Highfield Level 4 End-Point Assessment for ST0325 Retail Manager

End-Point Assessment Kit

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EPA Kit

Contents

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How to Use This EPA Kit

Welcome to the Highfield end-point assessment kit for the Level 4 Retail Manager Apprenticeship Standard.

Highfield is an independent end-point assessment organisation that has been approved to offer and carry out the independent end-point assessments for the Level 4 Retail Manager Apprenticeship Standard. Highfield internally quality assure all end-point assessments in accordance with its IQA process. Additionally, all end-point assessments are externally quality assured by the relevant EQA organisation, in this case this is Ofqual.

This kit is designed to outline all you need to know about the end-point assessments for this standard and will also provide an overview of the on-programme delivery requirements. In addition, advice and guidance for trainers on how to prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment is included. The approaches suggested are not the only way in which an apprentice may be prepared for their assessments, but trainers may find them helpful as a starting point.

Highfield also offers the Highfield Retail Manager Apprenti-kit that is a comprehensive learning resource which is designed to be used on-programme.

For more information, please go to the Highfield Products website. Please note that the use of this kit is not a prerequisite for apprentices undertaking the Retail Manager end-point assessment.

Key facts

Apprenticeship standard: Retail Manager
Level: 4
On Programme Duration: Minimum of 12 months
Grading: Pass/distinction
End-Point Assessment Window: Maximum of 4 months
End-Point Assessment methods: Written exam, business project, professional discussion

In this kit, you will find:

- an overview of the standard and any on-programme requirements
- a section focused on delivery, where the standard and assessment criteria are presented in a suggested format that is suitable for delivery
- guidance on how to prepare the apprentice for gateway
- detailed information on which part of the standard is assessed by which assessment method
- suggestions on how to prepare the apprentice for each part of the end-point assessment
- a section focused on the end-point assessment method where the assessment criteria are presented in a format suitable for carrying out 'mock' assessments

Introduction

Standard overview

Retail managers are responsible for delivering sales targets and a positive experience to customers that will encourage repeat custom and loyalty to the brand/business. It is a diverse role that includes leading and developing a team to achieve business objectives and work with a wide range of people, requiring excellent communication skills. Maximising income and minimising wastage are essential to the job and therefore individuals must develop a sound understanding of business and people management principles to support the achievement of the vision and objectives of the business. Retail managers champion the way for personal development, training and continuous improvement, encouraging their team to develop their own skills and abilities to enhance business performance and productivity.

On-programme requirements

Although learning, development and on-programme assessment is flexible, and the process is not prescribed, the following is the recommended baseline expectation for an apprentice to achieve full competence in line with the retail manager standard.

Throughout the period of learning and development, and at least every 2 months, the apprentice should meet with the on-programme assessor to record their progress against the standard using on-programme progression documentation. At these reviews, evidence should be discussed and recorded by the apprentice. Once the apprentice is deemed competent, the relevant section(s) of the standard should be signed off by the on-programme assessor and employer.

The maintenance of an on-programme record is important to support the apprentice, on-programme assessor and employer in monitoring the progress of learning and development and to determine when the apprentice has achieved full competence in their job role and is ready for the end-point assessment. The on-programme assessment log is **not** a portfolio of evidence, but a record of what the apprentice can do following periods of training, development and assessment. A minimum of 6 meetings and completed records are recommended to show ongoing competence across the entire standard, over a minimum of a 12-month period prior to starting the end-point assessment.

Further guidance and support on planning and managing a retail manager apprentice's training and development journey is available from the Retail Apprenticeship Board via People1st.co.uk.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the EPA

Where AI has been used as part of the apprentice's day-to-day work and forms part of a project report, presentation, or artefact, it should be referenced as such within the work. AI must not be used to produce the report or portfolio.

Where AI has been used as part of a portfolio that underpins an interview or professional discussion or any other assessment method, it should be fully referenced within the portfolio.

Additional, relevant on-programme qualification

There are no mandatory qualifications for apprentices for this standard. The Highfield Level 4 Certificate in Retail Management (RQF) and the Highfield Level 4 Diploma in Retail Management (RQF) are available as qualifications that may be taken alongside the retail manager apprenticeship while on programme, if required.

Readiness for end-point assessment

In order for an apprentice to be ready for the end-point assessments:

- they must have successfully completed the level 2 English and maths components of the apprenticeship
- the employer must be confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard. To ensure this, the apprentice must attend a formal meeting with their employer to complete the gateway readiness report
- the apprentice and the employer should then engage with Highfield to agree a plan and schedule for each assessment activity to ensure all components can be completed within a 4-month end-assessment window. Further information about the gateway process is covered later in this kit

If you have any queries regarding the gateway requirements, please contact your EPA Customer Engagement Manager at Highfield Assessment.

Order of end-point assessments

Assessments can be delivered in any order, contrary to the assessment plan. Information regarding the rationale for this is outlined at the bottom of the next page following IfATE's flexibility framework.

The Highfield Approach

This section describes the approach Highfield has adopted in the development of this end-point assessment in terms of its interpretation of the requirements of the end-point assessment plan and other relevant documents.

Documents used in developing this end-point assessment

Standard (2016)

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/retail-manager/

End-point assessment plan (2019, ST0325 AP02)

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/6891/st0325_retail-manager_l4_revised-ap-for-publication_23012023-1.pdf

Common approach

People 1st – Edition 2, September 2017

Special Considerations

Highfield has used the following criteria for the written exam, as the retail manager assessment plan does not provide parameters for marks. The first six questions are shorter answer questions, totalling 40 marks and the last two questions are longer answer questions, totalling 40 marks. There are 80 marks available all together. The assessment plan states the percentage of coverage for each area of the standard, which is detailed later in this kit. The pass mark is 48 out of 80 and the mark for a distinction is 68 out of 80. The duration of this examination is 2 hours, and the apprentice will be given 5 minutes to read the question paper before attempting to provide any answers. In total the examination will last 2 hours and 5 minutes.

The assessment plan states that for the written copy of their proposal, learners must write a maximum of 2 pages. As '2 pages' can be quite subjective, i.e. based on what size font is used, we have recommended that the proposal is a maximum of 500 words, over 2 pages.

Highfield recommend the retail business project has a word count between 2,000 words and a maximum of 5,000 words, excluding any annexes. However, as there is no stipulated word count in the assessment plan, this is only a recommendation and all submissions will be marked in full.

The order of assessment can be taken in any order. The assessment plan stipulates a particular order of assessment, but following their flexibility framework, this has been changed. The link to the framework is below:

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/developing-new-apprenticeships/resources/flexibility-framework/

Gateway

How to prepare for gateway

After apprentices have completed their on-programme learning they should be ready to pass through 'gateway' to their end-point assessment.

Gateway is a meeting that should be arranged between the apprentice, their employer and training provider to determine that the apprentice is ready to undertake their end-point assessment. The apprentice should prepare for this meeting by bringing along work-based evidence, including:

- customer feedback
- recordings
- manager statements
- witness statements

As well as evidence from others, such as:

- mid and end-of-year performance reviews
- feedback to show how they have met the apprenticeship standards while on-programme
- on-programme records

In advance of gateway, apprentices will need to have:

- achieved Level 2 English
- achieved Level 2 maths
- synopsis of their proposed business research project

Therefore, apprentices should be advised by employers and providers to gather this evidence throughout their on-programme training. It is recommended that employers and providers complete regular checks and reviews of this evidence to ensure the apprentice is progressing and achieving the standards before the formal gateway meeting is arranged.

The gateway meeting

The gateway meeting should last around 1 hour and must be completed on or after the apprenticeship on-programme end date. It should be attended by the apprentice and the relevant people who have worked with the apprentice on-programme, such as the line manager/employer or mentor, the on-programme trainer/training provider and/or a senior manager (as appropriate to the business).

During the meeting, the apprentice, employer and training provider will discuss the apprentice's progress to date and confirm if the apprentice has met the full criteria of the apprenticeship standard during their on-programme training. The **gateway readiness report** should be used to log the outcomes of the meeting and should be agreed by all 3 parties. This report is available to download from the Highfield Assessment website.

The report should then be submitted to Highfield to initiate the end-point assessment process. If you require any support completing the gateway readiness report, please contact your EPA Customer Engagement Manager at Highfield Assessment.

Please note: a copy of the standard should be made available to all attendees during the gateway meeting.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations
Highfield Assessment has measures in place for apprentices who require additional support. Please refer to the Highfield Assessment's Reasonable Adjustments Policy for further information/guidance.

ID requirements
Highfield Assessment will need to ensure that the person undertaking an assessment is indeed the person they are claiming to be. All employers are therefore required to ensure that each apprentice has their identification with them on the day of the assessment so the end-point assessor can check.

Highfield Assessment will accept the following as proof of an apprentice's identity:

- a valid passport (any nationality)
- a signed UK photocard driving license
- a valid warrant card issued by HM forces or the police
- another photographic ID card, e.g. employee ID card or travel card

The Retail Manager Apprenticeship Standard

The following pages contain the Level 4 Retail Manager Apprenticeship Standard and the assessment criteria in a format that is suitable for delivery.

Customer		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Understand key drivers of customer journeys and how managing positive customer experiences increased sales, customer spend and loyalty, and the resulting financial impact on the business	Manage the customer experience, including remotely e.g. on-line, through ensuring the team deliver to customers a positive experience that benchmarks favourably to its main competitors and meets customer service objectives	Take overall accountability and responsibility for the customers' experience. Make effective decisions by balancing the needs of the customer and the business

Professional discussion	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
CU1 Demonstrate how **feedback** has been sought from managers and **customers** and how this has been effectively dealt with	CU2 *Proactively invite feedback from all stakeholders and use this to develop and implement **measurable improvements** in performance of self and team*

Amplification and guidance
Customers: - definition, types of customers (internal and external), own company policies, dealing with queries and complaints   - customer demographics, including changing demographics and ensuring that the store product selection meets this   **Feedback:**   - customer - surveys, questionnaires (online, front till receipts, email, postal, in store), loyalty card information   - manager - reviews, one-to-one's, appraisals, performance reviews, store walks (manager walks the store providing feedback to the team on store standards).

- o   stakeholders - getting the views of other departments – buying/merchandising, marketing, finance

- **Measurable improvements:**
  - o   measurement factors - surveys - customer service and mystery shopping, units per transaction (UPT), average transaction value (ATV / basket size)

Financial

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand the key drivers of profitable retail performance and the relationship of forecasting to the retail calendar; know how to analyse and use information for forecasting, and how to report on financial results. Identify the impact of different types of costs on the business and understand how to make effective use of resources	Manage the overall performance of the team to achieve financial targets taking into account the retail calendar year. Analyse reports to identify and determine key actions and recommendations. Produce and report on financial plans as required by the business, and identify and implement opportunities to increase profit and reduce waste	Demonstrate commercial acumen and confidence to initiate change to improve the financial performance and profitability in line with business policy, objectives and procedures

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

FN1   How to apply **general principles** of operating commercially in a retail environment
FN2   Scope and content of a **business strategy** and future plans/influencing factors
FN3   Profit margin specifications and implications thereof for different products/services
FN4   Principles of budgeting and forecasting
FN5   The difference between a budget, 'actuals' and cash flow
FN6   **Key financial data** in a retail business, it's importance and how it should be used to analyse performance and inform planning

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Professional discussion	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
FN7 Provide evidence to show they have been part of the budgeting and cost control in the organisation	FN8 *Describe how recommendations for the improvement of quality, cost, value or efficiency have been made and implemented in the organisation*
Amplification and guidance	

- **Key financial data:**
    - for example, profit and loss statements, current ratio, balance sheet
    - understand the key drivers of profitable retail performance and the relationship of forecasting to the retail calendar
    - know how to analyse and use information for forecasting, and how to report on financial results
    - identify the impact of different types of costs on the business and understand how to make effective use of resources
    - analyse reports to identify and determine key actions and recommendations, being commercially aware
    - produce and report on financial plans as required by the business, and identify and implement opportunities to increase profit and reduce waste
    - central company costs compared with store costs.
    - sales performance – budget, plan, like for like, comparable (or comp.), last year's performance
    - sales - key performance indicators, average transaction value (ATV), units per transaction (UPT), basket size, footfall, footfall conversion rate (transactions as a percentage (%) of footfall)
    - margin percentage (%) - selling price minus cost price, expressed as a percentage (%) of selling price
    - mark up percentage (%)
    - cash margin and mark up £s
    - wage cost key performance indicators (KPI's), wage cost percentage (%) to sales, man-hour budgeting, productivity (sales divided by man hours), sales per full time equivalent (FTE), understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each
    - stock loss percentage (%) calculation
    - cash flow definition
    - how the retail plan/budget for the year is detailed by week and month in line with the retail calendar e.g. impact of seasonal and promotional events
    - different types of costs - financial and non-financial
    - opportunity cost

- o   depreciation- general understanding
- o   capital expenditure – general understanding of Return on Capital Expenditure (ROCE), Return on Capital Investment (ROCI)
- o   basic cost benefit analysis for new projects

- **Business strategy** and influences:
  - o   macro factors e.g. economy, employment level, inflation, industry factors e.g. shift to online sales
  - o   barriers to entry - what would stop a new competitor from entering the market e.g. cost of stores or the high cost of creating a brand, low barrier to entry by an online competitor
  - o   multi-channel retailing e.g. stores, on-line, mail order
  - o   manage the overall performance of the team to achieve financial targets taking into account the retail calendar year
  - o   budgeting and forecasting
  - o   top down and bottom up budgeting and planning - how the terminology of budget and plan may mean different things in different organisations
  - o   difference between budget/ plan and forecast
  - o   how to forecast- factors to take into account

- **General principles:**
  - o   For example, ethical and sustainable procedures

Leadership		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Understand different leadership styles used in retail businesses and when to use them effectively to motivate and inspire the team to do their best	Provide clear direction and leadership to the team, giving open and honest feedback. Apply and adapt own leadership style to different retail situations and people to achieve the desired outcome	Influence, challenge and involve others, aligning personal values with those of the company to instil a high performance culture

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

LE1	**Leadership styles**
LE2	**Theories of motivation**

Professional discussion	

To pass, the following must be evidenced	To gain a distinction
LE3 Provide an effective evaluation of own performance, including behaviours, identifying where opportunities for improvement have been taken and results thereof evaluated	LE4 *Explains how effective retail management and contingency planning have been developed and implemented and how this has increased overall departmental performance* LE5 *Provides **mentorship** to team members with measurable improvements to the performance of individuals and the team*

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Amplification and guidance

- **Leadership styles:**
  - for example, laissez-faire, autocratic, democratic, participative, transactional, transformational
  - methods of leading and supporting teams to achieve results

- **Theories of motivation:**
  - e.g. Taylor, Mayo, Herzberg, Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory, Herzberg Motivators and Hygiene Factors, McGregor's Participation Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory

- **Mentorship:**
  - mentorship definition
  - difference between mentoring and coaching

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Marketing

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Know the key factors influencing a marketing plan such as product launch and life cycle, pricing, discount and special offers and ways of marketing via physical and other media. Understand how own business has formed marketing plan and how own role can best utilise marketing strategies to address demand throughout the retail calendar	Communicate marketing objectives to team members and drive results. Analyse and evaluate the impact of marketing activities e.g. sales and customer feedback, and report the outcomes to senior management with relevant recommendations	Proactively seek to understand the marketing strategy of the business, gain knowledge of local area and competition, take action, or upwardly communicate recommendations on action, to improve the implementation and drive marketing activities in area of responsibility

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

MA1   Online, print and in person marketing methods used in the retail industry, including the comparative benefits and limitations
MA2   Product launch/**product life cycle**
MA3   Principles of **price-based marketing** (sales, discounting, special offers)
MA4   How **marketing strategies** link to the **retail sales calendar**

Amplification and guidance

- **Price-based marketing:**
    - price sensitivity of customers
    - for example, sales, discounting, special offers
    - price skimming, penetration, economy, premium
    - buy one get one free (BOGOF), bundled offers
    - impulse purchases

- **Marketing strategies:**
    - for example. new product, brand awareness, increasing sales of a current product or service

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- product introduction
- positioning in the market
- social Media - the ability now to target very detailed customers with advertising due to the information they have supplied to the social media company e.g. Facebook, where the location, sex, age and interests can be targeted, influencers and bloggers
- food tasting stations
- loyalty programmes and incentives
- general understanding of the 4 P's
- multi-channel sales in retail including hybrid methods combining two channels with positives and negatives of each
- programmatic marketing
- socio-economic scale – A, B, C1, C2, D, E and its use in marketing
- how High St retailers are combating on-line retailers – e.g. service, experiences

- **Product life cycle:**
  - introduction, growth, maturity, decline

- **Retail calendar:**
  - overview of all events and sales trends on a calendar
  - regular annual events e.g. Christmas, Valentine's Day, back to school, other school holidays, Easter (taking place on different dates each year)
  - new marketing/ promotional trends e.g. Black Friday
  - definition of retail - the sale of goods to the public in relatively small quantities for use or consumption rather than for resale e.g. retail does not necessarily mean stores

Communications

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand how to communicate and cascade information effectively at all levels and to a diverse audience. Know how to identify the information required for decision making, how it should be gathered and reported internally and externally	Establish clear communication objectives, lead communications in a style and manner that is relevant to the target audience and achieves an effective result for the business	Adapt style and method of communication to the circumstances and needs of individuals intuitively, demonstrating appropriate skills such as empathy, fairness and authority as appropriate; seek and provide feedback in a positive manner

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

CO1   The variety of **methods of communication** available and how to use these effectively depending on the situation and audience
CO2   Verbal/non-verbal/written, face to face, on-line, via telephone, brand standard/corporate image
CO3   How to establish the **needs** of individuals (team members and customers)
CO4   Principles of active listening
CO5   The importance of giving **constructive feedback** and acting on feedback received

Professional discussion

To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
CO6 Explain why it is essential to instill the importance of following **procedures** to staff	There are no distinction criteria for this component

Amplification and guidance

- **Methods of communication** and **needs:**
    - o business ethics
    - o how the business values, culture and ethics are communicated e.g. mission statement, values statement, corporate social responsibility
    - o methods of communication in the workplace e.g. written, email, internal social media, meetings, formal, informal, differing methods to suit one to one and team
    - o effective communication to achieve results
    - o involvement of associated departments in the company e.g. human resources, marketing, merchandising
    - o methods of communication to customers, depending on situation
    - o active listening
    - o non-verbal communication
    - o feedback
    - o communication of the brand image
    - o 'Town Hall' meetings

- **Constructive feedback:**
    - o follow up to initial meeting

- **Procedures** in the workplace:
    - o including health and safety, receipt of goods, till operation
    - o political action, e.g. sabotage or terrorism

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Sales and promotion		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Understand how to set sales targets that are challenging but realistic and how to lead team members to achieve sales targets, maximising opportunities and reducing potential threats to sales across the retail calendar	Manage the team to achieve sales targets through regular monitoring of performance against results, identifying high and low performance products/services and taking timely action to find and implement appropriate solutions	Think ahead and take positive actions to maximise opportunities for sales and effective marketing activities, make cost effective use of resources through robust processes to meet sales targets

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

SP1 Principles of **setting team and individual sales targets** SP2 Data analysis SP3 **Threats to sales targets** SP4 Principles of the **retail calendar**

Professional discussion	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
SP5 Provide an overview of how the retail operation meets the needs of the business SP6 Provide reasoned examples of how the operation operates efficiently	There are no distinction criteria for this component

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Amplification and guidance

- **Threats to sales targets** - macro and micro:
  - macro **-** economy, Ministry of Government and legislative changes, inflation, fluctuating disposable income, currency changes affecting products sourced overseas
  - micro - late delivery of stock, running out of stock, cash flow issues, closing of a local large employer near a store, refrigeration failure, theft, administrative loss (i.e. failure to declare a delivery discrepancy etc.)

- **Retail calendar** i.e. an overview of all events and sales trends on a calendar:
  - regular annual events e.g. Christmas, Valentine's Day, back to school and regular School holidays, Easter, events happening on different dates each year
  - potential opportunities and threats of promotions and events e.g. margin / turnover / profit
  - new promotional trends – e.g. Black Friday promotions (how named and date), food safety week
  - maximise opportunities for sales - visual merchandising to support sales, stock management
  - positioning of stock in store and within window display
  - co-ordinating of linked or associated merchandise, including impulse purchases
  - how main sale promotions decelerate and methods of boosting – e.g. additional markdowns, last days
  - how to maximise impact in promotions and in particular sale promotions
  - resources (space management) e.g. pounds sterling per square foot, pound sterling per linear foot, pound sterling per shelf space

- **Setting team and individual sales targets:**
  - performance management - monitoring of store, department and individual sales performance with appropriate action to address deficits to sales plan/budget
  - key performance indicators (KPI's) highlighting efficiency
    - wages percentage (%) to sales and other staff cost measures
    - sales per square foot and other space management tools
    - gross/net profit goals
    - stock loss
    - wastage

- o store profit – also known as contribution towards central costs
- o SMART targets
- o key performance indicators (KPI's) including personal sales, department sales targets, units per transaction (UPT), average transaction value (ATV), sales of 'add-on' or linked items and how these fit into the store, area, region, company targets
- o effective communication of targets to staff
- o top down and bottom up planning of sales budgets/plans
- o obtaining buy-in by the store sales team

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Product and service		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Keep up to date knowledge of product ranges, brand development, promotions, current and future trends. Understand how to analyse, interpret and share information and brief relevant stakeholders on products and services	Analyse and interpret product/service sales information and use it to make recommendations for future planning e.g. of staff and resources, ideas for new initiatives. Research and demonstrate new products/ services or initiatives to the team	Take ownership of the service offer, keeping self and team up to date with brand developments. Passionately take pride in new products and services actively promoting these with colleagues and customers

Professional discussion	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
PS1 Explain the importance of keeping up to date with **current industry trends** and provide examples of how this has been achieved	There are no distinction criteria for this component

Amplification and guidance

- **Current industry trends:**
  - online, click and collect
  - cashier less stores
  - radio frequency identification (RFID) tags
  - efficiencies e.g. lowering costs to compete with online retailers
  - marketing trends e.g. Black Friday promotions
  - local and national legislation regarding selling products e.g. tobacco, cigarettes, knives, alcohol
  - supporting store or head office functions
  - human resources (HR), marketing, finance, buying and merchandising
  - retail operations supporting other sales channels --- i.e. click and collect, ordering in store via tablet for sizes/ ranges not stocked
  - how to keep up to date with retail trends/ news – e.g. news apps (retail subject), alerts, newspapers, TV news, trade magazines, comparison shopping
  - interpret and share information, e.g. customer service satisfaction, mystery shoppers, customer surveys including till receipt surveys via online code, product knowledge and awareness of new lines

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- o service offer, i.e. history of own company (service level, products and unique selling point (USP))
- o product ranges -where to find information, internally, externally, risk analysis and risk assessments
    - changing product range in line with changing demographics
    - expanding product ranges in retailers

Brand reputation

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand the importance of upholding brand reputation, how brand reputation can become compromised and the impact on the business, and how threats can be managed. Identify the impact of social media on the industry and how it is used in own organisation	Ensure the team carry out activities in line with business and brand values that actively market the business, support competitiveness and help meet business objectives. Identify possible risks to brand reputation and take action to prevent or minimise their impact	Champion the brand and work closely with team and management to ensure brand reputation is upheld at all times

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

BR1   Principles of **brand reputation**
BR2   Importance of adhering to brand standards, branding and messaging

Amplification and guidance

- **Brand reputation:**
  - unique selling point (USP)
  - positioning within the market
  - potential dangers to brand reputation, including those posed by social media and websites such as Trust Pilot
  - multi-channel consistency
  - vision statement and values
  - local and national legislation regarding selling products e.g. tobacco, cigarettes, knives, alcohol
  - social responsibility, for example recycling, being carbon neutral

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Merchandising

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand key features of merchandising and how these link with the business' merchandising plan to achieve sales targets. Know the particular requirements of related activities such as seasonal peaks and troughs over the retail calendar year	Ensure effective merchandising set up, monitoring and maintenance in own area of business. Measure the impact of merchandising on sales and report the outcome to colleagues and senior managers, providing recommendations for improvements, and implementing changes within own remit	Adapt merchandising principles to own environment, store configuration, local needs and sales patterns

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

ME1   Key **principles of merchandising**, including their impact on the retail calendar
ME2   How local and national trends and requirements can influence merchandising
ME3   The importance of following merchandising plans
ME4   How online and in store promotions differ and can be used as part of a coherent merchandising strategy

Amplification and guidance

- **Principles of merchandising:**
    - for example, less is more, pyramid principle, repetition, focal points, symmetry
    - visual merchandising
        - product positioning in store, coordinating items, window displays
        - best practice communication to stores for effective visual merchandising displays
        - add-on / complementary items
        - knowledge of hot spots, key product placement locations within the store
    - retail calendar - supporting product launches by effective planning, utilising the retail calendar to not clash with other item launches and promotions
    - Positioning of impulse / add-on products and their value to retailers

Stock

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand how to manage an effective stock control system; recognise the financial implications to the business and own responsibility to manage stock to meet sales targets, marketing activities and business objectives	Monitor the stock management system to minimise the cost of damage to stock and the loss of stock to the business. Ensure audit compliance and react quickly to results to maintain business standards and stock requirements	Take ownership of **stock management** systems to meet current and projected business needs

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

ST1   The principles of managing an effective **stock control** system
ST2   The financial and operational implications of effective/ineffective stock control
ST3   Correct storage conditions for a range of stock
ST4   The costs/benefits of manual and automated stock ordering systems
ST5   **Legal requirements** relating to stock control, movement and sale (e.g. age restricted, fireworks)

Amplification and guidance

- **Stock control:**
    - Merchandising, e.g. a department that works closely with buying department to accurately allocate stock that the buyer has bought – ensuring that the right stock is in the right place at the right time and in the correct quantity (N.B. not to be confused with visual merchandising (VM) – the display of stock in store)
    - rate of stock turn (RST) - how often stock levels are turned over in a year and for promotions
    - stock unit allocation calculation (target stock level), i.e. weeks/monthly sales cover for initial auto-replenishment calculation; average weekly sales and the weekly stock cover required for the product, e.g. best-selling item - 6 weeks cover, with sales of 10 a week = 60 units
    - automated stock replenishment systems versus manual replenishment systems in normal trading and in key ramp up promotions, e.g. Christmas, Valentine's Day
    - wastage control - how to manage and control/ minimise
    - food merchandising vs clothing – i.e. much shorter shelf life

- o   how to deal with over stocks and end of season lines in sale promotions, especially using multi-channel retailing
- o   mark-downs and their effect on margin
- o   how to effectively deal with ageing stock, e.g. marked down stock, inter-store transfers, recalls
- o   the relationship of effective stock management to promotional events

- **Legal requirements:**
  - o   regarding selling products, e.g. tobacco, cigarettes, knives, alcohol, fireworks
  - o   us- by dates and best before dates

Developing self and others

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Identify a variety of ways to inspire and motivate team members, how to positively influence their approach to work and how to pass on knowledge and experience. Understand the importance of, and process for, ensuring team members' and own development	Work with team members to maximise their potential and achieve organisation's objectives. Implement effective and accurate training on products, services and legislation governing sales, such as age restricted products, trading standards and weights and measures	Help team members balance work and life priorities, realise their potential and see the benefits of self- development and improvement. Demonstrate commitment to self-improvement, championing a culture of continual development and progression

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

DS1	**Training needs analysis**
DS2	The **learning and development cycle**
DS3	The importance of feedback
DS4	**Learning styles**
DS5	**Training plan design**

Professional discussion

To pass, the following must be evidenced	To gain a distinction
DS6 Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation and development of teams and **individual staff members**	DS7 *Demonstrates staff engagement, **motivation**, performance management and how this has led to increased performance* DS8 *Provide examples of when improvement activities have been actively sought to develop own performance to raise standards in sales, promotions, team performance and customer service*

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Amplification and guidance

- **Learning and development cycle:**
  - o identifying learning needs, plan and design learning, deliver differing learning to suit individual/team and learning need(s), evaluate learning and results

- **Training needs analysis:**
  - o fundamentals of carrying out a training needs analysis and the component parts
  - o feedback from staff surveys

- **Learning styles:**
  - o Vark model (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, linguistic)

- **Training plan design**
  - o personal development plan (PDP)
  - o SMART objectives
  - o personal development review

- **Motivation:**
  - o theories, for example Taylor, Mayo, Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor, Vroom

- **Individual staff members:**
  - o mentoring and self-reflection and evaluation
  - o how to coach and mentor
  - o the difference between a leader and a manager with the advantages and disadvantages of each in different roles/ scenarios
  - o one-to-ones
  - o conducting appraisals
  - o building confidence of self and others
  - o developing selling skills of self and others

Team performance		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Know how to recruit, retain and develop the right people for the right roles. Know the key theories of performance management and how to apply them to retail teams using own organisation's tools and protocols to support them	Recruit the right people into the right job, monitor team performance and recognise excellence, effectively manage performance that is below standard	Orchestrate effective team dynamics, build effective relationships that select the right person for the right task, recognise individual styles and preferences

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

TP1   The principles and legal requirements for **recruitment** and selection
TP2   Factors that impact on retention of staff
TP3   The principles of an effective **performance management** system

Amplification and guidance

- **Recruitment:**
    - recruitment process
    - assessment day processes
    - competency based interviews
    - job description and person specification
    - Equality Act 2010, including protected characteristics
    - eligibility to work in the UK—Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
    - probationary period

- **Performance management:**
    - processes
    - continual development/ learning (CPD)
    - informal and formal disciplinary process

- o Mabey elements of performance management cycle
- o benchmarking
- o theories – team for example, Belbin, Tuckman
- o attrition (staff leavers) and staff turnover
  - how to calculate
  - causes of
- o time management
  - four quadrants of time management, (e.g. Eisenhower Decision Matrix, Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix)
  - Pareto principle (80/20 rule)
  - prioritisation
- o paper versus electronic time management / planning

Legal and governance

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand environmental, legislative, corporate, data protection and social responsibilities relating to retail businesses	Manage and continuously review adherence to legislation and regulations/policies for due diligence; handle audits and regulatory authorities such as the environmental health officer appropriately	Be accountable, advocate and adhere to the importance of working legally in the best interests of all people

Written exam

To pass, the following must be evidenced

LG1   **Legal requirements** relating to managing a range of retail operations
LG2   Health and safety
LG3   Trading standards
LG4   Data protection
LG5   **Corporate and social responsibility**

Professional discussion	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
LG6 Describe how the retail operation meets legislative and regulatory needs	*LG7 Demonstrate how a proactive approach to risk management has been implemented, including proactively educating and monitoring staff on health and safety and risk matters beyond the legislative minimum*

Amplification and guidance

- **Legal requirements:**
  - o   health and safety
  - o   data protection
  - o   licensing (where applicable)
  - o   sale of goods
  - o   consumer rights
  - o   food safety (where applicable)
  - o   date expired food
  - o   trading standards
  - o   employment law
  - o   dealing with a terror threat
  - o   legal requirements regarding non-compliance
    - -   Health and Safety at Work Act
    - -   Management of Health and safety at work regulations 1999
    - -   Risk assessments
    - -   RIDDOR
    - -   GDPR
    - -   Licensing Act 2003
    - -   Consumer Rights Act 2015 (instore, online and software)
    - -   invitation to treat within contract law (window price displays)
    - -   food safety (where applicable)
    - -   employment law

- **Corporate and social responsibility:**
  - o   roles and responsibilities within stores
  - o   sustainability
  - o   carbon footprint

- recycling
- community liaison
- food wastage
- limiting land fill
- potential additional customer costs associated with ethical procedures
- organisational governance / corporate governance
  - role of chairman, chief executive officer (CEO), managing director (MD)
  - non-executive directors
- whistleblowing

Business project

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand the vision of the business, its competitive position and own role and responsibility in the delivery of business objectives. Understand the market in which the business operates and how this impacts on the products/services it offers	Lead the team to achieve and exceed business objectives through forward planning, analysis and evaluation of own business area. Use sales and customer data to make sound and effective decisions which improve business performance	Demonstrate personal responsibility for the strategic direction and objectives for own area of the business

Business project

To pass, the following must be evidenced	To gain a distinction
BP1 Give a general introduction and background to the retail business, including how this related to the wider organisation, local and national environment BP2 Outline the problem, challenge or opportunity identified BP3 State the aims and objectives of the project BP4 Identify how the potential changes would lead to measurable improvements and benefits to the retail business BP5 Consult relevant stakeholders (e.g. customers, team members, managers) to inform the results and recommendations BP6 Provide a detailed analysis of costs associated with the proposed recommendations BP7 Identify applicable local and national legislation and ensure the proposal complies BP8 Provide research methodology to demonstrate a logical, coherent approach BP9 Make clear recommendations for implementation BP10 Concise validation and justification of recommendations	BP11 *Give a detailed introduction and background of the retail business, wider organisations, local and national environments, including on-line considerations* BP12 *Outline the current situation which has led to the identification of a challenge or opportunity* BP13 *Provide detailed aims and objectives for the project, linking to the current situation* BP14 *Identification of measurable improvements and benefits to the organisation* BP15 *Provide evidence of wide consultation with a range of stakeholders and show how responses have been effectively evaluated and their content considered and included in the recommendation* BP16 *A thorough analysis of costs and benefits of the recommendations in the short, medium and long term* BP17 *Critically analyse the project to ensure it meets organisational and legal requirements* BP18 *Effectively design and use a research methodology using qualitative and quantitative research to its best effect*

	BP19 *Detailed recommendations for implementation* BP20 *Provide a comprehensive link from the project into the medium term strategy of the retail business* BP21 *Detailed validation and justification of recommendations* BP22 *Proposed timeframes for implementation*

Assessment summary

The end-point assessment for retail manager is made up of 3 components that can be taken in any order:

1. A 2-hour written exam, with 5 minutes reading time, consisting of 6 short and 2 longer scenario-based questions, which may be broken down into several sub-questions, from the same question scenario.
2. A retail business project and 30-minute presentation with question and answer. Although there is no stipulated word count, Highfield recommend the retail business project has a word count between 2,000 words and a maximum of 5,000 words, excluding any annexes. The business project must be accompanied by the Written Submission Sheet which is available to download from the Highfield Assessment website.
3. A 1-hour professional discussion.

As an employer/training provider, you should agree a plan and schedule with the apprentice to ensure all assessment components can be completed effectively.

Each component of the end-point assessment will be assessed against the appropriate criteria laid out in this kit, which will be used to determine a grade for each individual component.

Written exam

- To achieve a pass, apprentices must achieve at least 60% (48 out of 80)
- To achieve a distinction, apprentices must achieve at least 85% (68 out of 80)

Business project

- To achieve a pass in the retail business project, all pass criteria must be covered
- To achieve a distinction in the retail business project, all pass and all distinction criteria should be covered

Professional discussion

- To achieve a pass in the professional discussion, all pass criteria must be covered

- To achieve a distinction in the professional discussion, all pass and all distinction criteria must be covered

Grading

The overall grade for the apprentice is determined using the matrix below:

Written exam	Retail business project	Professional discussion	*Overall outcome*
Pass	Pass	Pass	*Pass*
Pass	Pass	Distinction	*Pass*
Pass	Distinction	Pass	*Pass*
Distinction	Pass	Pass	*Pass*
Distinction	Pass	Distinction	*Pass*
Pass	Distinction	Distinction	*Distinction*
Distinction	Distinction	Pass	*Distinction*
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction	*Distinction*

Retake and resit information

If any assessment activity is resat or retaken, the maximum grade achievable for that assessment activity is a pass.

Resits

Should an apprentice fail 1 assessment activity **only** on the first attempt (or during a subsequent retake), a resit of that activity should be scheduled as soon as the apprentice is ready, when practicable for the business and in line with the policies, practices and procedures of Highfield.

The resit is usually expected to take place after all the required assessments have been taken and the individual assessment results and overall apprenticeship result has been given to the apprentice. There is no limit on the number of times an apprentice can resit a single failed activity.

Should an apprentice fail 2 or more activities, a period of further training and development lasting between 1 and 3 months must take place before the resit is scheduled and a new assessment window will be agreed following the period of additional learning. The decision on how much time is required is based on a discussion between the apprentice, their employer and end-point assessor. This further training can begin as soon as a learner's result has been released.

Retakes

There is no limit on the number of retakes that can take place should the apprentice fail 2 or more activities during subsequent retakes. In the event an apprentice fails 1 activity **only** as part of a retake, a resit of that activity should be scheduled in line with the guidance in the resit section above. If a **retake** is chosen, the apprentice will require a period of further learning and will need to complete a retake checklist. Once this is completed, please call the Highfield scheduling team to arrange the retake.

The above information is worded differently to that in the assessment plan, but People 1st have confirmed its accuracy.

Assessing the written exam

The following areas (knowledge) of the retail manager standard will be assessed by a 2-hour written exam consisting of a minimum of 6 short and 2 longer scenario-based questions, with the pass mark being 60% and the distinction mark being 85%. Each of these 8 questions may be broken down into several sub-questions, from the same question scenario. Each sub-question will indicate how many marks it is worth.

 The topics covered within the exam are listed below:

- Financial
- Leadership
- Marketing
- Communications
- Sales and Promotion
- Brand reputation
- Merchandising
- Stock
- Developing self and others
- Team performance
- Legal and governance

The individual marking sections are detailed in the table below:

Areas of the standard to covered	Percentage of questions in the exam
Financial Stock	30%
Communications	15%
Marketing Brand reputation Merchandising Sales and promotion	20%
Legal and governance	10%
Leadership Team Performance Developing self and others	25%

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Before the assessment

- While on-programme, the employer/training provider should brief the apprentice on the areas to be assessed by the written exam.

- In readiness for end-point assessment, the apprentice should complete a sample test. A test is available to download from the Highfield Assessment website.

Written exam criteria

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam	
	Financial	
Understand the key drivers of profitable retail performance and the relationship of forecasting to the retail calendar; know how to analyse and use information for forecasting, and how to report on financial results. Identify the impact of different types of costs on the business and understand how to make effective use of resources	FN1	How to apply general principles of operating commercially in a retail environment
	FN2	Scope and content of a business strategy and future plans/influencing factors
	FN3	Profit margin specifications and implications thereof for difference products/services
	FN4	Principles of budgeting and forecasting
	FN5	The difference between a budget, 'actuals' and cash flow
	FN6	Key financial data in a retail business, its importance and how it should be used to analyse performance and inform planning

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam	
	Leadership	
Understand different leadership styles used in retail businesses and when to use them effectively to motivate and inspire the team to do their best	LE1	Leadership styles
	LE2	Theories of motivation

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam	
	Marketing	
Know the key factors influencing a marketing plan such as product launch and life cycle, pricing, discount and special offers and ways of marketing via physical and other media. Understand how own business has formed marketing plan and how own role can best utilise marketing strategies to address demand throughout the retail calendar	MA1	Online, print and in person marketing methods used in the retail industry, including the comparative benefits and limitations
	MA2	Product launch/product life cycle
	MA3	Principles of price based marketing (sales, discounting, special offers)
	MA4	How marketing strategies link to the retail sales calendar

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam	
Communications		
Understand how to communicate and cascade information effectively at all levels and to a diverse audience. Know how to identify the information required for decision making, how it should be gathered and reported internally and externally	CO1	The variety of methods of communication available and how to use these effectively depending on the situation and audience
	CO2	Verbal/non-verbal/written, face to face, on-line, via telephone, brand standard/corporate image
	CO3	How to establish the needs of individuals (team members and customers)
	CO4	Principles of active listening
	CO5	The importance of giving constructive feedback and acting on feedback received

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam	
Merchandising		
Understand key features of merchandising and how these link with the business' merchandising plan to achieve sales targets. Know the particular requirements of related activities such as seasonal peaks and troughs over the retail calendar year	ME1	Key principles of merchandising, including their impact on the retail calendar
	ME2	How local and national trends and requirements can influence merchandising
	ME3	The importance of following merchandising plans
	ME4	How online and in store promotions differ and can be used as part of a coherent merchandising strategy

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam	
Stock		
Understand how to manage an effective stock control system; recognise the financial implications to the business and own responsibility to manage stock to meet sales targets, marketing activities and business objectives	ST1	The principles of managing an effective stock control system
	ST2	The financial and operational implications of effective/ineffective stock control
	ST3	Correct storage conditions for a range of stock
	ST4	The costs/benefits or manual and automated stock ordering systems
	ST5	Legal requirements relating to stock control, movement and sale (e.g. age restricted, fireworks)

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam
	Developing self and others
Identify a variety of ways to inspire and motivate team members, how to positively influence their approach to work and how to pass on knowledge and experience. Understand the importance of, and process for, ensuring team members' and own development	DS1 Training needs analysis DS2 The learning and development cycle DS3 The importance of feedback DS4 Learning styles DS5 Training plan design

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam
	Team performance
Know how to recruit, retain and develop the right people for the right roles. Know the key theories of performance management and how to apply them to retail teams using own organisation's tools and protocols to support them	TP1 The principles and legal requirements for recruitment and selection TP2 Factors that impact on retention of staff TP3 The principles of an effective performance management system

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam
	Legal and governance
Understand environmental, legislative, corporate, data protection and social responsibilities relating to retail businesses	LG1 Legal requirements relating to managing a range of retail operations LG2 Health and safety LG3 Trading standards LG4 Data protection LG5 Corporate and social responsibility

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam
Sales and promotion	
Understand how to set sales targets that are challenging but realistic and how to lead team members to achieve sales targets, maximising opportunities and reducing potential threats to sales across the retail calendar	SP1 Principles of setting team and individual sales targets SP2 Data analysis SP3 Threats to sales targets SP4 Principles of the retail calendar

The apprentice will	Criteria covered in the written exam
Brand reputation	
Understand the importance of upholding brand reputation, how brand reputation can become compromised and the impact on the business, and how threats can be managed. Identify the impact of social media on the industry and how it is used in own organisation	BR1 Principles of brand reputation BR2 Importance of adhering to brand standards, branding and messaging

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Assessing the business project

The purpose of the business project is to ensure the apprentice understands today's industry and what the consumer wants in a retail business, while relating this to their own retail organisation.

The project topic should not focus on an immediate problem, opportunity or idea, but prepare a medium-term strategy, for example, for a 2-year period for a department in a large retail organisation, or for the entire operation for a smaller organisation. It must look at opportunities and challenges, could incorporate new ideas and must lead to a coherent plan which would be appropriate for the business, match the organisation's objectives, identify measurable improvements and make recommendations for implementation.

Once the project has been identified by the apprentice, it should be discussed with their employer/training provider, this should be at least 1 month prior to the readiness for independent end-point assessment. The employer/training provider will then determine whether the proposed project has the potential to meet the criteria of the business project. The apprentice will then prepare a 1-page synopsis of their proposed project to bring to the end-point assessment planning meeting no less than 5 working days prior to the presentation.

The apprentice will be required to prepare a written copy of their proposal which is recommended to be around 500 words, but no more than 2 pages. This is submitted to the assessor and the assessor will review and authorise the proposal. If for any reason the proposal is not approved, the apprentice must re-submit a revised proposal within 1 week. The learner must not proceed with writing the final business project until the approval has been received and the end point assessment window starts.

Once the proposal has been approved, the apprentice will have no more than the 4-month assessment window period to prepare the project and should include:

- introduction and background
- outline of challenge or opportunity
- aims and objectives
- identification of measurable improvements and benefits to the organisation
- evidence of consultation and engagement of stakeholders
- analysis of costs and commercial context
- legislative requirements explained and adhered to
- evidence of effective research
- justified recommendations for implementation
- proposed timeframes for implementation

The apprentice should be given sufficient time to undertake the research and writing of the project and allocated the required facilities either within or away from the workplace. In addition, time will need to be given to allow the apprentice to prepare for the presentation of their project.

The business project must be presented to the end-point assessor within the 4-month assessment period at a pre-arranged date, which will be mutually agreed. The written project, plus any supporting information, must be submitted to Highfield at least 5 days in advance of the apprentice's presentation, which will enable the end-point assessor to mark, read, reflect and prepare questions for the presentation given by the apprentice. The business project should be submitted via Dashboard, in either PDF or Word format.

The apprentice may present their project in a format of their choosing; however, they should ensure that they cover the key recommendations from their project within the detail contained within the report.

The final business project does not need to be implemented, the business project is a written report that acts as a detailed business case regarding their idea/improvement and needs to purely focus on the assessment criteria.

The apprentice will have 30 minutes to deliver their presentation to the end-point assessor and this should include time for questions and answers at the end. An appropriate, quiet place should be available for the presentation to ensure that there are no interruptions; this may be on or off site. The employer can be present during the presentation as an observer only and as such, must not interact with the assessment activity.

The end-point assessor will then mark the written project and the presentation against the criteria listed below.

Business project criteria

The following page includes the criteria that must be covered by the business project.

Business project	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
BP1 Give a general introduction and background to the retail business, including how this related to the wider organisation, local and national environment BP2 Outline the problem, challenge or opportunity identified BP3 State the aims and objectives of the project BP4 Identify how the potential changes would lead to measurable improvements and benefits to the retail business BP5 Consult relevant stakeholders (e.g. customers, team members, managers) to inform the results and recommendations BP6 Provide a detailed analysis of costs associated with the proposed recommendations BP7 Identify applicable local and national legislation and ensure the proposal complies BP8 Provide research methodology to demonstrate a logical, coherent approach BP9 Make clear recommendations for implementation BP10 Concise validation and justification of recommendations	BP11 *Give a detailed introduction and background of the retail business, wider organisations, local and national environments, including on-line considerations* BP12 *Outline the current situation which has led to the identification of a challenge or opportunity* BP13 *Provide detailed aims and objectives for the project, linking to the current situation* BP14 *Identification of measurable improvements and benefits to the organisation* BP15 *Provide evidence of wide consultation with a range of stakeholders and show how responses have been effectively evaluated and their content considered and included in the recommendation* BP16 *A thorough analysis of costs and benefits of the recommendations in the short, medium and long term* BP17 *Critically analyse the project to ensure it meets organisational and legal requirements* BP18 *Effectively design and use a research methodology using qualitative and quantitative research to its best effect* BP19 *Detailed recommendations for implementation* BP20 *Comprehensive link from the project into the medium term strategy of the retail business* BP21 *Detailed validation and justification of recommendations* BP22 *Proposed timeframes for implementation*

Assessing the professional discussion

Throughout the 1-hour professional discussion, the assessor will review the apprentice's competence in all of the pass criteria outlined in this document as a minimum, therefore apprentices should prepare for the professional discussion by considering how the criteria can be met. The professional discussion will be conducted in a 'controlled environment' i.e. a quiet room, away from the normal place of work.

The apprentice can only achieve a distinction by covering all of the pass and distinction criteria, which is outlined in the distinction column.

This discussion will be divided into 3 stages:

- a review of the period of learning, development and continuous assessment (approximately 10 minutes)

- coverage of the remaining areas for the professional discussion as shown below (approximately 40 minutes)

- personal development and reflection – focusing on professional development (approximately 10 minutes).

Before the assessment:

Employers/training providers should:

- ensure the apprentice knows the date, time and location of the assessment
- ensure the apprentice knows which retail manager criteria will be assessed (outlined on the following pages)
- encourage the apprentice to reflect on their experience and learning on-programme to understand what is required to meet the standard and identify real-life examples
- be prepared to provide clarification to the apprentice, and signpost them to relevant parts of their on-programme experience as preparation for this assessment

It is suggested that a mock assessment is carried out by the apprentice in advance of the end-point assessment with the training provider/employer giving feedback on any areas for improvement.

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Professional discussion - mock assessment

It is the employer/training provider's responsibility to prepare apprentices for their end-point assessment, and Highfield recommend that they experience a mock professional discussion in preparation for the real thing. The most appropriate form of mock assessment will depend on the apprentice's setting and the resources available at the time. In designing a mock assessment, the employer/training provider should consider the following elements in their planning:

- a 1-hour time slot should be available for the complete professional discussion, if it is intended to be a complete mock assessment covering all relevant standards, however this time may be split up to allow for progressive learning
- consider an audio recording of the mock, and to allow the mock to be observed by other apprentices, especially if it is not practicable for the employer/training provider to carry out a separate mock assessment with each apprentice
- ensure that the apprentice's performance is assessed by a competent trainer/assessor, and that feedback is shared with the apprentice, to complete the learning experience, the mock assessment document sheets available from the website may be used for this purpose
- structured 'open' questions should be used as part of the professional discussion which do not lead the apprentice, but allows them to express their knowledge in a calm and comfortable manner, some examples of this may include the following:

    o marketing
        ▪ can you please tell me who are your main competitors?
        ▪ how do you monitor their activities?
    o stock
        ▪ Does stock ever get damaged in your business?
        ▪ what do you do if it does?
    o leadership
        ▪ how do you plan each day?
        ▪ how do you know what needs to be achieved on a daily/weekly basis

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Professional discussion criteria

The following page includes the criteria that must be covered by the professional discussion.

Professional discussion	
To pass, the following must be evidenced	**To gain a distinction**
PD1 Clearly articulate examples from the workplace relevant to evidencing competence across the standard	LE4 *Explains how effective retail management and contingency planning have been developed and implemented and how this has increased overall departmental performance*
CO6 Explain why it is essential to instil the importance of following procedures to staff	
DS6 Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation and development of teams and individual staff members	FN8 *Describe how recommendations for the improvement of quality, cost, value or efficiency have been made and implemented in the organisation*
SP5 Provide an overview of how the retail operation meets the needs of the business	DS7 *Demonstrates staff engagement, motivation, performance management and how this has led to increased performance*
SP6 Provide reasoned examples of how the operation operates efficiently	LG7 *Demonstrate how a proactive approach to risk management has been implemented, including proactively educating and monitoring staff on health and safety and risk matters beyond the legislative minimum*
PS1 Explain the importance of keeping up to date with current industry trends and provide examples of how this has been achieved	
FN7 Provide evidence to show they have been part of the budgeting and cost control in the organisation	DS8 *Provide examples of when improvement activities have been actively sought to develop own performance to raise standards in sales, promotions, team performance and customer service*
LG6 Describe how the retail operation meets legislative and regulatory needs	
LE3 Provide an effective evaluation of own performance, including behaviours, identifying where opportunities for improvement have been taken and results thereof evaluated	LE5 *Provides mentorship to team members with measurable improvements to the performance of individuals and the team*
CU1 Demonstrate how feedback has been sought from managers and customers and how this has been effectively dealt with	CU2 *Proactively invite feedback from all stakeholders and use this to develop and implement measurable improvements in performance of self and team*

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