

UNEMPLOYED LEARNERS AND ILM QUALIFICATIONS

VRQ assessment guidance for centres

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Introduction

ILM believes that studying for management and leadership qualifications during periods of unemployment can help individuals accelerate their return to the workforce.

We recognise that during a period of unemployment the work-based assessment element of our qualifications may be problematic for learners. Therefore to support centres working with unemployed managers and leaders we have produced this briefing document to guide the assessment options.

Importantly, while NVQs must be linked to assessment in a workplace setting, our VRQs offer more flexibility and it is these qualifications that are focused on in this document.

Please note we can not provide individual guidance for unemployed learners or comment on how study can affect Job Seekers Allowance. Please contact your local Job Centre for further advice.

Overview

- Recent previous employment can provide significant opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge to real workplace environments. Some voluntary work may also provide this opportunity. Therefore it is important to determine whether unemployed learners have this type of experience or opportunity before registration
- Action Learning Sets and Simulations are likely to feature more prominently in the teaching strategy for unemployed learners and centres are encouraged to invest in these approaches
- Case studies should not be widely used to assess ILM qualifications
- The use of tests is not considered an appropriate assessment approach for ILM qualifications
- For unemployed learners planning to study for an Management Award, the optional units should be selected with careful reference to this guidance document
- For learners who become unemployed after registration for a qualification, advice should be sought from ILM if (i) the learner was registered for a Certificate or Diploma in Management or Leadership; or (ii) if the planned units are not explicitly listed as suitable for an unemployed learner

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Alternative Assessment Approaches

#1 – Recent Previous Employment

This involves reflection on a previous period of employment (of at least three months' duration, no more than six months ago), during which time the learner was in a job role broadly aligned with the level of the qualification.

For Level 5 qualifications the learner should have had previous responsibility for directly supervising other staff. For Level 7 qualifications the learner should have had previous experience in both supervising other staff and operating at a senior level (eg leading an organisational function/department).

#2 – Voluntary Work

We consider it highly desirable that unemployed managers and leaders studying ILM qualifications continue to practice their skills and develop new ones. Many (but not all) forms of volunteering provide such opportunities. Suitable opportunities will include the following features:

- Significant interaction with at least two members of staff (Levels 2 & 3)
- Responsibility for directing the work of others (Level 5)
- Responsibility for the delivery of specific, time-bound activities (all levels)

#3 – Action Learning Sets

Action Learning Sets are a well recognised approach to accelerating learning and can be particularly helpful to build experiences focused on team-work outside of the workplace. Participants study their own actions and experience in order to improve performance – carried out in conjunction with others, in small groups called action learning sets. This process encourages each person to reflect on and review the action they have taken and the learning points arising. This should then guide future action and improve performance.

#4 – Simulations

Appropriately designed simulations are considered a suitable assessment vehicle if other options are not possible. Simulations are best used in a blended approach with other forms of training and assessment. Therefore they should be used to complement the experiences available through voluntary work/recent past employment.

Please note ILM does not consider it appropriate that core Management qualifications should be achieved solely through assessment using simulations (NB: The Level 2 Award and Certificate in 'Preparing for Business Enterprise' or Level 2 Award in 'Exploring Business Enterprise' may be achieved via the simulation assessment route).

ILM does not support the assessment approaches below as they do not assess a learner's ability to put their learning in practice:

- Time constrained tests
- Examinations
- Viva voce

Summary of VRQ Options

The following ILM VRQs can be appropriately assessed without the need for the learner to be currently employed or have recent previous experience in management/ leadership:

Management (awards)

- Level 2 Team Leading
- Level 3 First Line Management
- Level 4 Management

Leadership (award)

- Level 4 Leadership

Business & Enterprise (award / certificates)

- Level 2 Exploring Business Enterprise
- Level 2 Preparing for Business Enterprise
- Level 3 Starting Your Enterprise

Notes:

- (1) Not all the optional units cited in the Management qualifications will be suitable for this group of learners (see appendix for details)
- (2) Centres may find it necessary to use additional approaches and tools (e.g. Action Learning Sets & Simulations) to appropriately teach and assess learning for this group of learners
- (3) Registration of candidates should be restricted to an Award qualification for this group of learners (except for Business & Enterprise qualifications)

The following ILM VRQs can be assessed without the need for the learner to be currently employed providing they do have recent previous experience in management/ leadership:

Management (award)

- Level 5 Management

Coaching & Mentoring (award / certificate / diploma)

- Level 3 Coaching
- Level 3 Coaching and Mentoring
- Level 5 Coaching and Mentoring
- Level 7 Executive Coaching and Leadership Mentoring

Notes:

- (1) Not all the optional units cited in the Management qualifications will be suitable for this group of learners (see appendix for details)
- (2) Centres may find it necessary to use additional approaches and tools (eg Action Learning Sets and Simulations) to appropriately teach and assess learning for this group of learners

- (3) Registration of candidates should be restricted to an Award qualification for this group of learners (except for Coaching & Mentoring qualifications)

The following ILM VRQs are not suitable for study by the unemployed as the assessment emphasises the use of work-based assignments and reflective reviews, both of which focus on the leader and manager as a practitioner:

Management

- Certificate and diploma qualifications (all levels)
- Level 6 and Level 7 qualifications

Leadership

- All current qualifications except Level 4 award

Leadership and Management

- All current qualifications

Business and Enterprise

- Level 2 Business Improvement
- All current Level 5 qualifications

Notes:

- (1) If a learner becomes unemployed while studying for any of the above qualifications, specific advice should be sought from ILM on how to proceed

Appendix: ILM Management VRQ units

Qualification	Units suitable for all learners	Units suitable for those with recent experience in employment	Units only suitable for those currently in employment
Level 2 Team Leading (Award)	M2.01, M2.06, M2.08, M2.09, M2.12, M2.13, M2.14, M2.15, M2.16, M2.17, M2.19, M2.20, M2.21, M2.22	M2.02, M2.03, M2.05, M2.07, M2.10, M2.11, M2.18	M2.04
Level 3 First Line Management (Award)	M3.01, M3.04, M3.05, M3.06, M3.07, M3.09, M3.10, M3.11, M3.15, M3.20, M3.21, M3.22, M3.23, M3.26, M3.27, M3.30, M3.31, M3.32, M3.33, M3.35	M3.02, M3.03, M3.08, M3.12, M3.13, M3.14, M3.16, M3.18, M3.19,	M3.17, M3.24, M3.25, M3.28, M3.29, M3.34
Level 4 Management (Award)	M4.01, M4.02		
Level 5 Management (Award)	M4.01, M4.02	M5.04, M5.06, M5.09, M5.10, M5.15, M5.19, M5.23, M5.25, M5.27, M5.28	M5.01, M5.02, M5.03, M5.05, M5.07, M5.08, M5.11, M5.12, M5.13, M5.14, M5.16, M5.17, M5.18, M5.20, M5.21, M5.22, M5.24, M5.26