



## **Specification**

**Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Standard  
Version 1.3**

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## Welcome to Innovate Awarding

Welcome to the Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Apprenticeship. Our Innovate Awarding Specifications are designed to ensure the employer, provider and apprentice have the appropriate support and guidance to allow successful completion of an apprenticeship, providing further confidence and assurance having chosen us as an End-Point Assessment Organisation.

We are an Ofqual approved End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), experienced in operating within a regulated market. Driven by the employers we work in partnership with, we deliver End-Point Assessment (EPA) in the Health, Care, Education, Leadership, Management, Leisure, Customer Service, Creative, Hospitality, Retail, Transport and Logistics sectors.

Delivering an apprenticeship is an extremely rewarding role. We recognise the need for a clear specification, resources and support, so more valuable time can be spent delivering to an apprentice.

At Innovate Awarding we stand by our 'no surprises' approach to assessment, making an apprenticeship journey as simple as possible, ensuring the best chance of success for every apprentice who undertakes EPA with us.

### About Innovate Awarding

We are an EPAO with a collaborative approach to doing business. We work with providers to deliver fit for purpose EPA, providing assessments for a wide range of apprenticeship Standards, certificating thousands of apprentices, continuing to learn and improve with each experience.

We have experienced and responsive teams to ensure the EPA experience is smooth and efficient, working closely with our provider partners.

Please see our website for the range of Standards we are approved to deliver:

<https://innovateawarding.org/end-point-assessment/apprenticeship-standards/>

## The Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan

An Apprenticeship Standard details the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to be occupationally competent:

- **Knowledge** - the information, technical detail, and 'know-how' that someone needs to have and understand to successfully carry out the duties. Some knowledge will be occupation-specific, whereas some may be more generic.

- **Skills** - the practical application of knowledge needed to successfully undertake the duties. They are learnt through on and/or off-the-job training or experience.
- **Behaviours** - mindsets, attitudes or approaches needed for competence. Whilst these can be innate or instinctive, they can also be learnt. Behaviours tend to be very transferable. They may be more similar across occupations than knowledge and skills. For example, team worker, adaptable and professional.

Apprenticeships are an invaluable tool for upskilling in areas that matter most to employers. They are a highly effective route to recruit and train future talent, address skills shortages and develop careers across core parts of the business.

The Level 4 Improvement Practitioner apprenticeship has been developed by employers working in the sector detailing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be occupationally competent and outlining the training and assessment journey for an apprentice.

The apprentice will typically spend 14 to 18 months on-programme, working towards the Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Standard, combining practical training in a job with study. The extent of the on-programme time should be decided for each apprentice based on their prior learning, skills and experience. If employers are using this Standard for an existing employee, it is important to be aware that the role must represent new learning. Providers should support employers with this.

It is vital the apprentice is prepared and fully ready before they commence their EPA period, which is detailed in the Assessment Plan.

The EPA period will last two months, consisting of:

- Multiple Choice Exam
- Project Report, Presentation & Questioning
- Professional Discussion, underpinned by Log

## The Apprentice

Improvement Practitioners use a blend of Lean and Six Sigma, project and change management principles and tools to identify and lead the delivery of change across organisational functions and processes. Improvement Practitioners can be found across all sectors and functions including automotive, banking, engineering, food products, IT, property, retail, telecoms, Local and County Councils, NHS, Voluntary / Charity, Utilities, Pharmaceuticals, Insurance, Hospitality etc.

Typically, Practitioners lead smaller projects and/or play a key supporting role in a larger programme – tackling issues that may require swift problem solving, or re-occurring challenges that require in-depth analysis and the implementation of a range of effective and sustainable countermeasures. They are the focal point for all stakeholders and responsible for communication throughout a project. Typical activities include:

- Identifying potential opportunities, diagnosing issues, proposing solutions and implementing changes and controls
- Coaching teams and sharing best practice
- When leading projects, they may manage small teams ensuring motivation and momentum, and be responsible for the successful completion of the project

There are a variety of job titles associated with the occupation, these include, but are not limited to: Business Improvement Practitioner, Continuous Improvement Manager, Process Excellence Manager, Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and Quality Control Senior Analyst, Environmental Compliance Manager, Engineer (Environmental, Mechanical, Geotechnical, Civil, Chemical, etc), Environmental Construction Management, Environmental Data Analyst, Environmental Health and Safety Officer, and Transportation Engineer.

Green job titles:

- Environmental improvement compliance manager
- Environmental improvement engineer
- Environmental improvement construction manager
- Environmental improvement data analyst
- Environmental improvement health and safety officer

## Off-the-Job Training

Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for an English apprenticeship. It is training, which is received by the apprentice during the apprentice's normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the approved apprenticeship the learner is completing.

It is an important aspect of apprenticeship training, as it gives the learner time to properly develop knowledge and skills from the programme.

Off-the-job training allows the learner to take full advantage of the programme, improving the return on investment in training costs for the employer. A developed and upskilled apprentice will lead to an increase in productivity, a clear benefit to the business.

Examples of off-the-job training include:

- Learning new skills at work through shadowing other members of the team, where this activity has been agreed and documented as part of the agreed training plan
- In-house training programmes relevant to the apprenticeship
- Coaching sessions
- Attendance at workshops, training days and webinars relevant to the apprenticeship
- Completion of online learning
- Self-study that includes reading or watching videos
- Training in new working practices or new equipment
- Role-playing or simulation exercises
- Industry visits/conferences relevant to apprenticeships
- Writing assessments, assignments and completing projects or activities
- Practical training or training in the workplace relevant to the apprenticeship

## Gateway

Gateway is the entry point to EPA, and it is vital that all parties understand its importance. It is the point at which the apprentice has completed their learning, met the requirements of the Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard, and the provider and employer have reviewed the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours to confirm they satisfied the provider and employer that they are competent and ready to enter their EPA.

Employers are ultimately responsible for deciding when their apprentice is competent as an Improvement Technician and ready to enter EPA. This decision should be taken after conversation with the provider and apprentice. It is vital this decision is based on each individual apprentice's readiness and not because they have reached the end of the initially agreed training period.

## Pre-Gateway Checks

Knowing when an apprentice is Gateway-ready is much more than simply checking the apprentice has completed their learning and obtained all the mandatory requirements outlined in the Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Assessment Plan. Although this is important, it is about the provider, apprentice and employer being convinced that the apprentice is at the level of competence set out in the Standard and that they are prepared for the EPA, so they can claim that competency.

To pass through Gateway, typically the apprentice will have been training for 14 to 18 months. They must also have:

- Achieved Level 2 English and Maths, if applicable
- Satisfied their employer that they are consistently working at, or above, the occupational competence of the Level 4 Improvement Practitioner
- Completed a log that includes between 13 to 15 pieces of evidence

- Completed a Project Portfolio to evidence completion of an improvement project(s)
- Declared any reasonable adjustments and special considerations

Readiness for Gateway includes confirming that the apprentice's project portfolio and the Log meets the requirements of the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out within the Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Standard. This will be confirmed at Gateway and documented on epaPRO. This notifies us that the apprentice is ready for their assessment and the EPA planning meeting will be organised.

Readiness for Gateway requires confirmation from the employer, provider and apprentice, that the apprentice has met all the mandatory requirements.

## Assessment Booking

The planning meeting will be booked on epaPRO once the apprentice has been allocated to an Innovate Awarding Assessor, and the Gateway documents have been reviewed and approved. The planning meeting will take place between the apprentice and an Innovate Awarding representative (in most cases this will be the allocated End-Point Assessor). Unless specified in the Assessment Plan, there is no requirement for the employer to attend, however some employers may wish to be present for this meeting

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss assessment dates, confirm assessment timings, assessment requirements and assessment preparation. During the meeting we will discuss what happens if assessments are cancelled/rescheduled and how this could impact the end-point assessment (EPA) period, as well as providing information on certification and appeals.

The Level 4 Improvement Practitioner 30 minute planning meeting will book assessment timeslots for the:

- Multiple Choice Examination
- Project Report, Presentation and Questioning
- Professional Discussion underpinned by Log

After the planning meeting, the apprentice will receive an email confirming everything discussed in the meeting and a calendar invitation for all booked assessments. The apprentice will then prepare for their end point assessment.

## Log Guidance

Completion of a log. The log will typically include one piece of evidence for each KSB that is assessed by the professional discussion. The log will typically reference between 13 and 15 pieces of evidence.

Evidence must be holistically mapped against the KSBs. For example, the apprentice may write up a meeting held with stakeholders to demonstrate team working and communication, and/or examples of application of learning to the wider job role.

The log will be used to underpin the EPA professional discussion.

## Project Portfolio

Completion of a project portfolio to evidence completion of an improvement project(s). The improvement project(s) will be the subject of a project report to be produced during the EPA period and the subject of the presentation and questioning. The improvement project must

- Clearly demonstrate delivery of business improvement benefit as confirmed in writing by the apprentice's employer
- Be completed in the apprentice's workplace
- Address substantive business problem(s)
- Follow each step of one of the recognised improvement methodology

## End-Point Assessment

### Assessment Methods

#### Assessment Method 1: Multiple Choice Examination

The multiple choice examination will contain 40 knowledge-based questions and be time limited to 40 minutes. It will be online.

The apprentice may refer to training material/reference books. The candidate may refer to training material/reference books but may not access computer search engines or similar. This is in line with existing practice for assessment in the subject. The multiple choice examination is not a memory test and the ability to refer to materials reflects the real working environment where improvement practitioners would look things up to inform the right answer. Given the time restraints apprentices will not be able to refer to notes for every answer.

## Assessment Method 2: Project Report, Presentation and Questioning

### Overview

The EPA must be completed within 2 months of completion of the EPA gateway.

The project report, presentation & questioning and professional discussion underpinned by the log will take place during month two with a minimum notice period of 2 weeks required.

It is anticipated that the report presentation & questioning and professional discussion underpinned by log will take place on the same day however, this is not a requirement.

The maximum time for the report, presentation and questioning is 75 minutes.

### Component 1: Project Report

The project report must be submitted to the Innovate Awarding Assessor within one month of Gateway. The project report must be accompanied by a statement signed by the employer authenticating the project report and presentation and confirming business benefits associated with the improvement project. The project report will then be read by the Innovate Awarding Assessor prior to the presentation and questioning. This report will also be the subject of the presentation. Questioning on the report will follow the presentation.

The project report must detail the improvement project(s) carried out by the apprentice. This improvement project(s) must clearly show a business benefit to the apprentice's employer.

Examples of project titles are shown below:

Project Area	Key Metric
Accounts	Invoice processing time - days
Finance/Control	Cash flow - monthly overdraft limit/cost
HR/Training	Availability of required skill set - %
Logistics	Distance travelled – metres/miles
Purchasing	Spend on materials, services and utilities
Quality	Removal of minor non-conformances
Sales	Enquiry to order processing time - days
Resource/Equipment	Scrap material reduction - £
Product/Service Quality	Quality Performance - %
Design	Product Approval lead time for home markets

The evidence contained in the report will comprise of a series of pieces of work, or sections on the report, related to each one of the steps of one of the recognised problem solving methodologies. This evidence will be generated over the period of the project activities.

The report should be:

- A concise, visual summary
- Follow the principles of "A3 Thinking "
- Convey key points in a way that enables messages to be grasped "within 3 seconds"
- Be typically one to three sides of A3
- Include any support documents in an annex which must be submitted with the report and which must be distinct from documents included in the project portfolio

The report MUST follow each step of one of the recognised problem solving methodologies, e.g.

- Define, Measure, Analyse Improve, Control' (DMAIC)
- 8 Disciples (8D)
- Practical Problem Solving' (PPS)
- Holistically demonstrate how each of the KSB's listed in the Project Report Evidence Locator has been achieved.

The project report must be authorised by means of a 'signed statement' from the apprentice's line manager to confirm authenticity and business benefit.

## **Component 2: Presentation and Questioning**

The presentation made must be on the project(s) which is the subject of the apprentice's project report, and as such detail the improvement project(s) carried out by the apprentice. It is up to the apprentice how this information is presented, for example through PowerPoint, through a large copy of the project 'A3' report, images or charts.

The apprentice must inform the Innovate Awarding Assessor of their selected method of presenting to allow the Innovate Awarding Assessor to organise any IT equipment required.

It is up to the apprentice to bring all materials to the presentation. The scope of the presentation is limited to the improvement project(s) carried out by the apprentice and should be presented following linearly the steps of the applicable improvement methodology applied to the project(s).

The apprentice should clearly explain:

- The reasons for project selection
- How each improvement tool was used

- Business benefit of the project including a key performance indicator measure (for example, hours saved, money saved)
- How the apprentice worked with a team of people during this project

The presentation may be in any format (employers have differing 'house styles' and preferred presentation methods) and there are no word or content restrictions. However, the presentation MUST follow each step of one of the recognised problem solving methodologies (e.g. DMAIC, 8D, PPS).

The presentation must be authorised by means of a signature from the apprentice's line manager to confirm authenticity and business benefit.

The apprentice must bring their project portfolio of evidence to the presentation & questioning and be prepared to show extracts from these to the independent assessor if required during the questioning.

For each of the required KSBs which are not naturally evidenced through the report and presentation, the Innovate Awarding Assessor should ask follow up questions to elicit evidence that the KSBs have been attained, or otherwise.

Open questions must be used, for example:

- Explain in detail...
- Give an example...
- Take us through your calculation of...
- How did you...
- Describe....
- Demonstrate...
- Where do you find...
- What was the objective...

The timing for the presentation should be between 30-40 minutes and the timing for questions by the Innovate Awarding Assessor must be between 25-35 minutes.

The audience for the presentation & questioning must include one employer representative (usually the supervisor of the apprentice or above). Their role is to confirm validity of the information provided in the question and answer section, provide guidance to the Innovate Awarding Assessor in terms of employer policy and practice where requested and to create a realistic presentation environment. The employer must not amplify or clarify points made by the apprentice.

### **Assessment Method 3: Professional Discussion**

The log will be reviewed by the Innovate Awarding Assessor prior to the professional discussion.

The professional discussion must take place in a quiet and private room. The apprentice must bring a copy of their log to the professional discussion and be

prepared to show extracts from these to the Innovate Awarding Assessor if required.

The purpose of the professional discussion is to holistically assess the KSBs required by the standard. The Innovate Awarding Assessor will typically ask 13 to 15 open questions and can ask follow up questions for clarification to elicit evidence that the KSBs have been attained, or otherwise and to enable accurate assessment against the pass/merit/distinction criteria.

It is not possible to specifically state the questions to be asked at the professional discussion, as these will depend on the results of the review of the log previously carried out by the Innovate Awarding Assessor to identify where KSB's required have sufficient evidence or are not sufficiently evidenced. The apprentice will be asked, with reference to their log to explain how KSB's required were practically achieved.

Open questions must be used, for example:

- Explain in detail...
- Describe...
- Give an example...
- Demonstrate...
- Take us through your calculation of...
- Where do you find...
- How did you...
- What was the objective...

The timing for the Professional Discussion is between 50-60 minutes.

The audience for the Professional Discussion must include one employer representative (usually supervisor of the apprentice or above). Their role is to confirm the validity of the information provided in the Professional Discussion and provide guidance to the Innovate Awarding Assessor in terms of employer policy and practice where requested. The employer must not amplify or clarify points made by the apprentice.

## Grading

Each assessment method will be individually graded – fail, pass, merit, distinction. A fail in one or more of the assessment methods will result in a fail in the EPA.

The points achieved for each method will be multiplied in line with the weighting of the assessment method in terms of its contribution to the EPA/Apprenticeship grade, as follows.

	<b>Multiple Choice Examination</b>	<b>Project Report, Presentation &amp; Questioning</b>	<b>Professional Discussion, underpinned by Log</b>
<b>Weighting</b>	10%	60%	30%
<b>Pass</b>	10	60	30
<b>Merit</b>	20	120	60
<b>Distinction</b>	30	180	90

Accordingly, the minimum score attainable with 'pass' in all three methods = 100  
The maximum score attainable with 'distinction' in all three methods = 300

Boundaries for overall pass, merit or distinction are set as follows, with 'merit' being set at 50-79% of the range and distinction being set at 80% or greater of the range.

	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Lower Boundary	100	200	260
Upper Boundary	199	259	300

Each potential combination of grades for each individual method may then be tabulated to show the overall grade to be awarded.

## Grading Criteria

<b>Multiple Choice Examination (maximum obtainable = 40 marks)</b>		
<b>Pass Criteria</b>	<b>Merit Criteria</b>	<b>Distinction Criteria</b>
25 to 29 marks	30 to 35 marks	36 marks or greater
<b>Fail Criteria</b> – Less than 25 marks.		

## Project Report

Project Report, presentation and questioning		
Pass Criteria	Merit Criteria	Distinction Criteria
<p>Apprentices must demonstrate all the following criteria:</p> <p>1. Prepare, submit and present a project report to agreed timescales that details one improvement project. The project must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show business benefit to the apprentice's employer</li> <li>• Follow the steps of a recognised Problem Solving methodology (e.g. PPS, DMAIC, 8D) with a clear flow from one step to another and supported by the application/interpretation of appropriate Lean, Six Sigma, Project and Change Management tools</li> <li>• Demonstrate data-backed decision making to support definition, measurement, analysis and improvement</li> </ul> <p>2. Present the project using a concise, visual format and include: Explanation of how they chose and scoped the project</p>	<p>In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass:</p> <p>1. Clearly explains how the outputs of each tool are used to inform the next step</p> <p>2. Identifies and takes the opportunity to share and/or replicate the improvements made to one other area / system where there are differences in the solutions/controls required to deliver successful outcomes</p>	<p>In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass and Merit:</p> <p>1. Identifies and takes the opportunity to share and/or replicate the improvements made to one other area / system where there are differences in baseline metrics</p> <p>2. Seeks opportunities to apply Lean, Six Sigma, Project and Change Management tools in daily work</p>

<p>How they used each tool</p> <p>How they led a cross-functional team during the project</p> <p>3. How they coached colleagues in the application of improvement tools</p>		
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### Professional Discussion underpinned by Log

Pass Criteria	Merit Criteria	Distinction Criteria
<p>1. Provide evidence of their behaviours as detailed in the L4 standard</p> <p>2. Clearly explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods used for making decisions in the project team</li> <li>• How they engaged and influenced others</li> <li>• Their coaching skills as set out in the L4 standard</li> <li>• Their approach to Project Management</li> <li>• Their approach to Change Management</li> <li>• Their approach, results and learning relating to developing skills in Experimentation and Optimisation as set out in the L4 standard</li> <li>• Their use of benchmarking to inform target setting and improvement options</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifies opportunities for cross-functional improvement</li> <li>2. Supports delivery of business-wide improvement projects led by Improvement Experts</li> </ol>	<p>In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass and Merit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Takes the opportunity to prepare and/or deliver training to upskill colleagues</li> <li>2. Seeks opportunities to involve others in building a Continuous Improvement culture</li> </ol>

3. Critically evaluates their improvement journey and identifies recommendations for improvement/change (e.g. "If I were to do this again I would...")		
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## **Annex 1: Assessment Plan and Occupational Standard**

The Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Occupational Standard and the latest version of the Assessment Plan can be accessed by following this link:

[st0192-improvement-practitioner-level-4-ap-for-publication-17112025.pdf](https://www.innovateawarding.org/st0192-improvement-practitioner-level-4-ap-for-publication-17112025.pdf)

**Level 4 Improvement Practitioner ST0192**

**Version 1.3**

**Sector: Business and Administration**

**EQA Organisation: Ofqual**

## Annex 2: Additional Information

### Results and Certifications

All final assessment component results are published on epaPRO within **ten working days** of the assessment taking place.

We will submit a certificate claim with the DWP within 15 working days after the final result has been uploaded to epaPRO. The DWP will send the certificate directly to the employer.

For replacement certificates a request must be emailed to [epa@innovateawarding.org](mailto:epa@innovateawarding.org) Within two days of receiving the email, a replacement certificate will be requested from the DWP.

### Re-sits and Re-takes

Apprentices that fail the EPA will have the opportunity to re-sit/re-take. Re-sits/re-takes are not to be offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to merit/distinction or merit to distinction. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does. The conditions relating to re-sits/re-takes are outlined below.

If the apprentice fails one or more assessment methods, they can take a re-sit or a re-take at their employer's discretion. The apprentice's employer needs to agree that a re-sit or re-take is appropriate. A re-sit does not need further learning, whereas a re-take does.

The apprentice should have a supportive action plan to prepare for a re-sit or a re-take.

The employer and EPAO agree the timescale for a re-sit or re-take. A re-sit is typically taken within 3 months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a re-take is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within 6 months of the EPA outcome notification.

If the apprentice fails the project assessment method, they must amend the project output in line with the independent assessors' feedback. The apprentice will be given 4 weeks to rework and submit the amended report.

Failed assessment methods must be re-sat or re-taken within a 6-month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise the entire EPA will need to be re-sat or re-taken in full.

Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to an apprentice wishing to move from pass to a higher grade. The apprentice will get a maximum EPA grade of pass for a re-sit or re-take, unless the EPAO determines there are exceptional circumstances.

## **Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations and Appeals**

Information on reasonable adjustments, special considerations and the appeals process can be accessed by using this link:

<https://innovateawarding.org/end-point-assessment/apprentice-information>

## **Support Materials**

All the support materials for this apprenticeship can be found on epaPRO including the Assessment Key Verbs Document.

## **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and referencing**

Apprentice submissions such as reports, presentations, business projects and portfolios must be produced by themselves. Correctly cited quotes and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used to enhance and support the document, but the document itself must be the apprentice's own work and not generated by AI.

Innovate Awarding expects all forms of plagiarism to be treated very seriously by staff at centres, and centres should have in place their own plagiarism policy and process for handling suspected cases of plagiarism.

## Version Record

Innovate Awarding continuously review all support material to ensure its accuracy. All amendments will be recorded in the Version Record.

Version Number	Effective From	Reason for Change	Location
V2	18.02.2026	Mention of CPD Log on Page 9 amended to reflect the Log	

Please ensure that you use the current version.

All enquiries relating to the version change of the document should be directed to [epa@innovateawarding.org](mailto:epa@innovateawarding.org)



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