What should the apprentice expect from the business project?

Employer/training provider notes and guidance

The business project will provide the opportunity for you and the apprentice to identify and discuss an area of the business where an idea/opportunity is available to make improvements to the business. When deciding on the project you need to consider:

- the apprentice's preferences for the theme of the project where appropriate
- the viability/achievability of the project in relation to the business
- the potential added value for the business.

The project the apprentice decides on should focus on an area of the business where there are opportunities, challenges or improvements required. It will require the apprentice to complete a research phase to gather information and review the situation to produce realistic business recommendations for improvements.

The apprentice will be required to produce a business project proposal of 200–300 words, which will be submitted to the independent end-point assessor (IEPA) for approval. If the IEPA does not approve their project proposal they will need to submit a new proposal to the employer and IEPA within one week.

The length of the business project should be between 2,000 and 5,000 words and provide opportunities for the apprentice to demonstrate their understanding of the business they are working in and a wider understanding of the hospitality industry.

The project theme will depend on the type of business where they are working but could focus on:

- customer feedback
- waste management, cost efficiency, stock control
- business reputation, increasing market share, increasing sales through promotions
- health and safety issues, food safety/hygiene issues
- service efficiency, increased productivity
- menus and commodity considerations, beverage offers
- training and development of teams to improve performance.

Preparation

The employer/training provider will be required to work with the apprentice on developing the skills for completing the project whist identifying the need for the project that is both beneficial to the business and the work the apprentice undertakes in their job role.

The employer/training provider may suggest a range of themes that are applicable to the work place but the final decision of the selected theme will be down to the apprentice.

The apprentice will need to work independently on all stages of the business project but should be provided with access to sources of information and the opportunity to communicate with relevant members of staff, managers, customers, contractors and suppliers if required for gathering information and the review process.

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To assist the apprentice in completing the project you will need to provide them with:

- the task instructions
- the business project template
- grading descriptors for the business project
- a copy of the Hospitality Supervisor standards.

Proposal

Before the apprentice commences the project, they will need to complete the written proposal (200–300 words) for their business project and submit it to the IEPA for approval. This will need to be submitted before the practical observation and professional discussion are undertaken.

An introductory meeting will need to be arranged with the IEPA (this may be held remotely) to confirm the details of the end-point assessment (EPA) to ensure the apprentice understands the requirements of the assessment tasks. During this meeting the IEPA will:

- confirm acceptance of their business project proposal
- confirm the submission date for their business project (this will be two weeks before their practical observation and professional discussion take place).

Assessment of the business project

The IEPA will be looking at the following criteria when assessing the project to determine grade.

In order to pass evidence of:

- 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).
- How the business fits into the hospitality industry.
- An awareness of and understanding of the need for deadlines.
- Keeping up to date with trends and the changing industry.
- Outline the problem, challenge or opportunity identified.
- The aims and objectives of the project.
- How the potential changes would lead to measurable improvements and benefits to the department, team or area of working.
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders (eg customers, team members, managers) to inform the results and recommendations.
- An indication of costs associated with the proposed recommendations.
- Applicable legislation ensuring the proposal complies where necessary.
- Research methodology to demonstrate a logical, coherent approach.
- Clear recommendations for implementation.
- Concise validation and justification of recommendation.

In order to achieve a distinction, in addition to achieving all pass, provide evidence of:

- A detailed introduction and background of the department, team or working area/wider business unit (eg other departments, head office, local community/customer profile
- The current situation which has led to the identification of a challenge or opportunity.
- Detailed aims and objectives for the project, linking to the current situation.
- Measurable improvements and benefits to the organisation.
- Review the project to ensure it meets organisational and legal requirements.

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- A range of research has been used effectively, including obtaining information from stakeholders, such as team members, management, suppliers or customers.
- Detailed recommendations for implementation, including timings and potential costs.
- 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.

The IEPA will be determining whether sufficient breadth of skills, knowledge and behaviours have been shown to indicate the apprentice is able to relate to the Hospitality Supervisor standards to their own job role.

Submission

When submitting the business project, the apprentice will need to sign and complete the relevant sections in the project header and declaration sheet. The employer/training provider will need to review the project to ensure it meets the requirements, they will then need to sign the project header and declaration sheet and upload the completed project and signed documents to the portal for the IEPA to mark.

Professional discussion – business project presentation, questions and answers

Prior to the professional discussion assessment, 30 minutes will be allocated for the presentation of the business project and questions. The IEPA will prepare questions they can ask to check the depth of knowledge and understanding on points mentioned in the apprentice's project. The questions will provide the apprentice with an opportunity to expand on the knowledge they have shown in their project as well as clarifying areas that may be unclear.

Before the professional discussion it would support the apprentice if they read through their presentation and have a copy of their project to help remember what they have written. You may wish to ask them questions to help prepare them. The apprentice can take a copy of the project together with additional materials used in the completion of their project, eg photos, data, brochures can be taken into the discussion for reference.

Further support the employer/training provider can provide for the business project questioning session in the professional discussion includes:

- explaining the role of the IEPA
- issuing the task instructions
- encouraging apprentices to provide examples from their role in the workplace
- encouraging apprentices to prepare notes
- explaining the purpose of the Q&A session to assess areas of the standards not seen in the business project
- explaining the grading criteria and how it relates to the Hospitality Supervisor standards.

The employer may be present at the professional discussion to support (not lead) the apprentice and confirm information.

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