

Improvement Practitioner

Apprenticeship Standard Specification

1.1 Occupational profile

Improvement Practitioners use a blend of Lean and Six Sigma, project and change management principles and tools to identify and lead the delivery of change across organisational functions and processes. Improvement Practitioners can be found across all sectors and functions including automotive, banking, engineering, food products, IT, property, retail, telecoms etc.

Typically, Practitioners lead smaller projects and/or play a key supporting role in a larger programme – tackling issues that may require swift problem solving, or re-occurring challenges that require in-depth analysis and the implementation of a range of effective and sustainable countermeasures. They are the focal point for all stakeholders and responsible for communication throughout a project. Typical activities include:

- identifying potential opportunities, diagnosing issues, proposing solutions and implementing changes and controls
- coaching teams and sharing best practice
- when leading projects they may manage small teams ensuring motivation and momentum, and be responsible for the successful.

There are a variety of job titles associated with the occupation, these include, but are not limited to: Business Improvement Practitioner, Continuous Improvement Manager, Process Excellence Manager, Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and Quality Control Senior Analyst.

1.2 Purpose

This apprenticeship has been designed by a range of employers to ensure that both new entrants and those interested in progressing a career in the sector have an opportunity to develop the right skills, knowledge and behaviours. This apprenticeship is a fantastic way of developing these skills whilst learning and gaining experience at work.

At the end of the programme apprentices will:

- demonstrate problem solving methodologies
- undertake an improvement project within the workplace
- develop an understanding of the different lean tools and techniques

- develop improvement practitioner behaviours such as driving results, team-working and the desire for continuous development
- develop a deeper understanding of their business.

1.3 Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for apprentices selecting this apprenticeship standard. Employers and training providers must ensure that learners have the potential and opportunity to achieve the apprenticeship standard successfully.

1.4 Gateway requirements

Gateway requirements are stipulated by the apprenticeship standard's assessment plan and end-point assessment organisations must ensure that all apprentices have completed and achieved the requirements.

1.4.1 Apprenticeship duration

Improvement Practitioner apprentices must have exceeded the 12-month Government minimum duration and completed a programme of learning as set by their employer, supported by the appointed training provider. The programme will develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours detailed in the standard.

1.4.2 Mandated qualifications

Apprentices are required to achieve the following mandated qualifications for this standard:

- Level 2 English
- Level 2 mathematics

Evidence of these qualifications must be submitted to OAL along with a declaration that the apprentice has met the gateway requirements. Qualification certificates can be submitted at any point once the apprentice has been registered on our Portal. OAL will accept qualification certificates from any awarding organisation.

In the main OAL expects evidence to be in the form of the qualification certificate. Where the certificate is not available then a formal transcript or notification of results. Where either a certificate or formal notification of results is not available, but the apprentice has other evidence that may be acceptable, you should contact us directly so we can offer advice on the verification of the evidence.

Apprentices, who have previously achieved their English and/or mathematics as specified above, must submit their qualification certificates to Occupational Awards Limited as evidence of achievement and exemption.

Apprentices and their employer/training provider should refer to the OAL English and Mathematics Policy for end-point assessment gateway evidence available at <https://www.oawards.co.uk/about-us/> for evidence requirements of English and mathematics achievement.

1.4.3 Programme evidence required for the end-point assessment

Apprentices are required to complete the following during their learning programme:

- an apprentice log holistically referencing at least one piece of evidence demonstrating achievement of all the knowledge, skills and behaviours assessed in the professional discussion. The log should be submitted to OAL after gateway as it forms the basis of the professional discussion.
- an improvement project that demonstrates delivery of a business improvement benefit addressing substantive business problem(s) with the apprentice following each step of one of the recognised problem solving methodologies, holistically demonstrating how each of the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements have been achieved.

1.4.4 Gateway declaration

The apprentice is required to submit to OAL a signed declaration that they have completed the apprenticeship programme within the timeframe, completed the log and have undertaken an improvement project that has resulted in business benefit. The employer should counter sign this declaration. This is mandatory and apprentices will not be able to progress through gateway without submitting the declaration.

1.5 End-point Assessment (EPA) requirements

End-point assessment will take place at the end of the programme and is designed to test apprentices' skills, knowledge and behaviours independently of learning and qualifications.

End-point assessment for this standard includes a:

- **Knowledge test**

The test will be 40 minutes under controlled examination conditions and invigilated by the end-point assessment organisation. The test will comprise of 40 multiple-choice questions. The test is available online or paper-based.

- **Project report and presentation**

The project report and presentation involves 3 component; completion and submission of a project report, a portfolio of evidence supporting the report and presentation and a 40-minute presentation on the report. The presentation will involve a 35-minute questioning session. The project report should be submitted to OAL no later than one calendar month after gateway. The presentation will take place once the report has been submitted.

- **Professional discussion**

The professional discussion is a structure discussion between the apprentice and an independent assessor. The professional discussion will last no longer than 60 minutes and will be conducted in a controlled environment. The professional discussion is structured to draw out the best of the apprentices' competence and excellence. The apprentice is required to submit the log to OAL one calendar month prior to the discussion.

The apprentices' supervisor or equivalent will be present during both the project report presentation and professional discussion.

1.6 Planning the EPA

Once the apprentice has successfully passed through gateway a planning session will take place between the employer, training provider and OAL. The outcome of the planning session is to ensure that the EPA runs smoothly on the day.

Apprentices will be given access to the OAL Apprentice End-point Assessment Handbook once they have been enrolled onto the standard. The Apprentice End-point Assessment Handbook sets out the assessment requirements of EPA and the criteria on which the apprentice will be graded.

1.7 Order of end-point assessment

There is no fixed order that the assessment components can be taken.

1.8 Assessment personnel

An Independent Assessor appointed by OAL must invigilate and assess all components of the end-point assessment.

1.9 Apprenticeship grading

The apprenticeship is graded: Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction. Apprentices must achieve a minimum of a pass in each of the 3 components.

Results are subject to moderation and will be issued every 10 working days to the named training provider. OAL will send results to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in line with guidelines for certification. It is expected that a period of further learning will need to be undertaken if the apprentice has to re-take any part of the end-point assessment. OAL can make exemptions to this ruling should reasons for the fail are deemed to be outside the control of the apprentice.

1.10 EPA fees

OAL typically charges 15% of the total funding for this standard. However fees are worked out on an individual basis to ensure that employers and apprentices get the best value for money. For approved centres our fees can be found in the online Portal. Non-approved centres should contact us directly for a bespoke quote.

At OAL there are no hidden fees. Our fees are inclusive of all support, documentation and materials. This includes access to our team of experts to support the induction of apprentices, preparation for EPA, handbooks and assessment specifications and materials.

1.11 Standard Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

Key to table

- MCQ Multiple choice questions
- PRP Project Report and Presentation
- PD Professional Discussion

Knowledge statements		Assessed by:
Compliance	Legislative and customer compliance requirements including health and safety	MCQ
Team formation and leadership	Decision-making techniques e.g. consensus, authority rule, majority rule	PRP PD
Project management	Business case, risk analysis and management, toll-gate reviews, work breakdown structure, lessons learned, pilot studies, project review, process management and measures, benefits tracking	MCQ
Presentation & reporting	Reporting templates, message mapping, case for change	PRP
Change management	Stakeholder identification, analysis and management (RACI). Change curve, resistance characteristics, change sponsorship, compelling point of view	MCQ
Principles and methods	Business value of Lean and Six Sigma improvement methods - 8D, practical problem solving, Define Measure Analyse Improve Control, Design for Six Sigma	MCQ
Project selection and scope	$Y=f(x)$ equation (outputs are the result of inputs), business scorecard cascade	MCQ
Problem definition	Cost of Poor Quality, problem analysis models such as Is/Is Not	MCQ
Process mapping and analysis	Swim lane, value stream map, performance metrics – continuous, Parameter diagram, Takt time, Overall Equipment Effectiveness, theory of constraints principles, Kanban	MCQ
Data analysis – basic tools	Spreadsheets and pivot table analysis, statistical analysis software	MCQ
Measurement systems	Repeatability and Reproducibility principles	MCQ

Knowledge statements		Assessed by:
Basic statistics & measures	Control charts - attribute data, principles of normality	MCQ
Data analysis - statistical methods	Measures of central tendency and spread	MCQ
Process capability & performance	Capability analysis – continuous data for normal distribution	MCQ
Root cause analysis	Key principles including symptoms, failure-mode, potential/verified cause, critical inputs, escape point. Graphical representation of data with dot, scatter and box plots	MCQ
Experimentation	Active versus passive analytics, design of experiments, experiment plan	MCQ
Identification & prioritisation	Selection and prioritisation matrix, Failure Mode and Effects Analysis	MCQ
Skills statements		
Compliance	Work in accordance with organisational controls and statutory regulations	PRP
Communication	Speak and write clearly. Influence others, question effectively. Plan and deliver meetings presenting insight to engage audiences	PD
Coaching	Observe, listen, use questioning, provide feedback and spot learning opportunities	PRP
Project management	Define, sequence, plan and schedule activities with phases and milestones. Estimate effort and duration. Create and update project charter. Review progress	PRP PD

Skills statements		Assessed by:
Change management	Sponsorship contract, surface and manage resistance, build compelling narratives for change, assess change impact	PRP PD
Principles and methods	Select and apply a structured method and appropriate improvement tools engaging with subject matter experts to deliver business benefits	PRP
Problem selection and scoping	Support the identification of improvement opportunity and the scoping of these projects	PRP
Problem definition	Support development of problem/opportunity statements	PRP
Voice of the customer	Support application of techniques to identify and prioritise customers, their requirements and ensure balance against the stated and unstated needs of the business (Voice of the Business)	PRP
Process mapping and analysis	Process map to measure and analyse flow and value. Identify interfaces, functional responsibilities and ownership. Use insight to identify potential opportunities and map future state	PRP
Lean tools	Seek in-process waste through understanding of value within the value stream	PRP
Measurements systems	Plan, carry out and assess results of a measurement system study	PRP
Data acquisition for analysis	Develop a sampling strategy	PRP
Basic statistics and measures	Use graphical analysis to understand distribution and stability	PRP
Data analysis-statistical methods	Identify data-types and select analysis methods and tools. Assess time series data stability and analyse making relevant insight	PRP

Skills statements		Assessed by:
Process capability and performance	Select methods and metrics for analysis	PRP
Root cause analysis	Select and apply the appropriate graphical tool dependent on the data type to identify patterns, trends and signals to establish hypothesis	PRP
Experimentation and optimisation	Plan designed experiment with clear objectives, and appropriate levels of Measurement Systems Analysis, analyse experiment data and optimise	PRP PD
Identification and prioritisation	Identify and prioritise factors, ideas and solutions	PRP
Data analysis – SPC	Select and apply appropriate tools for ongoing monitoring and control. Analyse and interpret control charts	PRP
Benchmarking	Conduct structured benchmarking to support target setting	PD
Sustainability and control	Identify failure modes and embed learning from improvements	PRP

Behaviour statements		Assessed by:
Drive for results	Continuous drive for change and encourages others to deliver results across functional areas capturing and standardising best practice	PD
Team-working	Awareness of own and others' working styles. Creates high performing team	PD
Professionalism	Promotes a moral, legal and socially appropriate working manner, aligns behaviours to the organisations values. Maintains flexibility to needs of project	PD
Continuous development	Proactively seeks and acts on feedback. Reflects on performance and has a desire for development. Adapts quickly to working with new situations/stakeholders/challenges	PD
Safe working	Ensures safety of self and others, speaks out to challenge safety issues	PD