



ILM Level 5

Operations Manager

This document maps the differences and similarities between versions 1.2 and 1.4 of the apprenticeship standard.

There is widespread recognition that organisations need to support the development of leadership and management skills particularly at level 4 and above. These middle managers and leaders are critical to the success of businesses, and in turn will be crucial to driving economic growth.

IfATE have recognised the need to revise the current Operations Manager apprenticeship standard and, in partnership with the trailblazer group, have approved a new version of the standard (V1.4) that better reflects current trends in the workplace.

The updates from version 1.2 to 1.4 support apprentices to further develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) and prove competency as they undertake their end-point assessment (EPA). There are clear duties expected of an apprentice, and an increased focus on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the use of technology (including AI) to reflect the modern-day environment for team leaders in the workplace. The revised assessment plan allows for a more holistic and joined up approach from the on-programme project to EPA, with a more focused alignment of the KSBs.

This mapping document is designed to highlight the key updates, and we look forward to sharing more guidance and support in our autumn webinars.

Comparison summary

The new assessment method focuses more on structured approaches to management and leadership with a clear emphasis on ethical leadership, continuous development, conflict resolution, and stakeholder management. The current method emphasises personal development and operational management with specific behaviours, while the new method prioritises organisational governance and strategic alignment, reducing the emphasis on explicit behaviours in some areas.

Summary of changes

- **New title:** Version 1.2 Level 5 Operations or Departmental Manager apprenticeship standard is now Version 1.4 of the Level 5 Operations manager apprenticeship standard
- **Written project report with presentation and questions:** The new assessment reflects a more strategic and integrated approach to project management, focusing on the real-world application of skills and evaluation of outcomes rather than just the planning and delivery of a project proposal.
- **Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence:** The new assessment broadens in scope to incorporate a strategic, ethical, and values-based approach to leadership, reflecting a shift towards more holistic and forward-thinking management practices.

Comparing the assessment methods: Current vs new

Assessment method:
Written project report with presentation and questions (simplified overview)

Continued on next page...

Current requirements	New requirements
Planning their Project Proposal K1.1, K1.2, K1.4, K10.2, S1.1, S1.3, S4.3, B3.1, B3.2 Pass criteria: Be able to demonstrate key management skills in business development, including using tools and systems to support change, to identify opportunities and maintain commercial awareness. Shows application of management models in strategic planning, flexibility in problem-solving and a focus on organisational values and ethics. Distinction criteria: Ability to analyse business development tools and continuous improvement techniques, assessing their alignment with the organisation's systems and processes to ensure effective business growth. 4 x Pass / 1 x Distinction	Project Scope and Planning K6 K8 K10 K11 K17 S2 S15 S16 Pass criteria: Ability to demonstrate skills in problem-solving, stakeholder management, change implementation and strategic planning. Show ability to identify problems, use data analysis for decision-making, manage stakeholder relationships through negotiation, apply change management concepts and assess sector needs and external factors affecting the organisation. Distinction criteria: Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of stakeholder influence and negotiation strategies in achieving organisational improvement goals. To conduct a critical analysis of the organisation's current and future needs, assessing how well these approaches align with strategic improvements. 4 x Pass / 2 x Distinction

Summary of comparison:

Current: The focus is on understanding operational management approaches, business development tools, management systems, and organisational values. Skills include strategic planning, commercial awareness, change management and creativity.

New: Emphasises data-driven decision-making, identifying improvement opportunities, stakeholder management and change management concepts. Skills are oriented towards problem-solving, responding to external factors and negotiation with stakeholders.

**Assessment method:
Written project report
with presentation and
questions (simplified
overview)**

**Continued on next
page...**

Current requirements	New requirements
<p>Delivery of their Project Proposal K1.5, K2.1, K2.2, K9.1, K10.1, S1.2, S2.1, S2.2, S2.3, S7.1, S9.2, S10.1, S10.2</p> <p>Pass criteria: outlines key skills in project management, time management, data analysis, communication and change management. It includes using project management tools to organise resources, manage risks and monitor progress. Time management techniques are used to prioritise tasks, while critical data analysis informs decision-making. effective communication is tailored to the audience and situation, and change management involves supporting and overcoming barriers to change.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Ability to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the project management tools and problem-solving techniques used in the planning of the project proposal.</p> <p>5 x Pass / 2 x Distinction</p>	<p>Project Implementation K5 K7 K9 K12 K13 S5 S8 S9 S12 B3 B5 B6</p> <p>Pass criteria: Involves using IT and advanced software tools to support organisational needs by analysing information, monitoring performance and managing budgets effectively. It includes applying project and financial management tools to deliver projects within budget, along with problem-solving, decision-making, influencing and negotiating skills. Collaboration in researching and analysing information and demonstrating flexibility in managing continuous improvement and change are also key.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of approaches to managing continuous improvement and change within the project, assessing implementation success. It also includes evaluating the impact of project and financial management techniques, identifying areas for improvement for future projects.</p> <p>5 x Pass / 2 x Distinction</p>

Summary of comparison:

Current: Involves initiating and managing change, project setup, risk management, time management and problem-solving techniques. Skills include supporting change, resource management, risk mitigation, project tools usage, communication and critical analysis.

New: Covers IT and software tools, financial management, project management, problem-solving and negotiation techniques. Skills emphasise managing projects within budget, using digital tools, and implementing continuous improvement and change through collaboration.

**Assessment method:
Written project report
with presentation and
questions (simplified
overview)**

Current requirements	New requirements
<p>Project Proposal Output K3.1, S1.5, S3.1, S6.3, B3.4</p> <p>Pass criteria: Emphasises the importance of providing detailed reports and management information that accurately track the project proposal's budget while considering the financial implications of decisions made. It involves adjusting the approach or recommendations based on budgetary insights to ensure financial responsibility. Highlights the use of specialist advice and demonstrates openness to new ways of working.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Justifying the use of specialist advice and evaluating its impact on the project proposal. Justifying and evaluating the financial and budgetary recommendations made within the project proposal, assessing how these recommendations support the project's overall success and alignment with financial goals.</p> <p>2 x Pass / 2 x Distinction</p>	<p>Evaluation and recommendations K1 K15 S1 S10</p> <p>Pass criteria: The selection and application of various communication techniques and methods to effectively present information to stakeholders. It also involves evaluating the impact of outcomes from organisational plans or projects, using these insights to drive the decision-making process.</p> <p>2 x Pass / 0 x Distinction</p>
<p>Summary of comparison:</p> <p>Current: Involves producing management reports, budget monitoring, financial implications and impact of specialist advice. Skills include report production and financial management.</p> <p>New: Focuses on presentation skills, communication techniques, and evaluating the impact of outcomes on decision-making. Skills include stakeholder communication through various media and evaluating the impact of the outcomes project to drive decision making.</p>	

View the full wording for the new assessment methods on the [IfATE website](#).

Comparing the assessment methods: Current vs new

Assessment method: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence (simplified overview)

Continued on next page...

Current requirements	New requirements
<p>Managing Teams: K4.1, K4.2, K4.4, K5.1, K5.2, S4.2, S5.1, S5.2, S5.3, B2.1</p> <p>Pass criteria: Ability to evaluate leadership styles for managing multiple and remote teams, including adapting to be approachable and build trust. Knowledge of their approaches to recruiting, developing and managing team members using performance and talent management techniques. How they use coaching, mentoring, and delegation to develop team strengths, motivate and manage multiple teams effectively.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Analysing the challenges of managing multiple teams and describing strategies to address them. It also assesses the effectiveness of various coaching and mentoring techniques used for both office-based and remote team members, justifying the choice of techniques employed.</p> <p>3 x Pass / 2 x Distinction</p>	<p>Managing and Leading a Team K4 K14 K16 K18 K20 K24 S3 S4 S7 S19 S20 B1 B4</p> <p>Pass criteria: To understand the importance of performance management, professional development and effective leadership. It involves analysing performance data to identify improvement needs, proactively seeking learning opportunities and using leadership tools to set goals, manage accountabilities, and resolve conflicts. Focuses on coaching, mentoring and motivating team members to achieve organisational goals.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Critical evaluation of the effectiveness of people management strategies used, focusing on motivation and assesses the impact of coaching and mentoring techniques on individual development within the team.</p> <p>4 x Pass / 2 X Distinction</p>
<p>Summary of comparison:</p> <p>Current: This section focuses on understanding leadership styles, managing multiple and remote teams, motivating and developing team members through coaching, effective delegation, and performance management. The emphasis is on practical team management skills and building trust within teams.</p> <p>New: Expands to include a broader view on people management approaches, requiring evaluation of the impact coaching and mentoring techniques have on individuals in their team, performance management, conflict resolution, ethical leadership, and the continuous development of team members. It incorporates a values-driven approach to leadership, emphasising ethics, wellbeing, and professional integrity.</p>	

**Assessment method:
Professional
discussion
underpinned by a
portfolio of evidence
(simplified overview)**

**Continued on next
page...**

Current requirements	New requirements
<p>Personal & Professional Development K8.1, K8.2, S8.1, S9.1, B4.1, B4.2, B4.3</p> <p>Pass criteria: Create a personal development plan based on their learning and behavioural styles, reflect on their performance and emotional intelligence, and understand their impact on others. They should also embody their organisation's values, acting as a role model by being open, honest, and fair.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Evaluate various learning styles in different situations.</p> <p>3 x Pass / 1 x Distinction</p>	<p>Organisational Governance K2 K3 K22 S6 S11</p> <p>Pass criteria: Applying organisational policies, procedures, and relevant regulatory and legislative requirements. Considering their impact on the team, individuals, and the organisation and communicating these implications to stakeholders. Proactively leading the team by using these guidelines to promote an inclusive culture of equity, diversity and well-being.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Evaluating the effectiveness of their approach to supporting, delivering and promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and well-being, focusing on the impact these efforts have on the workplace.</p> <p>2 x Pass / 1 x Distinction</p>

Summary of comparison:

Current: Concentrates on self-awareness, emotional intelligence, personal reflection and the development of a personal growth plan. It underscores the importance of setting a good example and adhering to organisational values.

New: Understanding and applying organisational governance, including compliance with regulations, policies on equity and diversity and fostering an inclusive workplace culture. This section emphasises the leader's role in promoting ethical standards and wellbeing in the organisation

**Assessment method:
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**Continued on next
page...**

Current requirements	New requirements
<p>Operational Planning and Management K1.3, K1.6, S1.4, S4.1, B1.1, B1.2, B1.4</p> <p>Pass criteria: How they use their knowledge of data security and business planning to support operational plans, set targets and monitor performance. Examples of how they communicated their team's role in the organisation's vision and utilised their understanding of culture and diversity to lead change. Requires instances of showing resilience and accountability in seeking new opportunities for the organisation.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: This justifies the purpose of operational business planning and sales and marketing plans, explaining the importance of managing resources by setting key targets and monitoring performance to achieve objectives.</p> <p>3 x Pass / 1 x Distinction</p>	<p>Operational Planning K19 K21 K23 K25 S13 S14 S18 S21</p> <p>Pass criteria: Ability to analyse and prioritise organisational activities in response to the operating environment, ensuring business continuity and adhering to organisational policies to deliver sustainable services. Ability to evaluate how effectively operational plans align with the organisation's strategic direction, supporting its ability to adapt to changes in social, economic, and environmental factors.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Evaluating how well business continuity principles have maintained critical functions and assessing the effectiveness of organisational policies in delivering sustainable services that respond to social, economic and environmental changes.</p> <p>4 x Pass / 2 x Distinction</p>

Summary of comparison:

Current: Covers operational business planning techniques, including resource and performance management, data security and communicating organisational goals. It aims to equip managers with the skills to drive business operations effectively.

New: Provides a more strategic focus, including knowledge of sector-specific impacts, business continuity, sustainability and aligning operational plans with the organisation's strategic direction. It emphasises adaptability and the ability to implement contingency plans in response to changing environments.

**Assessment method:
Professional
discussion
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Current requirements	New requirements
<p>Communication Skills K6.1, K6.2, K6.3, K7.1, S6.1, S6.2, S7.2, S7.3, B1.3, B2.2, B3.3</p> <p>Pass criteria: Demonstrate the use of interpersonal skills, such as active listening, providing constructive feedback and valuing diversity. Able to describe effective communication methods used in meetings and presentations and how they built trust and strong relationships through collaboration and sharing good practices. Explain their use of negotiation and conflict management skills and justify how they remained positive and adaptable when responding to feedback and change.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: To evaluate various influencing and negotiating theories and models, assessing their effectiveness in managing supplier relationships within their organisation. They also need to analyse barriers to communication and describe how these can be overcome.</p> <p>3 x Pass / 2 x Distinction</p>	<p>Stakeholder Relationships S17, B2</p> <p>Pass criteria: This involves explaining how they manage relationships with diverse stakeholders, ensuring all are treated fairly, inclusively and with respect.</p> <p>Distinction criteria: Evaluating the impact of their approach to managing stakeholder relationships and providing recommendations for improvements.</p> <p>1 x Pass / 1 x Distinction</p>
<p>Summary of comparison:</p> <p>Current: Emphasises effective communication, conflict resolution and collaboration, theories and models. It includes managing relationships with stakeholders, leading meetings and utilising various communication techniques to foster effective interactions and navigate barriers.</p> <p>New: Concentrates specifically on managing relationships across multiple and diverse stakeholders with a focus on inclusivity, fairness and respect. It highlights the importance of maintaining a positive and inclusive culture in stakeholder interactions.</p>	

View the full wording for the new assessment methods on the [IfATE website](#).



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Contact us

**No 1 Newlands Court
Attwood Road
Burntwood
WS7 3GF**

customer@i-l-m.com

01543 266 867

www.i-l-m.com

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