

learndirect - *learning through work*

Level Indicators

The following descriptions summarise the nine levels used for Learning through Work awards. The more detailed indicators are included at the end. The descriptions indicate the level needed to complete an award at the relevant level, *not* to enter the programme.

Level 2 will involve you in taking responsibility for a range of tasks and drawing on in-depth knowledge of your immediate area of work. You will need to be able to check the results of your work, and show that you can respond to unfamiliar situations.

Level 3 - you will be making decisions about appropriate approaches, coping with situations which present a range of problems and choices, and reviewing your work. You will need to be able to use your understanding of principles that apply to your work, as well as drawing on your own ideas and experience to solve problems.

Level 4 (HE 1) - you will be thinking through and reviewing courses of action, making informed judgements on issues which affect your work, and coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems. You will need to be able to use your understanding of principles which apply to your work, as well as producing your own ideas and developing innovative responses. You will need to be able to carry out small-scale practical investigations, and review the appropriateness of different options.

Level 5 (HE 2) - you will be thinking through and reviewing courses of action, including for their impact outside of your immediate work. You will be making informed judgements on issues which affect your work, and coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems. You will need to be able to draw on a broad personal or formal knowledge-base and set of concepts which apply to your work, as well as producing your own ideas and developing innovative responses; you should be able to develop your own theories and find ways forward when faced with contradictions and dilemmas. You will need to be able to carry out small-scale practical research in relation to your work.

The detailed levels indicators

The tables below are intended to be used as a 'best fit' device, with opportunity for compensation within and between fields: it is not expected that a learner's programme will match exactly to a single level, but it should match closest to the intended level.

The notes on the final page should be read in conjunction with the indicators.

Field	Description <i>Qualification type</i>	Level 2 (FE)	Level 3 (FE)	Level 4 (HE1) <i>CertHE</i>	Level 5 (HE2) <i>DipHE</i>
Complexity and responsibility	This concerns the level of complexity you are dealing with and what you are personally taking responsibility for (which can be different from the responsibility expected in your job).	- Responsibility for a range of tasks and procedures and their immediate results - Making decisions about how to complete tasks - Coping effectively in familiar and occasionally unfamiliar situations	- Responsibility for results and standards as well as methods - Making decisions about appropriate approaches and, within limits, objectives - Coping effectively with unfamiliar situations which present a range of problems and choices	- Responsibility for courses of action and their results, including wider impacts - Thinking through and choosing courses of action - Coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems	- Responsibility across a broad area rather than for individual tasks, including for negotiating objectives and outcomes and for their wider impacts - Developing thought-through courses of action - Coping effectively with a range of unfamiliar situations and problems
Scope	This is about whether you are, for instance, working within a closely-defined situation or considering wider implications and impact.	- Interpreting and applying rules and guidelines to the area of work - Identifying different approaches within the overall guidance or boundaries of work	- Recognising principles and issues applying to the area of work - Identifying different outcomes and approaches within the overall boundaries of the work area	- Recognising the implications of different issues and courses of action - Identifying and evaluating the practical effects and impact of operating parameters	- Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action, - Identifying dilemmas and value-conflicts - Identifying and evaluating the effects and impact of operating parameters and principles
Thinking and understanding	This refers to the level of thinking and understanding you are using in analysing information, pulling information together and making decisions about what you are doing.	- Drawing on in-depth knowledge of the immediate area of work - Analysing data to extract relevant information for presentation or use - Interpreting and combining a range of information to assist action	- Acting on understandings of relevant principles, including awareness of alternatives and contradictions - Analysing information to identify relationships and make informed judgements - Combining information to develop ideas and choose courses of action or develop ways forward	- Acting on understandings of relationships and contradictions between principles and ideas - Investigating, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and make informed judgements - Reinterpreting and combining information to develop ideas and choose courses of action or develop ways forward	- Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge-base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice - Developing practical theories, ideas and models including to find ways forward when faced with contradictions and gaps in theories - Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify relationships and patterns and make informed judgements
Investigation and evaluation	This concerns how you are investigating information and evaluating situations.	- Identifying information which is needed and using a range of straightforward sources - Checking results of own work	- Identifying information which is needed and using a range of different sources, including from outside the immediate context - Evaluating the appropriateness of different approaches	- Designing investigations to provide new information and affect practice, including through practical investigation - Evaluating the appropriateness of different approaches and their impacts	- Designing practical research to provide new information and affect areas of practice - Evaluating the effects of options and actions, including impacts outside of the immediate context
Innovation and originality	This is about the level of originality and innovation you are bringing to your work.	- Drawing on own ideas and experience - Putting forward ideas for better ways of working	- Using own ideas in addressing issues - Improving and modifying approaches to working	- Producing own ideas and developing innovative responses - Developing novel solutions to	- Taking innovative approaches to address issues - Developing novel solutions to sets of problems

Field	Description	Notes	Interpretation
Complexity and responsibility	This concerns the level of complexity you are dealing with and what you are personally taking responsibility for (which can be different from the responsibility expected in your job).	Complexity and responsibility relate to factors such as: – the number of variables the learner is engaging with and the complexity of interrelationships between them – the criticality of the learner's actions – the breadth and depth of impact which the learner is taking responsibility for – the extent to which the learner is engaging with issues outside the immediate context – the extent to which the learner is addressing divergent issues.	Complexity and responsibility relate to how the learner engages with a situation, not to the situation itself. For instance, a learner in a fairly straightforward job may be demonstrating a high level of complexity and responsibility by going outside the job demands, while someone in a 'high-level' job need not be engaging with it in a way which demonstrates a high level of complexity or responsibility. The emphasis on different parts of this field are likely to vary with the type of work the learner is engaged in; compensation within the field is acceptable.
Scope	This is about whether you are, for instance, working within a closely-defined situation or considering wider implications and impact.	'Scope' refers to whether the learner is operating within close constraints, or 'outside the box' where s/he is dealing with wider systems implications, divergent or complex issues, and is setting the parameters of his or her action. Ethical, value-based and environmental / contextual issues will be reflected in 'scope' as relevant to the situation.	As with complexity and responsibility, scope relates to the learner's approach and actions, not to the context directly. The emphasis on different parts of this field are likely to vary with the type of work the learner is engaged in; compensation within the field is acceptable.
Thinking and understanding	This refers to the level of thinking and understanding you are using in analysing information, pulling information together and making decisions about what you are doing.	This field is essentially concerned with understanding and thinking in relation to practice. It is based on level increasing with factors such as – development and testing of personal theories and mental models – responsibility for evaluation – questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions – critical and creative, as opposed to purely technical, thinking – synthesis and interpolation – acceptance of and engagement with divergence, lacunae and 'wicked problems' or 'messes' – engagement with and management of dilemmas and conflicts of value.	Thinking and understanding need to be related to practice: in a work-based learning context theory-in-use or thinking-for-action is more important than espoused theory, although particularly at the higher levels the statements require reflection on the thinking employed in action. Particularly where intuitive and tacit understandings are involved, they may be evidenced through action rather than explanation, although in many situations a balance of action and explanation will be required. The emphasis on different parts of this field are likely to vary with the type of work the learner is engaged in; compensation within the field is acceptable.
Investigation and evaluation	This concerns how you are investigating information and evaluating situations.	This field draws on the three previous fields in the context of (practical) research and evaluation.	'Research' is used in the context of practical research: although the level of research expected is equivalent to that in an academic context, it may be presented differently (or used directly to inform action without being formally presented). The research criterion does not imply a distinct 'research project,' as research could be part of a development process, management plan or report, or other form of practical action.
Innovation and originality	This is about the level of originality and innovation you are bringing to your work.		Innovation refers to the originality of action for the context; it needs to be interpreted in the learner's context and does not imply something which is totally unique.

