



# Quantumawards

L6 EPA Briefing Pack



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# 1. Background

# Why End Point Assessment?



- In 2014 the Government launched 'Trailblazer' apprenticeships in response to the findings of the 2012 'Richard review of apprenticeships which suggested redefining what apprenticeships were:-
  - Open to all (not limited by age or employment status)
  - Funded by the Apprenticeship levy
  - Designed by employer 'Trailblazer' groups who produce TWO key documents;-
    - The Apprenticeship standard – lays down the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB's) to be delivered in the apprenticeship
    - The Assessment plan – details how the KSB's of the standard should be assessed

(Both documents available on the government portal at <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/improvement-practitioner-v1-0>)
- Every Apprenticeship MUST include an the 'End Point Assessment' (EPA) at the end of the apprenticeship which must be carried out exactly as detailed in the assessment plan.
- The EPA must be carried out by a third party independent to both Employer and Training Provider and approved by Government – the EPAO (End Point Assessment Organisation).



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## 2. EPA Structure

# EPA Methods

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There are two forms of assessment ('methods') used in the L6 Improvement Leader EPA.

Both need to be completed to form the overall EPA and both need to be passed in order to gain an overall pass. The two methods are:

1. Dissertation, Presentation and Questioning
2. Professional Discussion underpinned by portfolio of evidence

These two assessment methods are delivered either remotely or Face to Face.

- The EPA must be completed a maximum of 20 weeks after Gateway.
- Each method assesses a sub-set of the overall total KSB's
- Each method is graded Fail / Pass / Merit / Distinction.
- The overall grade for the apprenticeship is derived from the grading awarded for each method.

# Improvement Leader – EPA Assessment Plan



1. Portfolio of evidence is compiled during the apprenticeship programme
2. Title of dissertation is agreed with Candidate, Employer and EPAO within 2 weeks of Gateway
3. Dissertation is marked before the presentation and Independent Assessor will use it to compile questions for presentation element
4. Each of the 2 assessment methods will be graded Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction – giving an overall grade of Fail, Pass or Distinction

# Dissertation, Presentation & Questioning

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## Outline

- This EPA Method carries a weighting of 50% toward the overall grade
- The dissertation is to focus upon development and deployment of improvement strategy in the apprentice's organisation.
- The dissertation must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the EPA.
- The presentation must be 45 to 50 minutes in duration.
- The presentation will be followed by 35 to 40 minutes of questioning from the assessor.

# Dissertation, Presentation & Questioning



## Details

- The dissertation subject and title need to be agreed with the EPAO and employer as part of the Gateway approval.
- The main body of the dissertation must be between 4000 and 4500 words
  - A summary and appendices must be included and are additional to the word count
  - The summary must be a concise one-page of A4, visual, and follow principles of “A3 thinking”
- The dissertation’s scope must be sufficient to demonstrate the skills and knowledge laid out in the assessment plan.
- The presentation based upon the dissertation will be given to the assessor and the technical expert from the apprentice’s organisation. This presentation can use any of the media that the organisation normally uses.
- The presentation must outline the focus, approach, outcomes and evaluation covered in the dissertation.
- The apprentice can refer to their dissertation during the questioning phase.



# L6 Dissertation, Presentation & Questioning



## Pass Criteria

- you must meet specific pass criteria which also relate to the KSB's:-
  - Prepare, submit and present a dissertation to agreed timescales that details the development and deployment of improvement strategy in their organisation. The dissertation must recognise the following as key elements of the improvement strategy:
    - Value of a strategic plan for continuous improvement.
    - Identify, calculate and communicate business benefit of improvement programmes to the apprentice's employer.
    - Consider team formation/performance and leadership.
    - Consider the process for project selection and demonstrate the use of project selection guidelines and prioritisation of projects delivered.
    - Consider the wider organisation in the context of improvement strategy development and deployment planning.
    - Consider capability development.
    - Consider change management.
    - Consider process capability metrics.
    - Consider failure mode avoidance.

# L6 Dissertation, Presentation & Questioning

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## **Merit Criteria**

- In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass:
  - Apprentice must demonstrate 10 of the 18 merit criteria identified in the assessment plan.

## **Distinction Criteria**

- In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass and Merit:
  - Apprentice must demonstrate an additional 6 of the 18 merit criteria identified in the assessment plan.

# Project & Presentation

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Any Questions regarding  
the Dissertation and  
Presentation?

# Professional Discussion



## Outline

- This EPA Method carries a weighting of 50% toward the overall grade
- The portfolio of evidence (POE) which underpins the professional discussion is to be submitted to the EPAO within two weeks following the EPA gateway.
- The POE must include:
  - Minimum of one set of evidence for each topic area assessed by the professional discussion.
  - Range of documents such as minitab screen shots, coaching reports and a 1-page summary from the Lean strategy.
  - Evidence relating to preparation and delivery of training session which can be delivered during the on-programme phase of the apprenticeship. This training session is to have Level 5 learning outcomes linked to 1 or 2 improvement topics.
  - Training session must cover a subject from the list below:
    - Project and change management; Lean principles and tools; Measurement systems analysis and data collection planning graphical analysis and statistical analysis; Data transformation; and process capability; Experimentation, optimization and modelling; Failure mode avoidance.
    - Training materials are to be prepared by the apprentice and included in the POE.
    - The training session must be delivered to a group of level 5 or equivalent senior delegates in their normal working environment
    - The training session must be 45-50 minutes duration.
    - A continuous video recording of the training session must be included in the POE
    - All training materials and records of delegate feedback must be included in the POE
  - Evidence must be mapped holistically against the KSBs
- The Professional discussion will last 120-140 minutes in duration.
- Apprentices may refer to their POE when answering questions.

# L6 Professional Discussion



## Pass Criteria

- you must meet specific pass criteria which also relate to the KSB's:-
  - Create and communicate effective summaries involving “A3 thinking”.
  - Understand the importance of validating measurement systems.
  - Interpret and draw accurate conclusions from data.
  - Recognise the importance of structured project reviews.
  - Use coaching techniques to enable and encourage others to learn independently.
  - Set and communicate objectives and outcomes; communicate clearly to fully meet objectives/outcomes; seek feedback and reflect on opportunities for improvement.
  - Recognise the importance of appropriate method selection.
  - Recognise the importance of structured evidence-driven problem definition in everyday work.
  - Recognise the importance of understanding Voice of Customer in everyday work.
  - Recognise the importance of process thinking in everyday work.
  - Recognise the importance of principles and benefits of Lean in everyday work.
  - Recognise the importance of data-driven decision making in everyday work.
  - Stay up to date with latest updates of statistical software used by the organisation.
  - Recognise the importance of root cause analysis in everyday problem solving.
  - Recognise the value of building mathematical models to understand relationships within and between process inputs and outputs.
  - Recognise the value of Creative Thinking in the context of improvement projects.
  - Recognise the importance of ongoing process control in everyday work.
  - Recognise the importance of benchmarking in context of improvement activities.
  - Clearly communicate the value of improvement and operational excellence.
  - Understand key business drivers.
  - Recognise underperforming teams

# L6 Professional Discussion

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## **Merit Criteria**

- In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Pass:
  - Demonstrate 14 of the 25 merit criteria.
  - 1-2 of the merit criteria must be behaviours.

## **Distinction Criteria**

- In addition to satisfying all criteria for a Merit:
  - Demonstrate and additional 8 of the merit criteria (22 in total).

# Professional Discussion

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Any Questions  
regarding the  
Professional  
Discussion?

# EPA Overall Grading

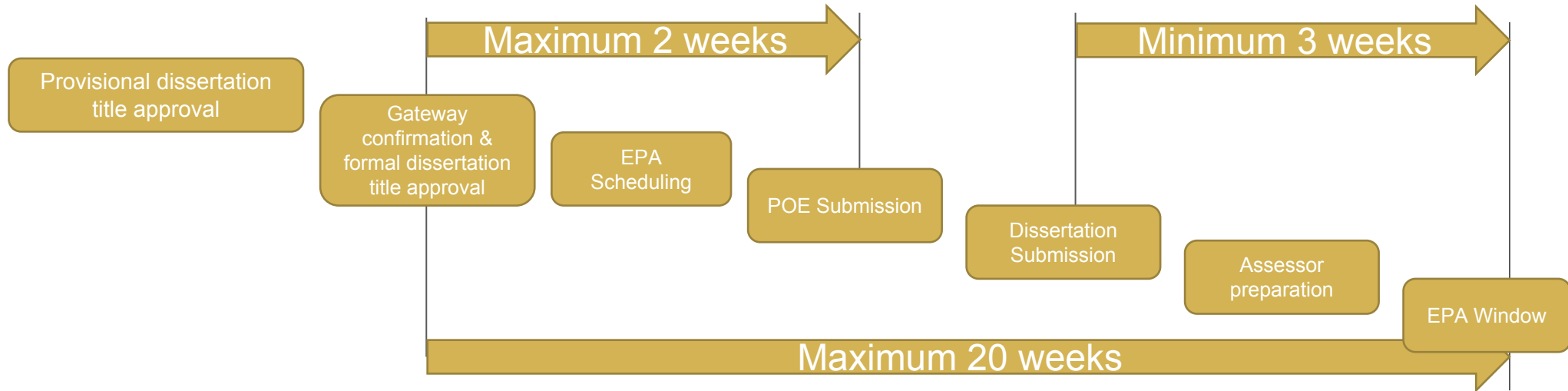


**Pass** - You must pass both EPA elements as a minimum. Grading combinations are described below:-

Professional Discussion	Dissertation, presentation & questioning	Overall grade
Fail	Any	Fail
Any	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Merit	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Merit
Merit	Pass	Pass
Merit	Merit	Merit
Merit	Distinction	Merit
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Merit	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction



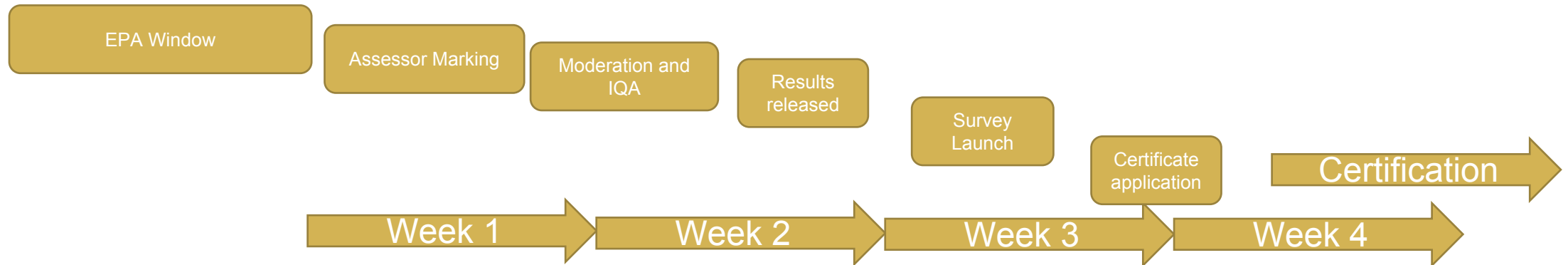
# EPA Process Timing Summary



1. Provision dissertation title approval – this will take place during the training phase of the apprenticeship and will be managed by the training provider.
2. Gateway Confirmation & formal dissertation title approval – The employer confirms that the gateway has been achieved and EPAO formally agrees the title of the dissertation.
3. EPA Scheduling – QAL will offer EPA slots to each apprentice during the requested EPA window period.
4. POE Submission – Portfolio of evidence to be submitted to support the professional discussion – the timing deadline for this is 2 weeks after the gateway.
5. Dissertation submission – Completed dissertation is submitted to EPAO - the timing deadline for this is 3 weeks prior to the EPA date.
6. Assessor preparation – A three-week period for the allocated assessor to review submitted evidence and prepare questions for presentation and professional discussion
7. EPA Window – a set of dates agreed between employer and QAL for the EPA to take place. The EPA must be completed within 20 weeks of the gateway.

**This timing is critical – your support is required to ensure all is completed in a timely manner**

# Results Timing



1. Assessor Marking – assessor completes paperwork, marks and grades each EPA element.
2. QAL IQA Team will then moderate results and complete IQA activities
3. QAL Assessment lead will then release results by cohort to the employer and individually (e-mail) – the QAL service level agreement is to provide results within 10 working days of the final EPA for that cohort being completed – but often is quicker
4. Certification – if 'Pass' grade or higher QAL will apply for your certificate through the government portal – this certificate may take 3 weeks or more to be printed and delivered
5. Survey Launch – we will issue an anonymous survey to all apprentices 2 weeks after the EPA window closes – your support to completing this survey will be greatly appreciated

# Resits and Retakes



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- If you pass the EPA, you cannot resit elements in order to improve your grade – your original result is final.
  - If you fail either one EPA method you will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit for that one method. (a resit does not require a period of further learning but can be requested)
  - This re-sit is typically taken within 3 months of notification of the result of the original EPA, the timescales are agreed between employer and the EPAO.
  - The re-sit can be awarded a maximum grade of a pass unless the EPAO identifies exceptional circumstances accounting for the original Fail.
  - If an apprentice fails the re-sit they will be required to re-take the EPA in full after a period of further learning.
  - Apprentices who fail both EPA methods will be required to re-take the EPA in full after a period of further training. This will typically be taken within 6 months of notification of the result of the original EPA.

# Reasonable Adjustment and Flexibility

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## Reasonable Adjustment

- If you consider you require reasonable adjustment for you not to be disadvantaged at EPA, please ensure this is requested by your training provider or employer prior to gateway (at the latest).

## Flexibility

- QAL will make every effort to schedule your EPA in line with the requirements of the assessment plan and to fit in with your schedule
- But we understand that things can change, and if something significant were to occur in the period approaching your scheduled EPA which would result in disadvantage to you, then please contact QAL to discuss rescheduling options

# Permissions and Certification



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## Permissions

- QAL are required to gain your formal permissions prior to the Gateway and EPA for the following:
  - That you are willing to undertake your End Point Assessment with Quantum Awards Ltd.
  - That you are willing for Quantum Awards to contact you by e-mail for the purpose of completing the end point assessment and gaining feedback regarding my end point assessment experience
  - That you are willing, if successful at EPA, for Quantum Awards Ltd to use your personal details to apply for your Apprenticeship certificate
- IMPORTANT – the permissions document must contain your ‘wet’ signature or a scanned signature to ensure validity. If you do not supply a completed permissions document, then EPA cannot take place
- Also, if any EPA element takes place by remote means, you must have photo I/D (Passport or driving license ideally) with you to verify who you are to the assessor or invigilator.

## Certification

- QAL will apply through the Government Gateway for your apprenticeship certificate which will be mailed to the address you provide. This may take 3 -5 weeks.

# Appeals, Complaints and Survey



## Appeals and Complaints

- QAL has a robust appeals and complaints procedure.
- A complaint is when you feel, for example, that things did not go as expected but which did not affect the EPA outcome.
- An appeal is where something happened which impacted on your result. There are two grounds for appeals:
  1. Serious or exceptional personal, unanticipated, mitigating circumstances that caused them to under-perform
  2. A significant fault within QAL's processes or mishandling of the assessment which interfered with the apprentices ability to present their case
- Please use the QAL website, the supplied form or contact QAL directly or through your provider or employer should you have a complaint or wish to make an appeal.

## Survey

- QAL will deploy to you a web based anonymous survey following your EPA. This is our main way of getting feedback from our customers and we ask that you take the time to complete this.

# Recap – Actions Timeline



Before Gateway

- Permissions form completed and sent to QAL

Gateway

- Employer informs QAL that gateway requirements have been met. QAL to be made aware of the need for any reasonable adjustment

Arrangements

- EPA scheduling takes place QAL – Apprentice. Apprentice must arrange line manager attendance

POE Submission

- No later than 2 weeks after gateway, submit portfolio of evidence

Submission

- No later than 3 weeks prior to EPA, submit dissertation

EPA Window

- The two elements of the EPA take place before 22 weeks following Gateway

Results

- Your results and feedback is sent to you no later than 2 weeks following EPA

Appeals and complaints

- You can complain, and have a right to appeal should you believe grounds for such exist

Survey

- QAL will send you a link to a survey which we would very much like you to complete.

Certification

- Your certificate will be sent to the address provided.

# Quantum Awards L6 Briefing- close

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Any Questions?



# L6 Improvement Leader

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Appendix

# About Quantum Awards Ltd (QAL)?



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- Your employer has selected Quantum Awards Ltd as your EPA for this Apprenticeship
  - Quantum Awards has been set up by Mark Smith and Andrew Parsons specifically to provide EPA services in the Lean, Improvement and Quality fields.
  - Mark is a highly experienced senior global quality professional, with director-level automotive experience in both Jaguar Land Rover and in the supply chain. He has initiated and led transformational programmes in diversity and inclusion, supplier measurement and training and is driven by a belief in the vital importance of developing the skills and capability of people. Mark is continuing his work across industry and is an integral member of the Quality Trailblazer group that recently developed the Quality practitioner standard.
  - Andrew was recently the Technical Skills Training Lead for Toyota Manufacturing UK Ltd where he worked mainly in a training role for the last 27 years, including developing with Capella Associates the first 'Lean Six Sigma training' into Toyota. He also led the improvement workstream of the sector wide 'Industry Partnership' which delivered over 300 government funded Lean 'Green Belt' trainings. Since 2017 Andrew has been chair of the Automotive Trailblazer Group which has produced 23 apprenticeship Standards. Until July 2019, he was Chair of the Improvement Standards Trailblazer Group.

# Why Quantum Awards Ltd (QAL)?

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- Led by experienced professionals with a passion for improvement
- Assessor staff are all experienced lean six sigma practitioners that have applied their expertise across many industries over many years and who have a deep understanding of the requirements of the Apprenticeship standard and the Assessment plan
- A robust Internal Quality Assurance system is in place and handled by a smaller sub-team again all with relevant industry experience in Lean and Business Improvement and all holding appropriate IQA qualifications.
- External Quality Assurance visits have confirmed QAL's rating as Strong with Outstanding elements - you can be assured of a professional service that provides the learners with a very positive experience
- Detailed feedback provided to each candidate following EPA to aid their own personal development, supported by analysis of EPA results to the provider to drive continuous improvement
- Exemplary feedback from customer surveys
- Endorsed by UK 'Blue Chip' companies including GSK and Toyota.

# Dissertation, Presentation & Questioning



## KSB's assessed

S	K
S1. Strategic deployment of CI	K1. Strategy development
S2. Business benefits	K2. Business benefits
S3. Team formation & leadership	K3. Team formation & leadership
S4. Capability development	K4. Self-development
S5. Project management	K6. Project selection & scoping
S8. Change management	
S10. Project selection & scoping	
S17. Process capability & performance	
S21. Failure mode avoidance	

You can see from the above that only Knowledge and Skill criteria as listed are assessed through the dissertation, presentation and questioning element. The Assessors will want to see how you moved through each stage of your dissertation and how and why you have developed your strategy and used the tools you used.

# Professional Discussion



## KSB's assessed

<b>K</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>B</b>
K5. Presentation & reporting	S6. Reviewing projects & coaching others	S15. Data acquisition for analysis	B1. Drive for results
K7. Measurement systems	S7. Presentation & reporting	S16. Statistics & graphical analysis	B2. Team-working
K8. Data analysis – statistical methods	S9. Principles and methods	S18. Root cause analysis	B3. Professionalism
K9. Experimentation & optimisation	S11. Problem definition	S19. Experimentation, optimisation & simulation	B4. Strategic thinking
	S12. Voice of customer (VOC)	S20. Identification & prioritisation	B5. Safe Working
	S13. Process mapping & analysis	S22. Data analysis – statistical process control	
	S14. Lean concepts & tools	S23. Benchmarking	

- You can see from the KSB's listed above that the Professional Discussion, in the main, is looking at 'process' (why, what, how) regarding how you planned, led and managed the continuous improvement journey within your organisation and how you demonstrated the required behaviours.
- Your portfolio of evidence should contain practical examples of how you have met each of these KSB's through competence evidence.

# Professional Discussion

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## Questioning

- The assessor will ask approx. open questions and, additionally, any follow-up questions required to understand how you have demonstrated the required KSBs.
- Questions will take a form similar to the following examples
  - Show me examples of A3 thinking reports that you have used to communicate outcomes of projects / strategies. How did you ensure that they were understood by the target audience?
  - How do you ensure that others in your organisation use evidence-based problem definition in everyday work?
  - Describe how you have built the organisation's knowledge and skills around graphical and statistical analysis.
  - How have you contributed to the development or maintenance of a best practice sharing network in your organisation?
  - How have you guided others to identify enablers/barriers and to take actions to address these?