

Level 4 Apprenticeship, Portfolio and Reflective Statement – Examiners' Report

Summary

There have been five assessment sessions for this exam since it launched in 2017. Therefore, it is a good time to take stock on how candidates have been addressing the exams' requirements.

Candidates appear to be well prepared and are addressing the requirements of the exam very well. Consequently, candidates are generally scoring high marks, which is heartening. For example, at the most recent session the average mark was 83%, with the highest and lowest marks being 98% and 70% respectively.

General Observations

It is pleasing to see that candidates are typically answering the requirements very well. Pass rates and average marks reflect this. It is assumed that candidates are benefiting from professional tutoring on how best to complete the exam.

Candidates are almost universally good at writing their answers in a way that makes it clear what their personal involvement was in each situation, which is a necessary requirement to pass.

Candidates that do well tend to use short sentences written in plain English. They also address each of the specific requirements in the relevant part of each section of the exam template.

There is generally a good standard of English and grammar being used.

Candidates are strongly advised to:

- Make full use of the guidance that is available to them;
- Make sure that they restrict their evidence to the appropriate part of the template – for example only describe lessons learnt in the lessons learnt part of the template; and
- Make sure that they get a friend or colleague to review their submission before it is finalised to check for mistakes.

The exam template may, from time-to-time be updated. It is important that candidates use the most recent exam template.

Candidates should also make sure that they include references to their training log, as required, and also reference which example from Part 1 of the exam that they expand upon in Part 2.

Observations on Part 1 (Portfolio)

Candidates tend to do very well on this part of the exam, and slightly better than for part 2. In the recent session the average mark for this part of the exam was 91%, compared with 80% for part 2.

It is pleasing to see that almost all candidates are able to find suitable examples from their work experience to evidence each of the 17 requirements. We have also been impressed by the conciseness of candidates' answers in this part of the exam. It is often the case that one or two well written sentences are sufficient to pass each part of the 17 requirements.

Observations on Part 2 (Reflective Statement)

Whilst candidates perform well on this section, they tend to do marginally less well than in Part 1 (as noted earlier). This is often because they have a slight tendency to drift away from what is sought in each part of the template or include information in the wrong part of the template.

We have observed that there is a good spread of skills and behaviours being used to answer this part of the exam, with no single skill or behaviour being particularly favoured over another.

The descriptions of the situations are often a little too brief. Whilst examiners do not want long descriptions, it is often the case that an extra sentence would be helpful to properly describe the scenarios.

Answers could, sometimes, be better tailored to the specific skill or behaviour that is being examined. It is important that answers are specific to a situation as opposed to being written in a general way – for example describing a specific situation that the candidate experienced, as opposed to a generic approach that tends to be applied at work.

It is noted that most candidates tend to write about what they have learnt, as opposed to their lessons learnt. This is, perhaps, unsurprising as identifying lessons learnt requires first an evaluation of a situation and then a second process of considering future approaches. Candidates are reminded that it is appropriate to note what went well, and should therefore be repeated in a similar situation – as a lesson learnt.