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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:	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.

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.

The training programme leading to end-point assessment should cover the breadth and depth of the standard using suggested on-programme assessment methods that integrate the knowledge, skills and behaviour components, and which ensure that the apprentice is sufficiently prepared to undertake the end-point assessment. Training, development and ongoing review activities should include:

- achievement of level 2 English and maths. If the apprentice began their apprenticeship training before their 19th birthday, they will still be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths. The requirements for English and maths are optional for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training.

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

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

- the apprentice must have achieved level 2 English and maths. The requirements for English and maths are mandatory for all apprentices aged between 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship training. The requirements for English and maths are optional for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training.
- the line manager (employer) must be confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard and that the apprentice is competent in performing their role. 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

The written exam must be the first assessment component, followed by the retail business project and finally the professional discussion.

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

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, for instance, 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/

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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 completed the following. The requirements for English and maths listed below are mandatory for all apprentices aged between 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship training. The requirements for English and maths listed below are optional for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training.

- Achieved Level 2 English
- Achieved Level 2 maths
- A 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.

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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 licence
- a valid warrant card issued by HM forces or the police
- another photographic ID card, for example, employee ID card or travel card

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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.

Financial
Knowledge
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
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
Amplification and guidance

• **General principles of operating commercially** may include:
     o cost management
     o budget control
     o maximising sales
     o customer experience
     o strategic planning
     o monitoring performance
     o ethical and sustainable procedures
 	
 • **Business strategy** outlines the plan for achieving long-term goals and objectives, which guides the direction of a business. This may include:
     o the scope of the business' activities

- o the content of a business strategy, for example, its goals, visions, mission and plans
- o market positioning and barriers to entry - what would stop a new competitor from entering the market:
    - cost of stores or the high cost of creating a brand
    - low barrier to entry by an online competitor
- o how it intends to achieve its goals
- o influencing factors, for example, macro factors:
    - economy
    - employment level
    - inflation
    - industry factors, for example, shift to online sales
- o multi-channel retailing:
    - stores
    - online
    - mail order
- o manage the overall performance of the team to achieve financial targets, taking into account the retail calendar year
- o understanding 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

- **Profit margin** is a critical financial metric that indicates how much profit a business makes from its sales after accounting for costs. Different products or services often have varying profit margins, which can affect pricing strategies, sales tactics and overall profitability.

- **Principles of budgeting and forecasting** are essential practices in retail management that help ensure financial stability and support strategic planning. They involve estimating future financial performance and planning how to manage resources effectively to achieve business goals.
    Principles of budgeting may include:
    - creating a detailed financial plan
    - setting realistic internal goals/targets
    - being flexible and adaptable
    - monitoring progress/performance
    - stakeholder involvement
    - taking corrective action
  - o Principles of forecasting may include:

- reviewing last year's sales
- data-driven insights to make informed predictions
- analysing trends
- incorporating external factors
- developing scenario to prepare
- collaborative input by involving key stakeholders
- using technology to enhance accuracy
- integrated with business planning processes

- **Budget** is the financial plan that outlines expected revenues and expenses over a specific period, such as a month, quarter or year. It serves as a benchmark for financial performance and resource allocation.

- **'Actuals'** refers to the real financial performance figures recorded over a specific period. These figures are compared against the budgeted amounts to evaluate performance.

- **Cash flow** is the movement of cash into and out of the business over a specific period. It tracks how cash is generated and used in daily operations, investments and financing activities.

- **Key financial data** may include:
  o profit and loss statements, current ratio and balance sheet
  o understand the main factors influencing profitable retail performance and how forecasting aligns with the retail calendar
  o demonstrate understanding on how to analyse and utilise forecasting information on financial outcomes
  o recognise the effects of various costs on the business and effectively manage resources
  o review reports to pinpoint key actions and recommendations while maintaining commercial awareness
  o develop and present financial plans as and when needed by the business while identifying and implementing strategies to boost profits and minimise costs
  o central company costs compared with store costs
  o 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, for example, impact of seasonal and promotional events
- different types of costs:
  - financial
  - non-financial
- opportunity cost
- depreciation - general understanding
- capital expenditure – general understanding of Return on Capital Expenditure (ROCE), Return on Capital Investment (ROCI)
- basic cost benefit analysis for new projects

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Leadership
Knowledge
Understand different **leadership styles** used in retail businesses and when to use them effectively to motivate and inspire the team to do their best
Written exam
To pass, the following must be evidenced
LE1   Leadership styles
LE2   Theories of motivation
Amplification and guidance

- **Leadership styles** refer to the methods of leading and supporting teams to achieve results. This may include:
  - laissez-faire:
    - adopts a hands-off approach to enable team members to make decisions and manage their tasks with minimal interference.
  - autocratic:
    - the leader holds full authority and decisions are made independently with minimal input from team members. The leader expects team members to adhere to all directions given.
  - democratic:
    - team members are involved in the decision-making process, encouraging their participation and valuing their input.
  - transactional:
    - emphasises the importance of routine, established procedures. Leaders use rewards and punishments to manage team performance.
  - transformational:
    - inspires and motivates the team by creating a vision for the future, through encouraging innovation and personal development among team members.

- **Theories of motivation** may include:
  - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - posits that people are motivated by a hierarchy of needs:
    - physiological, for example, food and water
    - safety, for example, security and stability

- social, for example, relationships and a sense of belonging
- esteem, for example, respect and recognition
- self-actualisation, for example, personal growth and achieving one's potential
  - Herzberg Two-Factor theory - divides factors affecting motivation into 'Hygiene Factors' and 'Motivators':
    - hygiene factors are necessary to prevent dissatisfaction but do not motivate employees, for example, salary, working conditions and company policies.
    - motivators drive higher performance and satisfaction, for example, recognition and opportunities for advancement
  - McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y - theory distinguishes between 2 management styles:
    - theory X assumes employees are inherently lazy and need strict supervision. This leadership style involves close supervision, control and a directive approach.
    - theory Y assumes employees are motivated, responsible and seek self-direction. This theory encourages a more participative approach, involving employees in decision-making and fostering autonomy.
  - Vroom's Expectancy Theory - suggests that motivation is based on the expectation that effort will lead to desired performance and rewards. It involves 3 components:
    - expectancy - the belief that effort leads to performance
    - instrumentality - the belief that performance leads to rewards
    - valence - the value of the rewards to the employee

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Marketing	
Knowledge	**Skills**
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

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

- **Marketing strategies** for new product, brand awareness or increasing sales of a current product or service may include:
  - 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:
    - Facebook
    - The location, sex, age and interests can be targeted to
    - Influencers and bloggers
  - food tasting stations
  - loyalty programmes and incentives
  - general understanding of the marketing mix - product, price, place, promotion (4 Ps)
  - multi-channel sales in retail including hybrid methods combining 2 channels with positives and negatives of each
  - programmatic marketing
  - socio-economic scale - A, B, C1, C2, D, E and its use in marketing

- o   how high street retailers are combating on-line retailers, for example, service or experiences

- **Online, print and in person marketing methods:**
  - o   online marketing methods may include:
    - ▪   social media advertisements, for example, YouTube
    - ▪   email campaigns
    - ▪   search engine optimisation
    - ▪   online advertising
  - o   physical marketing methods may include:
    - ▪   in-store radio systems
    - ▪   newspapers
    - ▪   magazines
    - ▪   posters
    - ▪   flyers
  - o   in-person marketing methods may include:
    - ▪   face-to-face interactions
    - ▪   events
    - ▪   store displays
    - ▪   pop-up shops
    - ▪   personal selling

- **Product life cycle** outlines the stages a product undergoes from introduction to decline. Understanding this cycle helps in planning marketing strategies and managing inventory efficiently. This may include:
  - o   development
  - o   introduction
  - o   growth
  - o   maturity
  - o   saturation

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- o decline

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

- **Retail sales calendar** - overview of all events and sales trends on a calendar:
  - o regular annual events
    - o Christmas
    - o Valentine's Day
    - o Back to school
    - o Other school holidays
    - o Easter (taking place on different dates each year)
  - o new marketing/promotional trends, for example, Black Friday or Cyber Monday

Communications

Knowledge

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

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

Amplification and guidance

- **Methods of communication** in the workplace may include**:**
  - in-person communication may include:
    - meetings - formal or informal
    - conversations
    - presentations
    - 'town hall' meetings
  - written communication may include:
    - posters
    - signage
    - flyers
    - letters
    - memos
    - retail magazines
  - digital communication may include:
    - email
    - social media
    - instant messaging apps

- **Verbal/non-verbal:**
  - verbal communication may include:
    - face-to-face conversations
    - telephones calls
    - video calls
    - written words
  - non-verbal communication may include:
    - active listening
    - body language
    - facial expressions
    - gestures

- **Needs of individuals** refers to the understanding of what each individual requires to perform optimally or achieve satisfaction. By accurately identifying these needs, you can tailor your approach to support both your team and your customers more effectively. This may include:
  - identifying needs of employees may include:
    - through one-to-one meetings
    - performance reviews
    - feedback and surveys
    - observations
  - identifying the needs of customers may include:
    - customer feedback
    - direct interaction
    - sales data analysis
    - market research

- **Principles of active listening** may include:
  - being fully present by giving your complete attention to the speaker
  - showing empathy towards speaker's feelings and perspectives
  - provide feedback by offering verbal and non-verbal feedback to show you are engaged and understand the message
  - ask clarifying questions to gain a deeper understanding
  - reflect and summarise the key points to confirm understanding
  - avoid interrupting by allowing the speaker to finish their thoughts before responding

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- o   use non-verbal cues, such as nodding and eye contact, to show that you are engaged

- **Constructive feedback** is aimed at improving performance by offering clear, specific and actionable suggestions for improvement. Ways to give constructive feedback may include:
  - o   using the situation, behaviour and impact model (SBI):
    - ▪   describe the situation, the specific behaviour observed and the impact of that behaviour
  - o   focusing on behaviours and actions rather than personal attributes
  - o   encourage dialogue by creating an open environment where feedback is a two-way conversation
  - o   following up to the initial meeting

Sales and promotion

Knowledge	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	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**

Amplification and guidance

- **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 (KPIs) 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
  - store profit - also known as contribution towards central costs
  - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) targets
  - key performance indicators (KPI's) may include:
    - 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
  - effective communication of targets to staff
  - top down and bottom-up planning of sales budgets/plans
  - obtaining buy-in by the store sales team

- **Data analysis** involves the systematic use of statistical and logical methods to describe, summarise and compare data. It helps in deriving actionable insights that can guide business strategies and decisions.
  - The steps involved in data analysis may include:
    - collecting data
    - cleaning and organising data
    - analysing data
    - interpretating results
    - making data-driven decisions
    - communicating findings
  - Application of data-analysis may include:
    - tracking and analysing sales data to evaluate performance against targets to identify high and low performing products
    - analysing customer behaviours, such as purchasing history and feedback, to gain insights into customer preferences and experiences, allowing for improvements to be made
    - assessing inventory management, such as levels and turnover rates, to optimise stock levels and reduce excess inventory
    - evaluating the marketing effectiveness of campaigns and promotions on sales and customer engagement

- **Threats to sales targets** may include:
  - macro:
    - economy

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- o legislative changes and Ministry of Government
- o inflation
- o fluctuating disposable income
- o currency changes affecting products sourced overseas
  - o 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, for example, failure to declare a delivery discrepancy

- **Principles of the retail calendar** is the overview of all events and sales trends on a calendar. This may include:
  - o potential opportunities and threats of promotions and events, for example, margin, turnover or profit
  - o new promotional trends, for example, Black Friday promotions (how named and date) or food safety week
  - o maximise opportunities for sales:
    - o visual merchandising to support sales
    - o stock management
  - o positioning of stock in store and within window display
  - o co-ordinating of linked or associated merchandise, including impulse purchases
  - o how main sale promotions decelerate and methods of boosting, for example, additional markdowns or last days
  - o how to maximise impact in promotions and in particular sale promotions
  - o resources (space management):
    - o pound sterling per square foot
    - o pound sterling per linear foot
    - o pound sterling per shelf space

Brand reputation
Knowledge
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
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** could include:
  - 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 such as:
    - tobacco
    - cigarettes
    - knives
    - alcohol
  - social responsibility, for example, recycling and being carbon neutral

- **Brand standards, branding and messaging** could include:
  - brand standards are guidelines that ensure consistency in how a brand is presented across various channels and touchpoints.
  - branding involves creating and maintaining a distinct and recognisable brand identity through various strategies and elements. This may be through:
    - brand name

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- logo
- colour scheme
- overall design
- music played in stores
  - o messaging refers to the content and tone used to communicate the brand's values, promises and key messages to its audience
  - o examples of how these can be applied may include:
    - through in-store experiences such as store layout, signage and customer interactions
    - developing and executing marketing campaigns that adhere to brand standards and effectively communicate the brand's key messages
    - training staff to understand and adhere to brand standards and communicate the brand's messaging effectively during customer interactions
    - ensuring all customer communications, including feedback responses and promotional offers, align with the brand's tone and standards

Merchandising

Knowledge	Skills
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

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** could include:
  - less is more
  - pyramid principle
  - repetition
  - focal points
  - symmetry
  - visual merchandising:
    - product positioning in store, co-ordinating items and 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 supports 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

- **Local and national trends and requirements** could include:
  - local trends refer to specific preferences and demands of customers in a particular geographic area, while local requirements may include regulations or cultural considerations that affect merchandising decisions. The influences these have on merchandising may include:
    - customer preferences - these can dictate the types of products that are popular and in demand within a specific area
    - cultural and seasonal events – events within the area can influence merchandising decisions to align with local celebrations, traditions or climate
    - local regulations - for example, health and safety can affect how products are displayed and sold
    - competitive landscape - understanding the local competitive environment
  - national trends refer to the widespread preferences and market movements across the country, while national requirements include regulations or industry standards that impact merchandising strategies. The influences these have on merchandising may include:
    - market tends - the current national market trends, for example, the rise in national interest in sustainable products
    - economic factors - the current economic conditions can influence the adjustments in pricings, promotions and inventory levels, for example, an economic downturn
    - regulatory compliance - adhering to national regulations, such as health and safety standards or product labelling requirements
    - consumer behaviour insights - research and data on consumer behaviours highlight broader preferences and purchasing patterns

- **Merchandising plans** outline the strategies for product placement, display and promotion within a retail store. They are designed to enhance the shopping experience and drive sales. The key components in a merchandising plan may include:
  - product placement:
    - the strategic positioning of products to maximise visibility and accessibility, for example, placing high-demand products at eye level or near the entrance
  - visual displays:
    - creating appealing and engaging displays to capture customer interest, for example, highlighting seasonal promotions
  - promotional activities:
    - co-ordinating in-store promotions and marketing efforts to boost sales, for example, organising special discount events
  - inventory management:
    - ensuring that the correct products are available at the appropriate time and in the right quantities, for example, monitoring stock levels and replenishing fast-selling items to prevent stockouts

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- **Online and in-store promotions** could include:
  - key characteristics of online promotions may include:
    - they are ideal for attracting new customers, as they can reach a wider audience beyond geographical boundaries
    - they allow for personalised marketing based on customer behaviour and preferences
    - they offer greater convenience and flexibility, as online promotions are accessible at any time
    - they provide valuable data and insights into customer behaviour and campaign effectiveness
  - key characteristics of in-store promotions may include:
    - they allow customers to physically interact with products and enhances their shopping experience
    - they drive impulsive buying, as they can purchase and take products home immediately
    - they provide opportunities for direct customer interaction and relationship building
    - they can be tailored to local events, culture or customer preferences
  - applying online and in-store promotional strategies may include:
    - launching coordinated campaigns that simultaneously promote a product online and in store
    - using customer data to create targeted promotions that appeal to specific customer segments
    - creating engaging in-store experiences that drive foot traffic and complement online efforts

Stock
Knowledge
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
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 could include: - merchandising, for example, 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 (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), for example, weeks/monthly sales cover for initial auto-replenishment calculation; average weekly sales and the weekly stock cover required for the product, for example, 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, for example, Christmas or Valentine's Day   - wastage control - how to manage and control/ minimise   - food merchandising versus clothing – much shorter shelf-life   - how to deal with over stocks and end-of-season lines in sale promotions, especially using multi-channel retailing   - mark-downs and their effect on margin   - how to effectively deal with ageing stock, for example, marked down stock, inter-store transfers and recalls

- o   the relationship of effective stock management to promotional events

- **Implications of effective/ineffective stock control** could include:
  - o   Effective stock control implications may include:
    - cost efficiency - reduces holding costs by maintaining optimal inventory levels
    - improved cash flow - frees up capital that would otherwise be tied up in excess stock
    - increased profitability - minimises stockouts and overstock situations, leading to higher sales and reduced markdowns
    - efficient operations - streamlines processes and reduces time spent on manual inventory tasks
    - improved customer satisfaction - ensures product availability and timely fulfilment of customer orders
    - better decision-making - provides accurate data for informed decision-making on purchasing and stock allocation
    - increased store morale - makes team members' daily tasks easier
  - o   Ineffective stock control implications may include:
    - increased costs - leads to higher storage and handling costs due to excess inventory
    - cash flow problems - ties up cash in unsold stock, affecting the retailer's ability to invest in other areas
    - lost sales and revenue - stockouts can lead to missed sale opportunities and dissatisfied customers
    - operational inefficiencies - causes delays and increased workload due to frequent stock checks and adjustments
    - customer dissatisfaction - results in delays in fulfilling orders and poor customer service due to stockouts
    - supply chain disruptions - creates challenges in maintaining consistent supply due to poor demand forecasting
    - decreased staff morale - team members' daily activities become more difficult

- **Correct storage conditions** ensures that stock remains in optimal condition and prevents loss or damage. The correct storage conditions for a range of stock may include:
  - o   perishable goods:
    - temperature control - keeping perishable goods refrigerated or frozen to prevent spoilage, for example, storing dairy products in a chilled environment between 1°C and 4°C
    - humidity management - maintaining appropriate humidity levels to preserve freshness, for example, using humidifiers in produce sections to prevent dehydration of fruits and vegetables
  - o   non-perishable goods:

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- temperature and light - store in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight to prevent degeneration, for example, keeping canned goods and dry foods in a temperature-controlled warehouse
- security measures – ensure non-perishable items are securely stored to prevent theft or damage, for example, implementing lockable storage for high-risk/high-value items
  - fragile items:
    - protective packaging - uses appropriate packaging to prevent breakage, for example, storing glassware in padded containers and using bubble wrap for extra protection
    - organised shelving - ensure shelves are stable and not overcrowded to prevent accidents, for example, placing fragile items on lower shelves to reduce risk of falling
  - hazardous materials:
    - safety compliance - adhering to regulations for the safety storage of chemicals and hazardous substances, for example, using ventilated cabinets for storing flammable materials
    - labelling and signage - clearly labelling hazardous material and display safety signs, for example, posting warning signs and ensuring proper labelling of all chemical containers
  - textiles and clothing:
    - temperature and humidity control - maintaining moderate temperature and humidity to prevent mould and mildew, for example storing clothing in a climate-controlled environment to avoid moisture damage
    - organisation and accessibility - using appropriate shelving and racks for easy access and inventory management, for example, organising clothes in size order for easy retrieval

- **Manual and automated stock ordering systems** could include:
  - manual stock ordering involves physical tracking of inventory levels and placing orders by hand. This requires staff to monitor stock levels and reorder products manually when necessary.
  - automated stock ordering systems use technology to monitor inventory levels and place orders automatically based on pre-set criteria. These systems often integrate with point-of-sale (POS) systems and other software.

- **Legal requirements** could include:

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- o certain products are age-restricted and can only be sold to customers above a certain age, for example, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks and knives. The legal obligation for these products may include:
  - o the customer's age must be verified before purchasing age-restricted products using a valid identification, such as a passport or driver's licence
  - o employees should be trained to understand how to handle sales of age-restricted products
  - o appropriate signage must be displayed, informing customers of age restrictions
- o products must have accurate labelling and safety information. The legal obligations for this may include:
  - o ensuring all products comply with relevant safety standards, for example, providing use-by and best before dates
  - o labels must provide correct information about the product, including ingredients, usage instructions and any hazards
- o environmental regulations may apply to the disposal of certain products, such as electronic waste. The legal obligations for this may include:
  - o follow proper procedures for disposing of waste products in accordance with environmental laws
  - o comply with any mandatory recycling or disposal programmes for specific product categories

Developing self and others

Knowledge
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

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**

Amplification and guidance

- **Training needs analysis** is a systematic process used to identify gaps in knowledge, skills and abilities within an organisation. The main aim is to determine what training is required to enhance employee performance and meet business objectives.
    - The key aspects of training needs analysis may include:
        - identifying skills gaps
        - aligning training with business goals
        - involving stakeholders
        - assessing current competencies
        - prioritising training needs
    - The steps in conducting a training needs analysis may include:
        - define objectives
        - gather data
        - analyse data
        - develop training plan
        - implement and evaluate

- **Learning and development cycle** is a structured approach to enhancing employees' skills and competencies. It ensures that training and development activities are systematically planned, executed and reviewed to support both individual growth and organisational goals.
  - The key stages of the learning and development cycle may include:
    - identify the skills and knowledge gaps within your team or organisation to determine what training is required
    - define clear, specific and achievable objectives for the training programme to ensure it meets the identified need
    - plan and design learning that includes the content, methods and resources needed to achieve the learning objectives
    - deliver the learning to suit individual/team and learning need(s)
    - evaluate the impact of the training on the learners and the organisation to determine if the objectives were met and identify areas for improvement
    - regularly review the training and development processes to ensure they remain relevant and effective, adjusting as necessary

- **Importance of feedback** could include:
  - feedback is a critical component in the workplace, serving as a tool for growth, improvement and engagement for both individuals and teams. The importance of giving feedback may include:
    - performance improvement - as feedback helps individuals understand their performance, identify areas for improvement and align their efforts with organisational goals
    - employee engagement and motivation - regular feedback can enhance employee engagement by making team members feel valued and recognised for their contributions.
    - skills development - feedback provides valuable insights that support skill enhancement and professional growth
    - fostering open communication - a feedback-rich culture encourages open communication, transparency and trust within the team
    - allows for in-the-moment feedback to be given - this provides employees with the ability to effectively communicate openly as soon as possible, when needed
    - identifying strengths and weaknesses - feedback helps individuals recognise their strengths and address weaknesses, contributing to personal and professional growth

- **Learning styles** refers to the different ways in which individuals prefer to receive and process information:
  - visual learners favour the use of images, diagrams and other visual aids to understand and retain information
  - auditory learners benefit from listening to information through discussions, lectures or audio recordings

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- o reading/writing learners prefer to engage with text through reading and writing tasks
- o kinaesthetic learners engage best through hands-on activities and physical involvement in the learning process

- **Training plan design** ensures that training activities meet the needs of the team and support the overall goals of the business. A well-structured training plan helps in organising and delivering training in a systematic manner, ensuring that all necessary topics are covered and that training is aligned with the business objectives.
  - o Methods of applying training plan designs may include:
    - identifying training needs through personal development plan (PDP)
    - setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) objectives
    - including personal development reviews

Team performance
Knowledge
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
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

- **Performance management** could include:
    - Processes
    - Continual professional development/learning (CPD)
    - Informal and formal disciplinary process
    - Mabey elements of performance management cycle
    - Benchmarking
    - Theories, for example, Belbin and Tuckman
    - Attrition (staff leavers) and staff turnover:
        - how to calculate
        - causes of
    - Time management:
        - The 4 quadrants of time management, for example, Eisenhower Decision Matrix and Stephen Covey's Time Management Matrix
        - Pareto principle (80/20 rule)
        - Prioritisation
        - Paper versus electronic time management/planning

- **Recruitment** could include:

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- o Recruitment process
- o Assessment day processes
- o Competency-based interviews
- o Job description and person specification
- o Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act) Act, including protected characteristics
- o Eligibility to work in the UK—Immigration Asylum and Nationality Act
- o Probationary period

- **Retention of staff** is crucial for maintaining a stable and experienced workforce. Understanding the factors that impact staff retention helps in creating a positive work environment and addressing issues that may lead to high turnover.
  - o Factors that impact staff retention may include:
    - work environment and culture
    - competitive compensation and benefits
    - career development opportunities
    - work-life balance
    - recognition and rewards
    - effective communication
    - job satisfaction and role clarity
    - salary
    - hours contracted/hours available

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Legal and governance

Knowledge	Skills
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

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**

Amplification and guidance

- **Legal requirements** could include:
    - Health and safety legislations
    - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
    - Licensing Act
    - Sale of goods
    - Consumer rights
    - Food safety
    - Trading standards
    - Employment law
    - Dealing with a terror threat
    - Risk assessments
    - Legal requirements regarding non-compliance

- **Health and safety** could include:
    - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
- The Fire Safety Order
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at Work Regulations
- First Aid Regulations

- **Trading standards** refers to a set of regulations and practices designed to ensure that businesses comply with laws relating to consumer protection, fair trading and product safety. Adherence to trading standards is crucial for maintaining legal compliance and building trust with customers. This may include:
  - compliance with legislation
  - accurate product information
  - consumer protection laws
  - fair trading practices
  - handling complaints and disputes
  - record keeping and documentation
  - training and awareness

- **Data protection** refers to the practices and regulations that ensure personal information is collected, stored and handled responsibly and securely. This is regulated by the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The regulation of consumer data could include:
  - obtaining explicit consent from customers before collecting their data for marketing purposes and informing them about how their data will be used
  - collecting personal data must be done with clear consent from individuals and they should be informed about the purpose of data collection:
    - providing a clear checkbox on an online sign-up form for customers to agree to receive marketing communications
    - explaining to customers what their data will be used for

- o personal data must be stored securely to protect it from unauthorised access, loss or theft:
    - using secure systems for storing customer data, such as encrypted databases and access-controlled servers
    - ensuring that only authorised staff members have access to sensitive customer information
    - regularly updating security measures to prevent breaches
- o individuals have the right to access their personal data and request corrections or deletions if necessary:
    - setting up a process for customers to request access to their data or ask for corrections
    - implementing a system where customers can view and update their personal information, such as addresses and contact details, through their account settings on the business' website
- o personal data should only be kept for as long as necessary and should be securely disposed of when no longer needed:
    - creating a data retention policy that specifies how long different types of customer data are kept and how they are securely deleted once they are no longer required
    - regularly reviewing and purging old customer records from your database that are beyond the retention period
- o staff should be trained on data protection practices to ensure they handle personal data appropriately:
    - providing training sessions on data protection and privacy for all employees who handle personal data
    - for example, providing workshops on how to recognise phishing attempts, securely handling customer information and understanding the importance of data protection laws
- o establishing procedures for reporting and managing data breaches or other data protection issues:
    - developing an incident response plan that outlines steps to take in the event of a data breach, such as notifying affected individuals and reporting the breach to the relevant authorities within the required timeframe
    - have clear protocols for documenting and addressing any data security incidents that occur

- **Corporate and social responsibility** could include:
    - o roles and responsibilities within stores may include:
        - sustainability
        - 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) and managing director (MD)
  - non-executive directors
  - whistle-blowing

Retail business project

Customer

Knowledge	Skills	Behaviour
Understand key drivers of customer journeys and how managing positive customer experiences increases 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

Business

Knowledge	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	Demonstrate personal responsibility for the strategic direction and objectives for own area of the business

Financial

Behaviour

Demonstrate **commercial acumen** and confidence to initiate change to improve the financial performance and profitability in line with business policy, objectives and procedures

Leadership

Behaviour

Influence, challenge and involve others, aligning personal values with those of the company to instil a high performance culture

Marketing

Behaviour

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

Product and service	
Knowledge	**Skills**
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

Technology	
Knowledge	**Skills**
Understand the technology requirements of the business and how to manage them to achieve effective and efficient retail operations and service; identify **commonly used and emerging technology** in the retail industry and identify its current and potential impact on the business	Ensure technology is sourced, located, available, maintained and secured in line with business needs; oversee the use of technology in line with business policy, identify and make recommendations for improvement

Diversity		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Understand how **local demographics** impact on business, **customers**, staff and products and how this impacts the business policies on diversity and equal opportunities	Implement business policy on diversity, ensuring team are aware of and know how to work effectively with colleagues, **customers** and other **stakeholders** from wide range of backgrounds and cultures	Instil values which embrace the benefits of working in a culturally diverse environment

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	**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*

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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	**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*

Amplification and guidance

- **Customers** may include:
  - Internal:
    - Employees
    - Suppliers
    - IT department
    - Merchandising team
    - Buying team
    - Marketing team
    - Finance team
    - HR department
  - External:
    - loyal customers
    - discount customers
    - impulse customers

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- o new customers
- o potential customers
- o need-based customers

- **Commercial acumen** refers to the ability to make decisions and take actions that improve a business's financial performance. It involves understanding market dynamics, financial principles and how different factors impact business profitability. This may include:
    - o analysing market trends and consumer behaviour:
        - understanding how market trends and consumer behaviour affect your retail operations and using this knowledge to make informed decisions
    - o financial management and analysis:
        - using financial data to assess business performance, identify areas for improvement and make decisions that enhance profitability
    - o strategic planning and implementation:
        - developing and executing strategies that align with business objectives and improve financial outcomes
    - o budgeting and cost control:
        - managing budgets effectively and controlling costs to ensure financial targets are met
    - o maximising sales and profitability:
        - implementing tactics to increase sales and profitability, such as optimising product placement, adjusting pricing, or running promotions
    - o adapting to business changes:
        - demonstrating flexibility and agility in response to changes in the retail environment, such as shifts in consumer demand or economic conditions

- **Stakeholders** are individuals or groups who have an interest in or are affected by the decisions and actions taken within a business. Examples of stakeholders could include:
    - o customers
    - o employee/team members
    - o managers
    - o suppliers
    - o shareholders/owners
    - o investors
    - o local community

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- o regulatory authorities
- o trade unions
- o competitors
- o local council

- **Commonly used and emerging technology** could include:
  - o point of sale (POS) systems
  - o electronic shelf labels (ESL)
  - o customer relationship management (CRM) systems
  - o inventory management systems
  - o artificial intelligence (AI)
  - o virtual reality (VR)
  - o contactless and mobile payment systems
  - o long range barcode scanning (RFID)

- **Local demographics** refers to the statistical characteristics of a population in a specific area and is crucial for tailoring business strategies to meet the needs of the local community and driving successful retail operations.
  - o Local demographics could include:
    - ▪ age
    - ▪ gender
    - ▪ income levels
    - ▪ education
    - ▪ cultural and ethnic backgrounds
  - o The influences local demographics have on a business could include:
    - ▪ local trends
    - ▪ consumer preferences
    - ▪ marketing and sales strategies
    - ▪ product and service offerings
    - ▪ cultural holidays

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Professional discussion

The professional discussion will recognise areas which have already been covered in the retail business project so as not to re-assess an area in which the apprentice has already demonstrated competence.

Professional discussion		
Customer		
Knowledge	**Skills**	**Behaviour**
Understand key drivers of customer journeys and how managing positive customer experiences increases 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
Business		
Skills		
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		
Financial		
Skills		**Behaviour**
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
Leadership		
Skills		**Behaviour**
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

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Marketing	
Skills	**Behaviour**
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

Communications	
Skills	**Behaviour**
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

Sales and promotions
Skills
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

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

Brand reputation	
Skills	**Behaviour**
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

Merchandising
Behaviour
Adapt merchandising principles to own environment, store configuration, local needs and sales patterns

Stock	
Skills	**Behaviour**
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

Technology
Behaviour
Drive efficiency in the implementation and use of new opportunities in technology for retail that will provide benefits to the business

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	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

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for, ensuring team members' and own development		
Team performance		
Skills		**Behaviour**
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
Legal and governance		
Behaviour		
Be accountable, advocate and adhere to the importance of working legally in the best interests of all people		

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 **PD2** Explain why it is essential to instil the **importance of following procedures** to staff **PD3** Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation and **development of teams and individual staff members** **PD4** Provide an **overview of how the retail operation meets the needs of the business** **PD5** Provide reasoned examples of how the operation operates efficiently **PD6** Explain the importance of keeping up to date with **current industry trends** and provide examples of how this has been achieved **PD7** Provide evidence to show they have been part of the budgeting and cost control in the organisation **PD8** Describe how the retail operation meets **legislative and regulatory needs** **PD9** Provide an effective evaluation of own performance, including behaviours, identifying where opportunities for improvement have been taken and results thereof evaluated	*PD11 Explains how effective retail management and contingency planning have been developed and implemented and how this has increased overall departmental performance* *PD12 Describe how recommendations for the improvement of quality, cost, value or efficiency have been made and implemented in the organisation* *PD13 Demonstrates staff engagement, motivation, performance management and how this has led to increased performance* *PD14 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* *PD15 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* *PD16 Provides **mentorship** to team members with **measurable improvements** to the performance of individuals and the team*

PD10 Demonstrate how **feedback** has been sought from managers and customers and how this has been effectively dealt with	PD17 *Proactively invite feedback from all stakeholders and use this to develop and implement measurable improvements in performance of self and team*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Amplification and guidance</td></tr>
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- **Forward planning** involves setting goals and creating strategies to achieve them to ensure a business remains competitive and responsive to change. This could include:
  - anticipating future trends
  - identifying customer needs
  - the challenges a business may face
  - developing actionable plans to address them
  - review retail calendar

- **Possible risks to brand reputation** could include:
  - operational failures
  - poor customer service
  - negative publicity and media coverage
  - ethical and compliance issues
  - customer feedback and reviews
  - social media reviews

- **Stock management system** refer to a process or software used to track and manage inventory levels, orders, sales and deliveries. It's essential for ensuring that the right amount of stock is available at the right time, while also minimising losses due to damage, theft or errors. The importance of ensuring effective stock managements systems may include:
  - minimising stock damage:
    - stock damage can occur during handling, storage or transportation
    - understanding the risks that can occur allows for practices to be implanted to reduce the risk of damage
    - for example, proper storage methods, careful handling and regular checks on stock condition
  - preventing loss of stock:

- stock loss can occur due to theft, administrative errors or spoilage
- monitoring the stock management system helps identify and prevent these issues by tracking inventory accurately and implementing security measures
- for example, using security tags on high-value items or regularly auditing stock levels
  - o continuous monitoring and improvement:
    - this allows for patterns to be identified and potential issues to be spotted early
    - this information allows for informed decisions to be made to improve processes
    - for example, regularly reviewing stock reports
  - o financial and operational impact:
    - effective stock management not only reduces costs associated with damage and loss but also ensures that the business operates efficiently
    - correct stock management leads to better customer satisfaction by ensuring that products are available when needed, while also reducing waste and improving profitability
    - for example, adjusting stock levels based on sales trends prevents overstocking or understocking, which reduces waste and ensures customers can purchase the products wanted

- **Importance of following procedures** in the workplace could include:
  - o ensuring consistent performance
  - o enhancing efficiency and productivity
  - o ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
  - o maintaining quality control
  - o facilitating training and onboarding
  - o reducing risk and managing safety
  - o improving communication and accountability
  - o reducing accidents in the workplace

- **Development of teams and individual staff members** could include:
  - o identifying training needs through assessing skills gaps among team members:
    - conduct performance reviews
    - skills assessments/skills audits

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- o designing and implementing training programmes tailored to address the identified skills and knowledge:
  - workshops
  - on-the-job training
  - mentoring
  - job swaps
- o providing ongoing support and feedback to aid in understanding progress and areas for improvement:
  - regular one-to-one meetings
  - providing constructive feedback
  - conducting appraisals
  - encouraging self-reflection and evaluation
- o building a collaborative team environment by fostering a positive environment that supports the development of team dynamics:
  - organise team-building activities
  - encourage communication, collaboration and teamwork among staff
  - build on confidence of self and others
- o measuring the effectiveness of development initiatives by assessing the impact of the initiative on meeting objectives:
  - using performance metrics, for example, key performance indicators (KPIs)
  - feedback surveys
  - follow-up evaluations
- o adapting development approaches based on feedback to ensure they are effective:
  - being flexible with training
  - understand when to coach and when to be a mentor
  - understand the difference between a leader and a manager with the advantages and disadvantages of each in different roles/scenarios

- **Current industry trends** could include:
  - o online, and click and collect
  - o cashier less stores
  - o radio frequency identification (RFID) tags
  - o efficiencies, for example, lowering costs to compete with online retailers
  - o marketing trends, for example, Black Friday promotions
  - o local and national legislation regarding selling products:
    - o tobacco
    - o cigarettes

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- - knives
  - alcohol
  - supporting store or head office functions
  - human resources (HR), marketing, finance, buying and merchandising
  - retail operations supporting other sales channels, for example, click and collect or ordering in store via tablet for sizes or ranges not stocked
  - how to keep up to date with retail trends/news
    - news apps (retail subject)
    - alerts
    - newspapers
    - television news
    - trade magazines
    - comparison shopping
  - interpret and share information, for example, customer service satisfaction, mystery shoppers, customer surveys including till receipt surveys via online code, product knowledge and awareness of new lines
  - service offers for example:
    - history of own company
    - service level
    - products
    - unique selling point (USP)
  - product ranges:
    - where to find information
    - internally
    - externally
    - risk analysis or risk assessments
    - changing product range in line with changing demographics
    - expanding product ranges in retailers

- **Legislative and regulatory needs** may include compliance with:
  - health and safety regulations
  - data protection laws

- o trading standards
- o employment laws
- o environmental regulations
- o age-restricted sales requirements
- o accessibility regulations

- **Feedback** could include:
  - o customers:
    - o surveys
    - o questionnaires (online, front till receipts, email, postal and in store)
    - o loyalty card information
  - o managers:
    - o reviews
    - o one-to-one's
    - o appraisals
    - o performance reviews
    - o store walks (manager walks the store providing feedback to the team on store standards)

- **Mentorship** involves guiding and supporting team members to help them develop their skills, grow in their roles and achieve their career goals. This could include:
  - o providing advice
  - o helping team members improve their customer service skills
  - o understanding retail operations better
  - o assisting team members in developing better sales techniques
  - o sharing experiences
  - o offering constructive feedback to help others improve and succeed
  - o encouraging personal growth
  - o helping team members to believe in their abilities and take on challenges with a positive mindset

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

Assessment summary

The end-point assessment for the retail manager apprenticeship is made up of 3 assessment methods:

1. A 2-hour written exam, 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
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. The grade will be determined using the combined grades.

Written exam

Total marks available are 80.

- 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)
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will have scored 47 or below

The test may be delivered online or be paper-based and should be in a 'controlled' environment.

Retail business project

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria outlined in this kit.

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all the pass criteria **and** all distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will not have achieved all of the pass criteria

The retail business report and presentation should be conducted in a suitable location such as an employer's or training provider's premises.

Professional discussion

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria outlined in this kit.

- To achieve a **pass,** apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria **and** all of the distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will not have achieved all of the pass criteria

The professional discussion may be conducted using technology such as video link, as long as fair assessment conditions can be maintained.

Grading

The apprenticeship includes pass and distinction grades, with the final grade based on the apprentice's combined performance in each assessment method.

To achieve a pass, the apprentice is required to pass each of the 3 assessment methods.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in the retail business project and 1 other assessment activity, with at least a pass in the third.

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

Written test	Retail business project	Professional discussion	Overall grade awarded
Fail any of the 3 assessment methods			**Fail**
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 an apprentice fails an end-point assessment method, it is the employer, provider and apprentice's decision whether to attempt a resit or retake. If a resit is chosen, please call the Highfield scheduling team to arrange the resit. 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.

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.

A maximum of two resits per assessment activity will be permitted. 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 any assessment activity is resat or retaken, the maximum grade achievable for that assessment activity is a pass.

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

Assessing the written exam

The written exam consists of **80 marks**, consisting of a minimum of 6 short and 2 longer scenario-based questions, and will last **2 hours**. 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 **pass** mark is 48 out of 80 (60%) and the **distinction** mark is 68 out of 80 (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 written exam may be delivered online or be paper-based and should be taken in a 'controlled' and invigilated environment.

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

In each paper, questions will cover each of the areas above, however, not every aspect of every area will be covered in every test.

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%

Before the assessment

The employer/training provider should:

- brief the apprentice on the areas that will be assessed by the written exam.
- in readiness for end-point assessment, set the apprentice a mock written exam. A test is available to download from the Highfield Assessment website. The mock tests are available as paper-based tests and also on the mock e-assessment system.

Written exam criteria

Financial	
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

Leadership	
LE1	Leadership styles
LE2	Theories of motivation

Marketing	
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

Communications	
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

Merchandising	
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

Stock	
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)

Developing self and others

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

Team performance

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

Legal and governance

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

Sales and promotion

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

Brand reputation

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 2-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.

Grading the business project

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria included in the tables on the following pages (under 'Business project criteria').

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria **and** all of the distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will have not achieved all of the pass criteria

Business project mock 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. It is the employer/training provider's responsibility to prepare apprentices for their end-point assessment and Highfield recommend that the apprentice experiences a mock presentation 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.

When planning a mock assessment, the employer/training provider should include the following elements:

- the mock presentation should be **30 minutes**, which should include time for questions and answers at the end
- consider a recording of the mock assessment and allow it to be played back to 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
- mock assessment sheets are available to download from the Highfield Assessment website and may be used for this purpose
- structured 'open' questions should be used as part of the Q&A that do not lead the candidate but allow them to express their knowledge in a calm and comfortable manner. Some examples of this may include the following:
  - customer:
    - discuss how you make effective decisions that balance the needs of both the customer and the business.
  - product and service:
    - describe your approach to analysing and interpreting product or service sales information.
  - technology:
    - can you provide an example of how you identified and addressed a technology need within your store?

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Business project criteria

Throughout the business project, the assessor will review the apprentice's competence in the criteria outlined below.

Apprentices should prepare for the business report by considering how the criteria can be met and reflecting on their past experiences.

Business project
To pass, the following must be evidenced
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
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced
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*

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Assessing the professional discussion

Throughout the **1-hour** professional discussion, the assessor will ask the apprentice questions to assess their competence against the relevant criteria outline in this kit. Therefore, apprentices should prepare for the professional discussion by considering how the criteria can be met.

The professional discussion is a structured discussion between the apprentice and the assessor. The employer will be present at this discussion to provide further examples and support, but not lead the apprentice.

The professional discussion will be conducted in a 'controlled environment', for instance, a quiet room, away from the normal place of work. The professional discussion may be conducted using technology such as video link, as long as fair assessment conditions can be maintained. Acceptable means of remote assessment include video conferencing/video calling and must include a two-way visual and audio link.

The professional discussion will recognise areas which have already been covered in the retail business project so as not to reassess an area in which the apprentice has already demonstrated competence.

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

Grading the professional discussion

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria included in the tables on the following pages (under 'Professional discussion criteria').

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria **and** all of the distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will have not achieved all of the pass criteria

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:
  - customer:
    - share an experience where you took responsibility for resolving a customer service issue and the outcome of your actions.
  - marketing:
    - discuss how you proactively seek to understand the overall marketing strategy of your business, including gaining knowledge of your local area and competition.
  - stock:
    - describe how you monitor the stock management system to minimise costs associated with stock damage and loss.

Professional discussion criteria

Throughout the **1-hour** professional discussion, the assessor will review the apprentice's competence in the criteria outlined below.

Apprentices should prepare for the professional discussion by considering how the criteria can be met.

Professional discussion
To pass, the following must be evidenced
PD1 Clearly articulate examples from the workplace relevant to evidencing competence across the standard
PD2 Explain why it is essential to instil the importance of following procedures to staff
PD3 Provide examples of how staff are managed effectively, including motivation and development of teams and individual staff members
PD4 Provide an overview of how the retail operation meets the needs of the business
PD5 Provide reasoned examples of how the operation operates efficiently
PD6 Explain the importance of keeping up to date with current industry trends and provide examples of how this has been achieved
PD7 Provide evidence to show they have been part of the budgeting and cost control in the organisation
PD8 Describe how the retail operation meets legislative and regulatory needs
PD9 Provide an effective evaluation of own performance, including behaviours, identifying where opportunities for improvement have been taken and results thereof evaluated
PD10 Demonstrate how feedback has been sought from managers and customers and how this has been effectively dealt with
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced.
PD11 *Explains how effective retail management and contingency planning have been developed and implemented and how this has increased overall departmental performance*
PD12 *Describe how recommendations for the improvement of quality, cost, value or efficiency have been made and implemented in the organisation*
PD13 *Demonstrates staff engagement, motivation, performance management and how this has led to increased performance*
PD14 *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*
PD15 *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*
PD16 *Provides mentorship to team members with measurable improvements to the performance of individuals and the team*
PD17 *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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