. Benchmarking: Develop a benchmarking strategy to support an improvement programme	Develop a benchmarking strategy to support improvement activities.	22. Build the organisation's knowledge and skills in terms of benchmarking.	**Pass:** Show that you developed a benchmarking strategy and provided meaningful comparisons and insights that supported the improvement activities. **Merit/Distinction:** Demonstrate that you built the organisation's knowledge and skills in benchmarking by establishing or improving benchmarking capability, enabling others to use benchmarking effectively as part of the wider improvement strategy
Behaviours			
B1. Drive for Results: Be a primary advocate for Improvement and Operational Excellence acting as a role model for others, focused on improving customer experience and delivering benefits	Deliver improvements that align to the organisation's key drivers. Guide others to identify enablers/barriers and to take actions to address these in the pursuit of improvements.		**Pass:** Demonstrate improvements linked to business drivers and help others overcome barriers.

B2. Team Working: Actively seeks opportunities for improving team performance and coaches others to resolve under-performance issues	Improve team performance and take steps to resolve under-performance issues.		Pass: Identify underperformance and coach teams to improve.
B3. Professionalism: Demonstrates personal resilience. Challenge, influence & engage seniors	Demonstrate effective influencing and stakeholder engagement techniques. Demonstrate personal resilience in a changing environment	23. Challenge seniors in the pursuit of improvements.	Pass: Show that you demonstrate personal resilience in a changing environment and use effective influencing and stakeholder-engagement techniques to gain support for improvement activity. Merit: Provide evidence that you have constructively challenged senior leaders in the pursuit of improvements while maintaining professionalism, resilience and effective influence

B4. Strategic Thinking: Drives future thinking for themselves and others. Actively seeks out new ideas, opportunities methods and tools. Build a knowledge and best practice sharing network	Actively seek out and research new ideas, opportunities, methods and tools. Contribute to a knowledge and best practice sharing network.	24. Set-up or lead new best practice sharing activities, with written aims, measures of success, scope and governance. 25. Actively contribute to latest thinking in improvement techniques and operational excellence.	**Pass:** Show that you actively seek out new ideas, methods, tools and opportunities, and that you contribute to knowledge-sharing or best-practice networks to stay current with improvement and operational excellence thinking. **Merit:** Demonstrate that you have set up or led new best-practice sharing activities with clear aims, measures of success, scope and governance, and that you actively contribute to the latest thinking in improvement techniques and operational excellence.
B5. Safe Working: Recognises opportunities to improve safe working practices	Works safely at all times.		**Pass:** Consistently demonstrate safe working and identify safety improvements.

Grading Descriptors for the Dissertation, presentation and questioning

The table below includes 20 specific Merit criteria (numbered to match the original Skills England Assessment Plan). To achieve a Merit for this assessment method, the apprentice must display all Pass criteria and 10 of the Merit criteria. To achieve a Distinction for this assessment method, the apprentice must demonstrate an additional 6 Merit criteria in addition to the 10 gained for the Merit, i.e. a total of 16 Merit criteria.

KSBs	Pass Descriptors	Merit/Distinction Descriptors	Guidance Notes
K1. Strategy Development: Policy deployment principles and Hoshin Kanri, Porter's 5 forces, Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT)/Political Economic Social Technological Legal Economic (PESTLE), Ansoff's growth matrix, Boston Consulting Group growth share matrix, GE-McKinsey matrix	Demonstrate knowledge of policy deployment principles and Hoshin Kanri, Porter's 5 Forces, Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT)/Political Economic Social Technological Legal Economic (PESTLE), Ansoff's growth matrix, Boston Consulting Group growth share matrix, GE-McKinsey matrix.	1. Application of at least one tool from the following list to support strategy development for the organisation: • Policy deployment principles and Hoshin Kanri • Porter's 5 forces • Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT) and Political Economic Social Technological Legal Economic (PESTLE) • Ansoff's growth matrix • Boston Consulting Group.	**Pass:** Evidence knowledge of policy deployment principles and the strategic tools listed, showing clear understanding of how they support strategy development. **Merit/Distinction:** Provide evidence that you applied one or more strategic tools in a way that directly informed the scope, options and recommendations in your dissertation, explaining why the chosen tool(s) were appropriate and how the insights influenced decision-making
K2, S2. Business Benefits: Net present value, activity based costing. Identify, quantify and communicate financial and non-financial benefits	Demonstrate knowledge of net present value, activity based costing in the context of identifying and calculating business benefits associated with improvement programmes	2. Application of net present value or activity based costing in the context of identifying and calculating business benefits associated with improvement programmes. 3. Assess the organisation's approach to calculating business benefits associated with improvement programmes and make recommendations for improvement.	**Pass:** Show accurate NPV and/or Activity Based Costing with stated assumptions, sensitivity checks, and clear linkage to cashflow or cost-to-serve; communicate non-financial benefits and how they influenced go/no-go.

			Merit/Distinction:
			Application of the above, along with an assessment of the organisation's approach, resulting in a minimum of 2 recommendations
K3, S3. Team Formation & Leadership: Team types and constraints, dysfunctional teams, emotional intelligence, Neuro-linguistic programming techniques, reinforcement strategies. Use appropriate tools and techniques to identify, diagnose and resolve sources of under-performance and conflict within teams	Demonstrate knowledge of team types and constraints, dysfunctional teams, emotional intelligence, Neuro-linguistic programming techniques and reinforcement strategies. Apply appropriate tools and techniques to identify, diagnose and resolve sources of under-performance and conflict within teams	4. Application of 1 of the following to support deployment of the organisation's improvement programme: • Emotional intelligence • Neuro-linguistic programming	**Pass:** Demonstrate how you applied EI/NLP/reinforcement strategies to resolve constraints or conflict; evidence improved team performance attributable to your interventions (before/after). **Merit/Distinction:** Specifically show how EI or NLP have supported the improvement programme.
K4. Self-Development: Latest thinking in Continuous Improvement and Operational Excellence	Demonstrate knowledge of latest thinking in Continuous Improvement and Operational Excellence.	5. Assess the organisation's approach to staying abreast of latest thinking in Continuous Improvement and Operational Excellence and make recommendations for improvement. 6. Establish or improve the organisation's approach to staying abreast of latest thinking Continuous Improvement and Operational Excellence.	**Pass:** Cite recent CI/OE sources and show how you adopted or adapted them within the dissertation's approach or recommendations. **Merit/Distinction:** Assess how well the organisation is keeping up to date with CI/OE and make a minimum of 2 recommendations for improvements. Show how you have directly established or improved the approach.

K5. Presentation and Reporting: Single page reporting – A3 thinking	Demonstrate knowledge of the principles and benefits of A3 thinking.	1. Guide and support others in A3 thinking. 2. Establish or improve the organisation's approach to A3 thinking.	**Pass:** Explain the principles benefits of A3 thinking and show clear understanding of how single-page reporting supports effective problem-solving and communication. **Merit/Distinction:** Evidence how you have supported others with A3 thinking. Evidence how you have established or improved the organisation's approach to A3 thinking Consider Including a one-page A3 that visually conveys context, analysis, countermeasures, and results; ensure it matches the dissertation narrative.
K6, S10. Project selection and Scoping: Business performance metrics, establish guidelines for project identification and prioritisation. Assess effectiveness of identification and prioritisation processes and implement countermeasures to enhance outcomes. Engage leadership team to identify improvement opportunities	Demonstrate knowledge of long-term organisational goals and business performance metrics and how these should be used to inform project selection and scoping. Demonstrate development and use of approaches to identify and prioritise improvement opportunities that align with the organisational strategy.	7. Embed project selection methods across the organisation as part of the organisations long-term strategy for transformation. 8. Assess the organisation's approach to identifying, prioritising and scoping improvement projects and identify recommendations for improvement. 9. Benchmark approaches used by others to identify, prioritise and scope improvement projects and identify opportunities to enhance the business improvement strategy	**Pass:** Show a defensible selection method using business performance metrics and strategic fit; include prioritisation matrix/criteria and governance sign-off. **Merit/Distinction:** Show that project selection and scoping methods are embedded across the organisation as part of its long-term transformation strategy, that you have assessed how the organisation currently identifies, prioritises and scopes improvement projects and provided recommendations for improvement, and that you have benchmarked how other organisations approach project selection to identify opportunities that

			strengthen your own business improvement strategy.
S1. Strategic Deployment of Continuous Improvement: Contribute to the business planning cycle and lead the development of improvement strategy. Analyse current state and identify opportunities. Develop deployment plans considering key enablers. Contribute to the development of an improvement culture. Maintain engagement through effective communication	Develop an improvement strategy for the business which: • Links to the business planning cycle • Includes analysis of the current state and opportunities • Considers development of an improvement culture • Includes deployment and communication plans	10. Integrate the improvement strategy into other business processes to drive continuous improvement through everyday activities.	**Pass:** Demonstrate that you created an improvement strategy that links to the business planning cycle, is based on a current-state analysis, supports the development of an improvement culture, and includes clear deployment and communication plans. **Merit/Distinction:** Evidence how the improvement strategy is fully integrated into everyday business processes so that continuous improvement becomes part of daily operations, people practices, governance, and decision-making
S4. Capability Development: Design, source and evaluate learning interventions. Facilitate multi-functional workshops. Advise on selection of individuals for different levels of training	Design, source and evaluate learning interventions. Facilitate multi-functional workshops to build capability in improvement principles, methods and/or tools. Assess needs and selection of individuals for different levels of training in improvement principles, methods and/or tools.	11. Assess the organisation's approach to capability development and identify recommendations for improvement. 12. Benchmark approaches used by others to develop capability and identify opportunities to enhance the business improvement strategy.	**Pass:** Show that you design, source and evaluate learning interventions, run multi-functional workshops to build improvement capability, and assess training needs so the right people are selected for the right level of improvement training **Merit/Distinction:** Show that you assess the organisation's overall approach to capability development and recommend improvements, and you

28

			benchmark how other organisations build capability to identify opportunities that strengthen your own improvement strategy.
S5. Project management: Plan and manage an improvement programme with appropriate levels of governance. Apply processes for managing a portfolio of improvement projects including reporting, escalation, audit and risk management/mitigation	Plan and manage an improvement programme with appropriate levels of governance. Apply processes for managing a portfolio of improvement projects including reporting, escalation, audit and risk management/mitigation.	13. Assess the organisation's approach to at least 2 of the following (in the context of improvement strategy/deployment) and identify recommendations for improvement: • Programme management • Governance • Reporting and escalation • Audit and risk management/mitigation 14. Benchmark project management approaches used by others and identify opportunities to enhance the business improvement strategy.	**Pass:** Show programme-level governance, reporting/escalation cadence, audit and risk mitigation used for the dissertation initiative. **Merit/Distinction:** Show that you have assessed the organisation's approach to at least two areas—such as programme management, governance, reporting and escalation, or audit and risk management—and provided clear recommendations for improvement. You must also demonstrate that you benchmarked project management approaches used by other organisations and identified opportunities to strengthen your own business improvement strategy.
S8. Change Management: Assess the effectiveness of change and identify opportunities to improve outcomes, guiding and supporting others to deliver results	Assess the effectiveness of change and identify opportunities to improve outcomes, guiding and supporting others to deliver results.	15. Assess the organisation's approach to change management and identify recommendations for improvement. 16. Benchmark approaches used by others to change management and identify opportunities to enhance the business improvement strategy.	**Pass:** Evaluate change effectiveness (adoption, usage, proficiency) using a recognised model (e.g., ADKAR, Kotter) and identify improvements. **Merit/Distinction:** Show that you have assessed the organisation's overall approach to change management and provided clear recommendations for improvement, and that

			you have benchmarked how other organisations manage change to identify opportunities that strengthen your own business improvement strategy.
S17. Process Capability and Performance: **Make recommendations on how an organisation can drive improvement through the selection of tools and metrics for process capability analysis**	Assess the organisation's approach to analysing process capability and identify recommendations for improvement.	17. Benchmark approaches to process capability analysis used by others and identify opportunities to enhance the business improvement strategy.	**Pass:** Show that you assessed the organisation's current approach to analysing process capability, evaluated the tools and metrics being used, and made recommendations on how these could be improved to better support performance and continuous improvement. **Merit/Distinction:** To achieve merit, you must show that you benchmarked how other organisations approach process capability analysis and used this comparison to identify opportunities that would strengthen and enhance your own business
S21. Failure Mode Avoidance: **Communicate the business case, aims, methods & key tools. Identify opportunities for application within product and project life cycles including Lean Design**	Assess the organisation's approach to Failure Mode Avoidance and identify recommendations for improvement.	18. Benchmark approaches to Failure Mode Avoidance used by others and identify opportunities to enhance the business improvement strategy.	**Pass:** Demonstrate proactive Failure Mode Avoidance tools such as DFMEA or PFMEA, identified and prioritised risks, and demonstrated how your actions reduced risk across the product or project lifecycle. **Merit/Distinction:** Show that you assessed the organisation's overall approach to Failure Mode Avoidance and provided recommendations for

			improvement, and that you benchmarked how other organisations apply FMA to identify opportunities that strengthen your own business improvement strategy.

Re-sit / Re-take

If an apprentice fails one or more component part, they will be offered the opportunity to re-sit / re-take the component(s). It is then up to the apprentice's employer how many attempts an apprentice is given.

- A resit does not require further learning
- A retake requires some retraining to be agreed by employer and EPAO

The typical timescale for a re-sit is 3months and for a re-take is within 6 months (dependent on how much re-training is required). All assessment methods must be taken within a 6-month period, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be re-sat / re-taken.

Where any assessment method must be re-sat or re-taken, the apprentice will be awarded a maximum overall EPA grade of pass. Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to an apprentice wishing to move from a Pass to a higher grade.

MOCK PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

It is the responsibility of the employer and training provider to complete mock professional discussions with the apprentice and the responsibility of the apprentice to ensure they have practised answering questions for their End-Point Assessment.

Professional discussion materials will be given to the training providers when registering learners with NQual.

A mock professional discussion is suggested to take approximately 2 hours to 2 hours 20 minutes, in line with the Assessment Plan timings.

nqual.

admin@nqual.co.uk
www.nqual.co.uk
01925-964-903