

Level 7, Unit 3, Leadership, Change and People Performance (25 credits)

Assessor's guide to interpreting the criteria

RQF general description for Level 7 qualifications

- Achievement at Level 7 requires a learner to command and display mastery of the complex and specialised area of business studies, demonstrate expertise in highly specialised and advanced technical, professional, and research skills.
- Learners at this level are expected to be able to conduct professional activity, including research, using and modifying advanced skills and tools, and designing appropriate research methodologies. They would be expected to effectively communicate results of such research to peers.
- Learners should be able to develop new skills to a high level, including novel and emerging techniques, and act in a wide variety of unpredictable and advanced professional contexts.
- The level of accountability at Level 7 expects the learner to accept full responsibility for relevant decision-making, including supervision and a significant degree of responsibility for other people's work, initiating activity and taking the lead.

EQF general description for Level 7 qualifications (RQF Level 7 is mapped to EQF Level 7)

- Achievement at EQF Level 7 reflects the ability to build, use and transfer highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in the field of business, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. The learner must also demonstrate critical awareness of knowledge issues in the field of business and at the interface between it and other fields.
- This level commands specialised problem-solving skills required in research and innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields.
- A learner at this level is expected to manage and transform work and study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches.
- The levels commands that learners take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice, and for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

General requirements

- Conformance of individual student's performance to unit criteria and standards must be confirmed by a trained assessor.
- Centres, in collaboration with the assessors, must ensure that there is system in place allowing collection and storage of routine evidence of students' work (e-portfolios). E-portfolios should be in a format allowing online access, on request, by a TLM account manager.

- When the assessor is satisfied with a candidate matching all the criteria to the specification subject to the guidance below, the Centre can request a review of the e-portfolio by an account manager.
- If the account manager confirms the assessor's judgements, the student will get 30 marks towards his/her final mark, and be allowed to sit a final examination.
- When the student passes the final examination (see below Method of assessment), the student is considered to have completed all the requirements for the qualification.

Expansion of the assessment criteria

1 The learner will understand the contribution that an organisation's workforce can make to competitive advantage and the advancement of the strategic vision and values.

1.1 The learner can explain how HR strategies can advance the abilities, motivation and performance of employees.

Candidates must explain the mechanisms through which organisation's HR strategies can sustain and improve employees' abilities, motivation and performance.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

1.2 The learner can explain the relationship between HR strategy and corporate strategy with a view to sustained support of organisational objectives.

Candidates must describe how HR strategy relates to corporate strategy in order to continuously and consistently facilitate achievement of organisational objectives.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

1.3 The learner can critically review the theory, principles and practice of High Performance Working (HPW).

Candidates should critically evaluate the concept of HPW and the empirical evidence of its practical application.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners are expected to deliver a well-structured and meticulous review, demonstrating their mastery of the theory behind HPW and extending that knowledge to a range of real and hypothetical contexts. They must demonstrate a strong analytical approach and critically discuss relevant and appropriate examples.

1.4 The learner can devise HR strategies intended to maximise employee performance and commitment across a range of specific organisational scenarios.

Candidates must demonstrate their practical skills in designing relevant and appropriate HR

strategies geared towards higher employee performance and commitment in a number of contexts.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Assessors may provide some initial guidance for this criterion by suggesting a case study providing a range of situations where different HR strategies and/or policies may be applied.

Answers should remain at strategic level and not slip in the domain of operational responses.

Scenarios may include, but are in no way limited to:

- Falling productivity immediately after a major technological innovation has been implemented
- Failing remuneration policy and high staff turnover with competition head-hunting the best talents in the organisation
- Any of a number of situations related to group dynamics
- Lack of direction and low commitment due to decision-making excluding lower management levels
- Need for increased commitment and work efficiency in a flat organisation where promotion opportunities are very limited or impossible
- Any of a number of situations related to crisis management
- Situations where innovative HR strategies and methods could be employed (e.g. Google's data-based people management (people analytics), maternity plans, 'perks', or '20% time', etc.).

1.5 The learner can explain own contribution based on experience and learning as a manager and agent for change.

Candidates should explain their own personal contribution to an organisation, or to the learning process and with regard to their personal development, identifying themselves as managers and agents for change.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Since this criterion allows free-style interpretations, assessment should attempt to cover proper usage of specific terminology, sound logic and reasoning, knowledge of relevant theories and methods, ability to extend and adapt knowledge in an innovative way, much in line with the general level descriptors for QCF/EQF Level 7.

2 The learner will understand and apply strategies for people resourcing, retention and development.

2.1 The learner can critically explain professional approaches to recruitment by drawing on first hand experience.

Candidates should explain and analyse different professional approaches to recruitment, and exemplify their arguments.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

2.2 The learner can evaluate the rationale for the effective deployment and redeployment of employees.

Candidates must explain the reasoning behind the concept of deployment and redeployment of employees in pursuit of organisational effectiveness and objectives.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners are expected to acknowledge the dynamic nature of business and that people, along with other types of resources available to organisations, need to be adequately positioned and often repositioned to ensure that strategic and tactical objectives are consistently met in an effective and efficient manner.

2.3 The learner can evaluate methods for addressing performance issues including absence and punctuality.

Candidates should carefully evaluate alternative methods for addressing a range of employees' performance issues.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should construct their answer around two focal points - identification of the most common and most important performance issues, and evaluation of alternative approaches to resolving such issues (e.g. enhancing ability or improving motivation). Both aspects are important for a balanced and comprehensive answer.

2.4 The learner can evaluate strategies for enhancing levels of employee retention.

Candidates must explain and compare different HR strategies aimed at increased employee retention.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Answers should come from a range of domains, such as: recruitment and selection, loyalty, job design, promotion, talent management, etc.

2.5 The learner can assess the benefits that can be derived from a strong employer brand in terms of maintaining and developing the quality of the work force.

Candidates should explain the importance of developing and sustaining strong employer brand, and discuss how such brand may contribute in a positive way to the overall quality of work force in an organisation.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

2.6 The learner can describe actions necessary to develop a strong employer brand.

Candidates must describe and explain the process of developing a strong employer brand.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

2.7 The learner can explain how a corporate approach to staff development can result in a learning organisation.

Candidates must explain the concept of 'learning organisation', and how firms should use different staff development policies and approaches to become one and access the related benefits.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should cover the benefits of the main characteristics of a learning organisation (Senge) and discuss how each of them can be achieved.

3 The learner will understand strategies for enhancing employee commitment and engagement within an organisation.

3.1 The learner can identify the strategic benefits to be derived by an organisation whose work-force exhibits a high level of employee engagement.

Candidates must demonstrate that they understand the concept of employee engagement and are able to explain the strategic benefits to the organisation that high levels of it tend to trigger.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should be aware of the different definitions of employee engagement (e.g. Kahn, Schmidt, Meyer and Allen, etc.) and must demonstrate broad knowledge of the subject matter.

The criterion does not prescribe any particular focus, but assessors may choose to indicate a specific perspective by giving additional guidance based on the curriculum.

3.2 The learner can describe the factors which have to be in place or absent before a high level of employee engagement can be achieved.

Candidates must identify and explain the prerequisites to high level of employee engagement.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

3.3 The learner can devise practical strategies for enhancing levels of employee engagement in a range of organisational contexts.

Candidates must construct practical, comprehensive and effective strategies for increasing the levels of employee engagement in key organisational contexts.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Assessors may choose which of the two approaches is more suitable for them to use: assign a list of outlined contexts to learners for them to work on, or ask them to come up with a selection of key/most common situations where enhancing employee engagement is relevant and appropriate. While both approaches would satisfy the criterion, the latter should receive more encouragement.

3.4 The learner can evaluate the success of a particular performance strategy in terms of its intended and actual impact.

Candidates must be able to carry an evaluation of a given performance strategy and compare intended results and expected outcome with actual results.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

This criterion requires the candidates to take a practical stand and work with real-life data, being able to make comparisons, read and interpret different performance indicators and gaps between objectives and performance.

3.5 The learner can contextualise the role of performance review and performance appraisal within an organisation's improvement, reward and development strategies.

Candidates must explain, using highly-specialised terminology, the role and place of performance

review and performance appraisal within an organisation's broader HR strategy and narrower improvement, reward and development strategies.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

3.6 The learner can critically analyse the principles and the application of total reward in terms of the employer brand concept.

Demonstrating highly critical and analytical approach, candidates must explain the total reward model and concept in relation to the employer brand.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

In particular, learners should clarify how employer brand may contribute -- or become an obstacle -- to the total reward model, when applied in practice. Answers should demonstrate the interconnectedness between them, and shed light on specific examples of contexts (e.g. where weak perceived employer brand can easily undermine a well structured and comprehensive total reward strategy). Different elements of the total reward model/strategy should be discussed and their contribution -- or possible negative impact -- to the overall functioning should be traced.

3.7 The learner can explain the importance of personal and professional development in motivating agents of continuous improvement and transformational change.

4 The learner will understand the value of leadership approaches linked to High Performance Working (HPW) at all levels in the organisation.

4.1 The learner can compare and contrast attitudes, behaviours and capabilities of effective leaders in the context of HPW culture.

Candidates must demonstrate detailed knowledge of HPW by comparing and contrasting the properties and characteristics of effective leaders in HPW organisations versus organisations with traditional approach to human resource management.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

4.2 The learner can explain the significance of effective leadership in establishing and maintaining an effective HPW culture throughout an organisation.

Candidates must explain the importance of effective leadership to establishing and maintaining effective HPW culture throughout an organisation.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

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Learners must find a suitable approach to the criterion and explain the mechanisms through which leadership impacts the aspiration to, establishment of, and sustaining HPW culture in an organisation. Relevant and appropriate examples should be encouraged.

4.3 The learner can describe the value and relevance of key leadership theories, models and frameworks.

Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of leadership theories, models and frameworks, by describing their value, relevance and contribution.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Considering the vast number of leadership theories and classifications, this criterion should be assessed in terms of relevance and accuracy of representation, structure, comprehensiveness, analytical skills used for comparing broadly similar theories, etc. Innovative and knowledge-extending propositions and arguments made by the learners should be encouraged.

The contribution of different theories, models, and frameworks should be evaluated in the context of empirical evidence. Depending on the curriculum, assessors may decide to provide some guidance and outline the limits of this task. In addition, criteria 4.3 and 4.4 are good candidates for a common task and assessment in a bundle, and some assessors may decide to add 4.5 to the same bundle.

4.4 The learner can evaluate the effectiveness of key leadership theories, models and frameworks in today's context.

Candidates must critically evaluate the effectiveness of key leadership theories, models and frameworks in the modern world.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

As in 4.3 above, assessors may decide to provide some additional guidance and outline the limits of this task based on the curriculum. Learners' answers should contain frequent reference to empirical evidence in support of their arguments, and hypothetical extensions in line of the general level descriptors for QCF/EQF Level 7. The evaluation and analytical focus must preserve the analyst's contemporary standing. Criteria 4.3 and 4.4 are good candidates for a common task and assessment in a bundle, and some assessors may decide to add 4.5 to the same bundle.

4.5 The learner can match appropriate leadership actions and styles to a representative sample of organisational scenarios.

Candidates must be able to recommend -- and justify their choices -- leadership actions and styles appropriate to a selection of organisational scenarios.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should be presented with a selection of situations taking place in an organisational context, which may be varied in terms of origin and nature, size of impact and importance, business sector, and organisational structure and size, etc. Situations should be common, but rather dynamic in nature. Learners' recommendations, on the other hand, must go beyond the trivial response, be thoughtful, proactive and anticipatory.

Though many cases may require a complex remedy, the focus should remain on leadership. Reasonable extension of answers to the domain of different functional areas should be encouraged, as it would demonstrate a comprehensive and holistic approach. Depending on the curriculum, assessors may decide to provide some guidance and outline the limits of this task. This criterion may be considered a natural extension of the previous two (4.3 and 4.4), and assessors may decide to design a task covering all three criteria.

5 The learner will be able to apply the theories, concepts and tools associated with organisational change to the benefit of the organisation.

This set of criteria is intended to be used in assessing learners' competencies related to change management

5.1 The learner can explain the significance of change management skills for organisations in the current environment.

Candidates should demonstrate their competence in the field of change management by discussing the importance of change management skills for modern organisations.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

5.2 The learner can identify the competencies and skills individuals need to enable them to cope with change.

Candidates must identify which competencies and skills help individuals cope with change.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Although requiring focus in individual skills, this criterion should be attempted in an organisational context. Comprehensive answers should include competencies and skills needed for coping, adapting, facilitating, and promoting change. This criterion is related to criterion 5.8.

5.3 The learner can identify the competencies and skills managers need to enable successful change in others.

Candidates must identify the key competencies and skills which managers need to develop and possess in order to trigger and enable successful change in other people within the organisation.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Complementing criteria 5.1 and 5.2, this criterion is looking at the change management subject matter from the perspective of managerial skills. Providing that the three perspectives are preserved - organisational, individual, and managerial - assessors may decide to set a common task for all three criteria.

5.4 The learner can select systematic techniques appropriate to the effective and efficient management of change within representative corporate scenarios.

Candidates must identify systematic and specialised techniques which would facilitate and lead to effective and efficient management of change within the context of a range of typical and well outlined corporate scenarios.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Assessors may decide to suggest several organisational scenarios for learners to work with, or allow them to make a selection of their own. While the latter would imply deeper knowledge and mastery of complex abstraction skills, the learners should keep their answers within the focus of the criterion and justify their choice of representative scenarios with quality reasoning based on empirical evidence. Candidates should avoid the temptation to enumerate all techniques which they believe are relevant and appropriate for change management, but stay within the narrower selection of what is relevant and appropriate, and why.

5.5 The learner can identify sources of potential resistance to change including the political dimensions of organisational behaviour.

Candidates must identify a range of sources of potential resistance to change, considering all dimensions of the organisation and its environment.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

5.6 The learner can construct practical strategies for reducing or eliminating resistance to change.

Candidates are expected to devise practical strategies for organisational contexts where resistance to change is likely to emerge.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should target situations where resistance is already present, albeit with varied intensity, but a full answer would typically involve anticipatory and proactive strategies.

5.7 The learner can distinguish between proposed changes that are likely to be of rational benefit to the organisation and those that are for symbolism or political effect.

In the context of change management, candidates must demonstrate practical skills in differentiating between statements and actions related to proposed changes in the organisation, that are rational, pragmatic, and suggest working solutions, and such that may be categorised as 'lip service', political speech or aimed at building a positive corporate image.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

To demonstrate their proficiency in the subject matter, learners at Level 7 should be expected to bring up examples of their own finding, rather than analyse examples being presented to them by the assessors.

5.8 The learner can construct a personal development plan that supports change for improvement.

Candidates must be able to put together a personal development plan which outlines and enables individual improvement through change.

Evidence: Evidence from assessor's observations and documented work.

Additional information and guidance:

Learners should draw knowledge from the subject matter of change management and HR management. This criterion is related to criterion 5.2.

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