



Retail team leader apprenticeship Assessment plan

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the requirements and process for independent end assessment of the retail team leader apprenticeship standard approved by the Government (Department for Education (DfE)). All apprenticeship standards must include independent assessment to check the apprentice's overall performance against the standard. It is designed for employers, apprentices, education and training providers and assessment organisations.

Independent end assessment occurs when the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is working consistently at or above the level set out in the retail team leader apprenticeship standard. The assessment period for the retail team leader standard can commence at any point once the apprentice is competent after the twelve-month minimum period of learning and development.

2. Apprentice's readiness for independent end assessment

i. Achieving full competence

The period of learning, development and continuous assessment is managed by the employer, in most cases with the service of an education or training provider. 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 standard:

Throughout the period of learning and development, and at least every two months, the apprentice should meet with the on-programme assessor to record their progress against the standard using the on-programme progression template (freely available at People1st.co.uk). At these reviews, evidence should be discussed and recorded by the apprentice. Once the apprentice is deemed competent the relevant section(s) of the standard should be signed off by the on-programme assessor and employer.

The maintenance of an on-programme record is important to support the apprentice, on-programme assessor and employer in monitoring the progress of learning and development and to determine when the apprentice has achieved full competence in their job role and is ready for independent end 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 six meetings and completed records are recommended, to show ongoing competence across the entire standard, over a minimum of a twelve-month period prior to the starting the independent end assessment.

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

ii. Readiness for end assessment

The independent end assessment is synoptic, which means it takes an overview of the apprentices' competence. The end assessment should only commence once the employer is confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard which, as a best practice recommendation, could be clearly evidenced by the on-programme progression meetings and records. The independent end assessment ensures that all apprentices consistently achieve the industry set professional standard for a retail team leader. Prior to independent end assessment the English and maths components of the apprenticeship must be successfully completed.

A formal meeting will be held and must include the relevant people that have responsibility and accountability for the completion of the apprenticeship, such as: the line manager, on-programme assessor and /or a senior manager as appropriate to the business. It is recommended that the on programme records, if utilised, are brought to this meeting. The outcomes of the meeting must be recorded on the **readiness for independent end assessment** record (freely available from People1st.co.uk) to ensure judgements are appropriate, consistent and fair.

Once the employer (supported by the on-programme assessor) is satisfied that the apprentice has achieved full competence a second meeting must be held that includes an independent end assessor, who must be supplied with the completed record at least one week in advance. This meeting may be conducted remotely – e.g. a virtual meeting using technology such as Skype, as its aim is to secure the plan for the forthcoming assessment activities, but does not contribute to any assessment decisions.

The apprentice will be required to bring to this meeting a synopsis of their proposed business research project which will be agreed by the employer representative and put forward as a research proposal during the assessment window. The independent end assessor and apprentice will review the proposal for the business project, make any necessary amendments during the first week of the assessment window and then the project may commence.

The independent end assessor will agree a plan and schedule for each assessment activity with the apprentice and employer representative to ensure all components can be completed within a three-month end assessment window. Assessment organisations must inform People 1st of the independent end assessments prior to commencement to ensure external quality assurance activity can be planned and implemented. It should be noted that the on programme assessor is not involved in this planning activity as this forms the next step of the apprenticeship journey, moving from the on-programme phase to the end point assessment.

iii. Order and timings of the end assessment

The on demand test must be the first assessment component, followed by the retail business project and finally the professional discussion.

3. Summary of independent end assessment process

The apprentice will be assessed to the apprenticeship standard using three complementary assessment methods. The assessment is synoptic, i.e. takes a view of the overall performance of the apprentice in their job. The assessment activities will be completed in the following order:

On demand test:

60 minute on demand multiple choice test
 Scenario based questions, usually taken on screen
 Externally set and marked automatically by the assessment organisation
 Undertaken either on the employer's premises or off site
 Full details located in Annex B

Retail business project:

A project requiring the apprentice to look at an immediate opportunity, problem, challenge or idea within their retail environment. This could be a project to identify a potential cost saving for the business through improving efficiency, reducing waste or finding alternative ways of working to achieve business objectives and should include a research proposal, identify measurable improvements and make recommendations for implementation. Full details located in Annex C

Professional discussion:

1 hour structured meeting
 Led by the independent end assessor, involving the apprentice and employer (e.g. line manager)
 Focusing on how they have performed during the apprenticeship and their overall achievement of the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the standard.
 Full details located in Annex D

Completion:

Independent end assessor confirms that each assessment element has been completed
The grade is determined by the independent end assessor on the overall performance of the apprentice in the retail business project and professional discussion: Pass / Distinction / Fail

4. Reliability, validity and consistency

Independent end assessment is a culmination of a learning and development journey resulting in external confirmation of an apprentice meeting the industry defined standard. The assessments are conducted by an independent end assessor approved and appointed by an assessment organisation, which is quality assured to ensure consistent, reliable and valid judgements.

In summary, the following controls must be adhered to:

- ✓ A formal structure to plan the end point assessment, allowing planning of internal and external quality assurance, including the use of the ***readiness for independent end assessment record*** (freely available from People1st.co.uk).
- ✓ A common approach to assessment tools and procedures for independent end assessment, which will be freely available. The common approach will help ensure that end assessment tools and procedures are consistent in meeting the requirements for fair, accurate and reliable assessment decisions, against the retail team leader apprenticeship standard.
- ✓ The mandating of both technical and assessment competence and continuing professional development (CPD) for independent end assessors to ensure that they have not only the right tools, but the right qualifications, training and experience to make reliable judgements.
- ✓ An end point assessor from an independent assessment organisation, who has had no prior involvement with the apprentice, providing an objective independent view.
- ✓ The internal quality assurance of individuals conducting independent end assessments and of independent end assessment outcomes and results, by an SFA registered assessment organisation.
- ✓ Requirements for standardisation of independent end assessments across assessment organisations.
- ✓ The use of on demand tests with automated marking ensuring a consistent approach regardless of the apprentice's workplace.
- ✓ Three complementary assessment methods that provide a clear structure for synoptic assessment across the standard.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Independent end assessor

An independent end assessor must be someone who has nothing to gain from the outcome of the assessment and must not have been involved in the training or line management of the apprentice. They must be approved and appointed by the assessment organisation to undertake the independent end assessment of the apprentice.

The employer led approach to end assessment allows assessors to be sourced from the employer's workforce to assess apprentices in their own organisation as long as independence from the apprentice can be demonstrated (i.e. they must not have been involved in either the learning and development or line management of the apprentice). During independent end assessment they are acting on behalf of, and are responsible to, the assessment organisation.

To ensure consistent and reliable judgements are made, independent end assessors will be subject to rigorous quality assurance and must take part in regular standardisation activities. The mandatory criteria for independent end assessors is set out below.

a) Occupational expertise of retail team leader independent end assessors

The requirements set out below relate to all retail team leader independent end assessors. Independent end assessors must:

- ✓ Have excellent knowledge and understanding of the apprenticeship standard as set out in the industry set Grading Criteria (Annex E).
- ✓ Hold a recognised current workplace assessment qualification. The list of approved qualifications will be published at www.people1st.co.uk and updated as new, appropriate qualifications are released.
- ✓ Have current, relevant occupational expertise and knowledge, at the relevant level of the occupational area(s) they are assessing, which has been gained through 'hands on' experience in the industry.
- ✓ Practice standardised assessment principles set out by the assessment organisation.
- ✓ Have sufficient resources to carry out the role of independent end assessor i.e. time and budget.

b) Continuous professional development for retail team leader independent end assessors

It is necessary for independent end assessors to maintain a record of evidence of their continuous professional development (CPD). This is necessary to ensure currency of skills and understanding of the occupational area(s) being assessed, and can be achieved in a variety of ways. It should be a planned process, reviewed on an annual basis, for example as part of an individual's performance review.

Independent assessors should select CPD methods that are appropriate to meeting their development needs. Within a twelve-month period, an independent end assessor will be required to demonstrate they have gained practical experience in the retail industry which develops/up-dates their knowledge/skills. The following provides an example of a variety of methods that can be utilised for CPD purposes, a multiple of which need to be experienced/undertaken.

Updating occupational expertise

- ✓ Internal and external work placements to gain 'hands on' experience
- ✓ Work experience and shadowing
- ✓ External visits to other organisations
- ✓ Updated and new training and qualifications
- ✓ Training sessions to update skills, techniques and methods
- ✓ Visits to educational establishments
- ✓ Trade fairs

Keeping up to date with sector developments and new legislation

- ✓ Relevant sector websites and twitter feeds
- ✓ Membership of professional bodies and trade associations
- ✓ Papers and documents on legislative change
- ✓ Seminars, conferences, workshops, membership of committees/working parties
- ✓ Staff development days

Standardising and best practice in assessment

- ✓ Regular standardisation meetings with colleagues (see requirements for standardisation below)
- ✓ Sharing best practice through internal meetings, news-letters, email circulars, social media
- ✓ Comparison of assessment and verification in other sectors

Assessment organisations

Assessment organisations are registered on the SFA Register of apprenticeship assessment organisations. Assessment organisations are responsible for ensuring assessments are conducted fairly and that assessments are valid, reliable and consistent. It is essential that assessment organisations:

- ✓ Ensure independent end assessors are competent both vocationally and in assessment
- ✓ Approve and appoint independent end assessors*
- ✓ Ensure assessments are planned, communicated and executed fairly
- ✓ Quality assures independent end assessments
 - o With planned internal quality assurance activity
 - o Including both desk based and 'live' quality assurance activity
 - o This must be performed on a risk basis, i.e. new or poorly performing assessors must have every element of every assessment quality assured, but established, high performing assessors can be quality assured on a sampling basis, with at least one assessment activity being subject to either desk based or live internal quality assurance activity
- ✓ Ensure on-demand tests are correctly invigilated (Annex B)
- ✓ Ensure standardisation of all assessors occurs on a regular basis, including but not limited to:
 - o Review of annual adherence to CPD requirements
 - o Regular standardisation meetings – usually quarterly but required frequency to depend on internal and external quality assurance outcomes of each assessment organisation

- o Assessment and verification training sessions
- o Shadowing and cross checking of other assessors
- ✓ Address poor performance from assessors to ensure high standards of end assessment
- ✓ Obtain and review feedback / satisfaction results from apprentices and employers, taking appropriate actions for improvement
- ✓ Address and administer any appeals and grievances fairly and in line with the consistent approach

Employers wishing to conduct end point assessment, either in their own organisation or for other organisations, must register as an assessment organisation on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations in the same way any assessment organisation is required to do. All assessment organisations are required to check the independence of the end point assessor from the apprentice, ensuring that the end point assessor has not been involved in the learning, development or line management of the apprentice. All assessment organisations are subject to external quality assurance. This exception to the standard constraints for end point assessment was granted by the Skills Minister for the retail standards in September 2015.

* Where independent end assessors are sourced from the employer's workforce they must be able to demonstrate independence from the apprentice and will act under the remit of the assessment organisation during the period of the assessment.

Assessment organisations will be subject to external quality assurance in order to deliver national consistency across the retail sector which is overseen by the Retail Apprenticeship Board and managed by People 1st.

6. External quality assurance (EQA) of the end point assessment for the retail team leader apprenticeship standard

All assessment organisations listed on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) must follow the external quality assurance process in this plan. The external quality assurance will be overseen by a Retail Apprenticeship Board and conducted and managed by People 1st on a nonprofit making basis. Supporting information on the external quality assurance can be found at www.people1st.co.uk.

Retail Apprenticeship Board

Membership to the Board is via a fair and open public nomination and selection process, with input from key industry, education and training organisations. Membership is open to all types and sizes of businesses, including representation from SMEs and organisations that are new to the apprenticeship process. When a vacancy arises, retail employers are invited to apply for a seat on the board, demonstrating support from at least two industry and/or education and training organisations. Nominees will be judged on their experience, knowledge, qualifications and commitment to ensuring that apprentices consistently achieve the apprenticeship standard. Where a nominee does not immediately secure a place on the board, they will be retained on a list of prospective members for future vacancies.

A Board of 15 members:

- Represent the views of their business and industry networks
- Are subject to re-election after a period of 2 years (requiring the support of two organisations). Re-election is not automatic in order to give opportunities for other employers to be part of the board
- Work openly, challenge, innovate and drive the industry's apprenticeship commitment to quality
- Contribute their specific experience and expertise
- Actively communicate and engage other employers and partners to achieve high quality apprenticeships

The Board also includes a nominated representative from a private training provider, a college and an assessment organisation, whose membership runs for a period of one year before re-election.

In relation to quality the responsibilities of the Board include:

- A full knowledge and understanding of the:
 - o content the retail team leader assessment plans
 - o external quality assurance arrangements and methodology
 - o infrastructure and processes used to manage and operate the external quality assurance
- Agreeing measures to benchmark external quality assurance results set by People 1st
- Overseeing external quality assurance results based on the provision of quarterly reports provided by People 1st and agreeing corrective action as necessary
- Working collaboratively with training providers and assessment organisations, to identify and address matters relating to the external quality assurance process and results
- Reviewing evaluation results to ensure that the retail manager apprenticeship remains fit for purpose and advising on matters of maintenance which may impact on external quality assurance

- Reviewing and addressing complaints against retail manager apprenticeship and external quality assurance results

Process for initiating external quality assurance

Once an employer is confident that an apprentice has consistently reached full competence against the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the apprenticeship standard they will contact an independent end assessment organisation. In order to start the external quality assurance process, the assessment organisation will notify People 1st online at www.people1st.co.uk.

External quality assurance visits will be completed regularly on each assessment organisation, and may include more than one visit/activity where an assessment organisation operates in more than one region, or uses multiple assessment centres. External quality assurance will comprise a range of activities, examples of which are detailed below and will include onsite visits to assessment organisations.

External quality assurance activities

External quality assurance will focus on four defined areas to ensure compliance, including: consistency of assessment materials, competence and performance of staff, the internal quality assurance checks and the overall planning and reporting of the apprenticeship end point assessment process.

- **Ensuring consistency of assessment materials**
 - o Design of the assessment materials
 - o Consistent application and internal quality assurance of assessment materials during end point assessments
- **Competence of staff – EQA activity will check**
 - o Vocational competence of assessment and internal verification staff
 - o That assessment and internal quality assurance staff have been trained on end point assessment for the retail team leader standard
 - o That Continuous Professional Development of both vocational and assessment competence is occurring to the prescribed standard
- **Internal quality assurance – EQA activity will check**
 - o Independent Assessment Organisations have implemented internal quality assurance procedures as set out in the assessment plan
- **Reporting and management of information – EQA activity will check**
 - o Timely and accurate registration of the apprentice and notification of results
 - o Accuracy of internal data against registrations in the People 1st system
 - o Full, accurate and legible records

Sampling size and frequency

An assessment organisation's sample size will vary due to a number of considerations. Each assessment 'centre' (i.e. if an assessment organisation provides remote centres or operates multiple teams of assessors) will be sampled regularly. The baseline sample for the first external quality assurance visit will be 10%. At the end of each EQA visit the assessment organisation's performance will be graded (e.g. excellent, adequate, poor) and future EQA activity levels will be planned accordingly. Assessment organisations receiving excellent EQA results can expect future samples to be less than 10% and assessment organisations receiving poor EQA results can expect increased frequency of activity and size of EQA sample. At each EQA visit the sample required will include:

- Apprentices who are currently in the assessment window and those who have completed their end point assessment since the previous full external quality assurance visit
- Assessment centres conducting end point assessments on multiple linked standards (i.e. retailer, retail team leader and retail manager) may have external quality assurance activity combined for efficiency.

It is expected that EQA activity will typically occur every six months, but this frequency may be adjusted in accordance with the volume of apprentices completing end point assessment and the past performance of the assessment organisation.

Prior to an external quality assurance visit, assessment organisations will be contacted to provide and confirm relevant information regarding apprentices. From this information a sample will be selected and names of apprentices for whom evidence and activity are to be quality assured will be notified to the assessment organisation prior to the visit.

Typically, an external quality assurance visit will involve:

- Meetings between the external quality assurance personnel and apprentices, assessors and internal quality assurance staff.
- A desk review of assessment documentation, covering each assessment activity and usually covering a range of results from distinction through to fail, validating the internal quality assurance activity.
- Review of records relating to the planning of internal quality assurance and feedback from end point assessments.
- Review of records relating to the multiple choice test administration.
- Review of records relating to appeals and grievances.
- Review of competence and CPD for assessment and internal quality assurance staff.
- Review evidence of satisfaction measures for apprentices and employers.
- External quality assurance activity will normally include an opportunity to see an assessment of a business project, professional discussion or conduct of an examination. All three forms of assessment will be observed over time during the course of external quality assurance visits.

Reporting and recommendations

Within 15 working days after the visit a draft report will be supplied to the independent assessment organisation, including recommendations, actions and a provisional risk grading. The assessment organisation will be given a further 15 working days to provide any feedback, as necessary, after which the final edition of the report, including final grade, will be sent to them.

Subsequent external quality assurance activity will be appropriate to the findings, recommendations and actions and may include interim EQA activity prior to the next full visit.

The EQA reports will not be made publically available, but may be shared, in whole or in part, with the employers on the Retail Apprenticeship Board to inform evaluations and improvements. Identifying information will be removed so that board members cannot identify the assessment organisation.

7. Grading

The apprenticeship includes Pass and Distinction grades with the final grade based on the apprentice's combined performance in each of the independent end assessment activities in accordance with the table below and the detailed criteria in Annex E. The assessment activities are not 'weighted' in percentage terms as they are all important to demonstrating the apprentice's synoptic performance; however, employers have been clear that in order to achieve a distinction overall the apprentice must perform to distinction level in the retail business project as the core method of demonstrating competence, supplemented by the professional discussion and on demand test. The following approach to calculating the overall grade should be followed as set out in the table below:

On demand test	Retail business project	Professional Discussion	Overall grade
Successfully achieved (Non graded element)	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Pass	Distinction	Pass
	Distinction	Pass	Distinction
	Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

In order to pass:

In the **on demand test** the apprentice must achieve the correct percentage of correct answers to pass the assessment activity. The on demand test will feature a sample of questions, based on a representative sample of the assessment criteria in Annex E(i)

In the **retail business project** the apprentice must demonstrate competence against all of the assessment criteria in Annex E(ii).

In the **professional discussion** the apprentice must demonstrate competence against all of the assessment criteria in Annex E(iii)

In order to achieve a distinction:

In addition to demonstrating competence across all of the assessment criteria to achieve a pass, apprentices can also achieve a distinction grade by demonstrating competence against **all** of the assessment criteria in Annexes E(ii) and E(iii) respectively. This competence can be demonstrated over the course of the **retail business project** and **professional discussion**, allowing the best use of naturally occurring evidence if available during the retail business project but allowing the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in the professional discussion if required.

The independent end assessor will be notified of successful completion of the on demand test (results of which will usually be computer generated and validated by the assessment organisation, or if not computer generated but paper based, must use automated marking by the assessment organisation and results notified), and then aggregate performance to determine the overall assessment outcome of not achieved, pass or distinction using a clearly defined, evidence-based process as prescribed by the assessment organisation.

Should an apprentice fail one assessment activity this should be retaken as soon as the apprentice is ready and when practicable for the business. Should they fail two or more activities a period of further training and development lasting between one and three months must take place before a resit. A maximum of two resits per assessment activity will be permitted. When retaking an assessment activity, the maximum grade that can be achieved for that activity is a pass.

8. Affordability

It is anticipated that the cost of the retail team leader end-point assessment will be approximately 20% of the total external costs of training and assessment required for the apprenticeship and that there will be up to 2,000 apprentices completing this standard each year.

Annex A – Assessment method by element of retail team leader standard

Retail team leaders are a critical support to managers, delivering exceptional customer service and a positive experience to customers, and may have to deputise for managers in their absence. The role is dynamic and in one day can involve a variety of different functions. Most significantly retail team leaders guide and coordinate the work of the team to complete tasks, identify and explore opportunities that drive sales, ensuring team members maintain business standards in relation to merchandising, service and promotional activities, in line with procedures. Retail team leaders gain the most of their team on a day to day basis, ensuring they are fully trained and work effectively and to the best of their ability.

Key to assessment method identification

IEA	Independent End Assessment activity – identifies which assessment method will be used for that section of the standard.					
T	Assessment will be through the multiple choice test					
RBP	Assessment will be through the retail business project and presentation					
PD	Assessment will be through the professional discussion					
2 methods	Where two methods are identified the first is preferential; however, if assessment is not possible the second method may be used					
	Knowledge and Understanding (Know it)	IEA	Skills (Show it)	IEA	Behaviours (Live it)	IEA
Customer	Understand the customer profile of the business, their purchasing habits across a retail calendar year and how to meet and exceed their needs. Know the best ways to drive the team to increase sales, secure customer loyalty and attain business targets	PD	Monitor customers' enquiries and service requirements; coach and support team members to use appropriate methods e.g. face to face or remote such as on-line facilities, to deliver consistent and exceptional service that provides customers with a positive experience	PD	Act as a role model to champion excellent customer service by always looking to improve customers' experience through a welcoming and professional approach which builds strong customer relationships	PD
Business	Understand the purpose of the business including its vision, objectives and brand / business standards, how they compare to its competitors and how own role, and the team, help to achieve them	RBP	Work with the team to maintain brand / business standards at all times and identify and address any potential risks according to business procedures	RBP	Demonstrate personal responsibility for meeting the objectives of the team and the business	RBP

Financial	Understand how own actions and those of the team can contribute to the overall financial performance of the business by increasing sales e.g. through product positioning, and minimising costs through effective stock control and prevention of theft	T	Support the achievement of financial targets by planning and monitoring resources. Use resources effectively and efficiently to meet expected demand. Oversee the areas that impact on financial performance in own area of the business in line with business procedures	T	Demonstrate commercial awareness and act responsibly and with integrity to protect the financial position of the business	T
Leadership	Understand how to organise the team on a daily basis to achieve objectives, and recognise the importance of contingency planning to meet business requirements; know limits of authority when deputising for line manager	RBP / PD	Use available information to coordinate the work of the team so that the right people and resources are in the right place at the right time to ensure consistent brand / business standards are delivered. Deputise for line manager within limits of own authority	PD	Display decisive thinking when making decisions that are in the best interest of the business. Use sound judgement; take prompt action in the case of problems relating to resources	PD
Marketing	Understand how the brand / business is positioned externally, particularly in relation to local and online competitors and how its products / services meet consumer trends. Understand how own actions, and those of the team can impact on customers' perception of the brand / business	RBP / PD	Support the team to ensure they understand and engage in the marketing activities and plans of the business and help ensure that customers have the best possible experience	PD	Proactively seek to understand local consumer trends, competitors' offers and promotions, and customer needs and expectations, report to manager, seek feedback and take action in area of responsibility	PD
Communications	Understand how to support effective communication, quickly determining the situation and needs of individuals and how to respond in the most appropriate way using a variety of techniques and methods, for example face to face and / or remotely to include on-line	T	Adapt style of communication according to the audience, monitor the effectiveness of and encourage excellent communications across all operations that achieve the best result for the business including verbal, written and on-line communications	T	Demonstrate positive verbal and body language using concise and clear methods of communication, taking on board other peoples' points of view and responding in a way that is considerate to the audience	PD
Sales and Promotion	Understand the factors which can determine and affect sales and promotions throughout the retail year and how to coordinate and implement them to support business objectives	RBP	Communicate sales targets to the team and support them, recognising and acting on opportunities to maximise revenue, for example through link selling and drawing customers' attention to promotional offers	RBP	Proactive in looking for cost effective sales opportunities and ways to enhance revenue	RBP

Product and service	Know and promote the features and benefits of products / services, their unique selling points, the skills required to sell them, where items fit into product ranges, associated products and services, where to find detailed information if required and other relevant information such as delivery lead time, accessibility and source	RBP / PD	Maximise opportunities to increase sales by ensuring team know and understand the features, benefits, unique selling points and other relevant information relating to products, product ranges and services offered by the business	RBP / PD	Promote all products and services confidently, demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of them	RBP / PD
Merchandising	Know methods of merchandising throughout the retail operation, including point of sale, the retail calendar and local needs e.g. geographical, topical or weather based	T	Ensure team replenish and maintain merchandising according to business requirements, the retail calendar and local needs e.g. geographical, topical or weather based	RBP / PD	Communicate and encourage the merchandising principles, standards and commerciality to the team	RBP / PD
Stock	Understand the principles of stock control from sourcing to sale / supply. Understand the management of stock levels, security, restrictions (e.g. age restricted products), wastage and effective systems for recording them	T	Ensure team complies with stock procedures to minimise stock damage or loss, maximise income and comply with legal requirements; and take appropriate action to sell stock that is near the end of its product, promotional or shelf life	RBP / PD	Take a proactive approach and lead the team to effective stock management, ensuring stock is accessible and available in line with quality requirements, where and when needed	RBP / PD
Technology	Understand how current and emerging technologies support retail operations and sales whether customer facing or remote, and how best to operate them to achieve an efficient and effective service	RBP	Oversee the appropriate use of technology in line with business policy and follow the appropriate procedures to deal with service issues	PD	Is an advocate for the effective and efficient use of technology	PD
Developing self and others	Understand the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of self and others to develop a high performing team in the business. Understand team dynamics and the importance of enabling team members to appreciate their role in the wider organisation and in meeting business objectives	T	Plan, organise, prioritise and oversee own and team members' activities, supporting their induction, training, development and coaching, and delegating tasks fairly and appropriately to meet business objectives	PD	Take responsibility for own performance, learning and development. Develop positive relationships with team members, embracing new and better ways of working	PD

Team Performance	Know how to identify and develop excellent team performance. Understand how the performance of the team contributes to the overall success of the business	T	Lead the team on a daily basis, setting targets and reviewing progress against them. Motivate team members, provide coaching and on job training. Identify conflict within the team and work to resolve this with support from others	PD	Positively and confidently challenge poor performance and reward excellent performance in line with business procedures	PD
Legal and governance	Understand the importance of business compliance to legal requirements and supporting the team to operate in line with business policy and procedures	T	Ensure self and team always comply with legal requirements, respond quickly to identified risks and ensure they are dealt with in line with business procedures and reported to the appropriate member(s) of the management team	T	Be responsible, advocate and adhere to the importance of working legally in the best interests of all people	T
Diversity	Understand how to work with and support people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures and the business policy on diversity	T	Ensure team members are aware of and follow business policies relating to diversity. Make reasonable adjustments as required for customers or team members	PD	Operate in an empathic, fair and professional manner with all individuals regardless of background and circumstances	PD

Annex B: On demand test specification

Key facts:

- ✓ 60 minute on demand multiple choice test
- ✓ Scenario based questions
- ✓ Externally set and marked
- ✓ Undertaken either on the employer's premises or off site

The assessment will be an objective on demand test and will be in multiple-choice format ensuring validity and reliability and which allows for consistent, efficient and timely allocation of marks / grades. It is expected that the on demand tests will be on-screen and computer marked, with validated results notified to the independent end assessor. If on demand tests are paper based, they must be sent back to the assessment organisation for automated marking and the independent end assessor will be notified of the results. The question banks will cover the knowledge and skills identified on the standard (Annex A). Some questions will require the apprentice to consider a course of action or solution to a situation / problem based on a 'real-life' workplace activity in line with the identified requirements of the standard. The questions will be scenario based requiring the apprentice to demonstrate reasoning and joined up thinking, demonstrating synoptic performance against the key elements of the standard. The 60-minute test will include questions covering a representative sample of the grading criteria identified in Annex E.

Apprentices will complete their tests on-screen unless individual assessment needs dictate a suitable alternative method, such as paper based, away from the day to day pressures of work and in a 'controlled' environment, which may be on or off the employers' premises.

Assessment Organisations

The assessment organisation will identify a suitable person to invigilate the on demand test. As this test is externally set and marked it may be invigilated by the on-programme assessor, alternatively it may, but does not have to be, the assessor assessing the retail business project and professional discussion. Tests will be invigilated in line with the requirements set out by the assessment organisations.

Test specifications will be available from People1st.co.uk and all assessment organisations must comply with the common approach contained therein.

Questions will be written using the language, tone and style expected for the level of standard. Apprentices taking the tests will be given a proportional sample of these questions which reflect general coverage of the standards to demonstrate competence within the given time constraints. Test specifications will include a clear rationale for pass level.

The definition of a 'controlled environment' will be clearly defined and explained by the assessment organisations prior to scheduling the test and will include environmental requirements such as lighting, space, privacy and the requirements for an invigilator to follow a best practice process.

Annex C: Retail business project

The retail business project tests the application of the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the standard as identified in Annex A. It ensures the apprentice understands today's industry and what the consumer wants in a retail business. It is designed to assess apprentices in a consistent way, irrespective of their particular workplace and their role within their company, and must therefore be presented outside of day-to-day work pressures.

High-level descriptors of an example project are given below:

Retail team leader

This could be a project to identify a potential cost saving for the business through improving efficiency, reducing waste or finding alternative ways of working to achieve business objectives and should include a research proposal, identify measurable improvements and make recommendations for implementation. The project should focus on an immediate problem, opportunity or idea in line with the scope of a team leader's day to day role.

The project is identified by the apprentice and discussed first with the line manager and then the on-programme assessor at least one month prior to the readiness for independent end assessment. This allows time for the apprentice to prepare a one page maximum synopsis of their proposed project which they are required to bring to the independent end assessment planning meeting. The independent end assessor and employer representative will then determine whether the proposed project has the potential to meet the criteria of the retail business project. The project will contain the following:

- ✓ 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

Once the project proposal has been approved by the independent end assessor at the independent end assessment planning meeting, the apprentice will be required to undertake their project, which must be presented to the independent end assessor within the three month end assessment period. The presentation will take place in a controlled environment either on or off-site. A 'controlled environment' is defined as a quiet room, away from the normal place of work with access to all the equipment the apprentice requires to deliver the presentation. The apprentice will have 30 minutes to deliver the presentation to include time for questions and answers at the end. An employer representative can be present during the presentation as an observer only and will not interact with the assessment activity.

The apprentice is required to provide supporting evidence to show that they have completed each of the underpinning activities to lead them to the recommendations presented to the independent end assessor. The presentation time is not in itself sufficient to cover the full requirements so

apprentices must also supply supporting information to evidence the process undertaken, which must be with the independent end assessor no less than five working days prior to the presentation. There is no stipulated word count and the independent end assessor will mark this alongside the presentation given to provide the outcome of the assessment activity. Apprentices are free to present this information in whichever way they feel is most appropriate, for example in a business report, but must include details of how and what research was undertaken, costings and how the legal implications have been considered.

The independent end assessor will make their judgement on the delivery of the retail business project assessment using the criteria for assessment contained in Annex E(ii). The independent end assessor should note particular aspects of the retail business project delivery that they wish to discuss with the apprentice during the question and answer session at the end of the presentation, either to confirm their judgement and/or provide further information on which to base the grading decision.

The grading criteria for all assessment activities are contained in Annex E.

Annex D: Professional discussion specification

Key facts:

- ✓ 1-hour discussion between the apprentice and the independent end assessor
- ✓ Employer present to support (but not lead) the apprentice and confirm information
- ✓ Will include areas of the standard not seen in the observation plus key additional areas identified in Annex A
- ✓ Planned in advance to allow the apprentice to prepare fully for the discussion

The professional discussion is a structured discussion between the apprentice and their independent end assessor. The employer will be present at this discussion to provide further examples and support (but not lead) the apprentice. The employer does not score the discussion. The independent end assessor conducting the professional discussion should normally be the same person who assessed the retail business project. It allows the independent end assessor to ask the apprentice questions in relation to:

- ✓ The period of learning, development and continuous assessment
- ✓ Coverage of the standard
- ✓ Personal development and reflection

The apprentice will be informed of the requirements prior to the discussion at least five days in advance and may bring materials to assist them to demonstrate their competence. The discussion must be appropriately structured to draw out the best of the apprentice's energy, enthusiasm, competence and excellence.

The professional discussion will be conducted in a 'controlled environment' i.e. a quiet room, away from the normal place of work. If for any reason it is not possible for all involved to meet in the same place end assessors must ensure adequate controls are in place to maintain fair and accurate assessment. 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. A standard template, provided as part of the detailed specification available from People1st.co.uk, which can be contextualised will be used, to ensure that standards are secure but interviewers are able to focus on key areas for confirmation of performance and effective appraisal of the evidence base. This will ensure that consistent approaches are taken and that all key areas are appropriately explored. The professional discussion will be planned in advance to allow for quality assurance activity in line with sampling requirements and will cover the key elements of the standard identified in Annex A.

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. The professional discussion will typically last one hour and will be scored by the independent assessor using the standard template. The template will record full details of all marks applied (and evidence referenced) by the assessor.

Annex E: Grading criteria

Annex E (I) In order to pass all apprentices will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a proportional sample of the following in the on demand test, which should be referenced to the employer occupational brief for the retail team leader for further detail (available at www.people1st.co.uk)	
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles of establishing, monitoring and reviewing sales targets Key costs for a retail team, including fixed and variable, stock, staff and overheads Turnover, gross and net profit Ways to minimise costs and wastage • VAT
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The variety of methods of communication available and how to use these effectively depending on the situation and audience Verbal / non-verbal / written, Face to face, on-line, via telephone, Brand standard / corporate image How to establish the needs of individuals (team members and customers) Principles of active listening The importance of feedback
Merchandising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key principles of the retail calendar Principles of merchandising How local needs can influence merchandising The importance of following merchandising plans
Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principles of stock control The stock journey, from supply to sale Why storage conditions are important for effective stock control How to manage stock levels Legal requirements relating to stock control, movement and sale (e.g. age restricted, fireworks)
Developing self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team dynamics Performance reviews, SMART planning and target setting to meet team and individual objectives Motivation and monitoring of team members to achieve objectives
Team performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits of team building Identification and resolution of conflict within a team
Legal and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal requirements relating to a range of retail operations Health and safety supervision and risk analysis

Annex E (ii) The following competencies must form the basis for the retail business project:

Please note that although these competencies are based around assessment criteria and may appear to be a new set of competencies, they are designed to underpin the process the apprentice must go through in order to meet the standard, as identified in Annex A, for example, effective research demonstrates the apprentice's ability to understand customer profiles and needs, and other criteria reference back to understanding the organisation's strategy.

In order to pass an apprentice will:

- Give a general introduction and background to department, team or area of work, including how this relates to the rest of the business unit (if applicable)
- Outline the problem, challenge or opportunity identified
- State the aims and objectives of the project
- Identify how the potential changes would lead to measurable improvement and benefits to the department, team or area of working
- Consult relevant stakeholders (e.g. customers, team members, managers) to inform the results and recommendations
- Provide an indication of costs associated with the proposed recommendations
- Identify applicable legislation and ensure the proposal complies where necessary

In order to achieve a distinction, apprentices must, in addition to achieving all the pass criteria:

- Provide research methodology to demonstrate a logical, coherent approach
- Make clear recommendations for implementation
- Concise validation and justification of recommendation
- Give a detailed introduction and background of the department, team or working area wider business unit (e.g. other departments, head office, local community / customer profile)
- Outline the current situation which has led to the identification of a challenge or opportunity
- Provide detailed aims and objectives for the project, linking to the current situation
- Identification of measurable improvements and benefits to the organisation
- Provide evidence of wide consultation and show how responses have been included in the recommendation
- Review the project to ensure it meets organisational and legal requirements
- Show a range of qualitative and quantitative research has been used effectively
- Detailed recommendations for implementation
- Detailed validation and justification of recommendations
- Proposed timeframes for implementation

Annex E (iii)	In order to pass all apprentices will demonstrate ALL of the following during the professional discussion:
Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The professional discussion is an opportunity for the independent end assessor and the employer to discuss the apprentice's performance across the whole standard. As such the apprentice is able to bring to the meeting any supporting evidence required to demonstrate their competence against the standard. Higher level standards incorporated in the employer occupational brief underpin specific areas of distinction level performance expected from a retail manager apprentice
In order to pass an apprentice will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the organisation's customer profile, how their purchasing habits are monitored across the retail calendar year and explain how the team are supported to ensure their individual needs are met or exceeded. State how they act as a role model to motivate the team to increase sales, merchandise products effectively, attract customer loyalty and meet business / brand targets Describe how to organise day-to-day activities, plan for contingencies and escalate to the manager as appropriate Explain the position of the business / brand and how the team can impact the reputation within the market Demonstrate understanding of the full range of products / services offered by the brand / business and how technology is used to promote these to the customer Explain how to lead the team in effective stock management to meet legal and business requirements Demonstrate how own and team development is planned and managed detailing the benefits of development to individuals and the business Describe how the team work positively, professionally within a diverse culture
In order to achieve a distinction apprentices must, in addition to achieving all pass criteria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate customer feedback to justify evidence that customer expectations are met or exceeded Analyse data evidence to support the meeting of organisation's targets and objectives Measure individual and team development and performance



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