EPA TRENDS & ANALYSIS

April 2021 - March 2022

V1: Oct 2022

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This Trends and Analysis Report provides analysis and a high level overview of the End Point Assessment activity undertaken by the Chartered Management Institute in the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

The purpose of the report is to draw out the areas of best practice and consider areas for improvement, in order to provide information and guidance for employers, and training organisations listed on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP), who are preparing Apprentices for End Point Assessment for the Apprenticeship Standards listed below.

Data to inform the report has been drawn from experiences gained during the last 4 years and the successful completion of almost 20,000 end point assessments across the following Apprenticeship Standards:

The report relates to the following Apprenticeship Standards:

LEVEL 3
Team Leader or Supervisor v1.1 & v1.2

LEVEL 5
Departmental or Operational Manager v1.1 & v1.2

LEVEL 6
Chartered Manager Degree

LEVEL 7
Senior Leader Master's Degree

LEVEL 3
Business Administrator AP01 & AP03

LEVEL 4
Junior Management Consultant

LEVEL 4
Associate Project Manager

KEY TRENDS ACROSS ALL STANDARDS

POSITIVE

Once again CMI saw:

- **How resilient the Apprentices were, and their ability to adapt and flex** - not only to the needs of their organisation but also as a result of unexpected external factors during these unprecedented times.

- **Apprentices continuing to use their live assessment activities** - interviews, professional discussions, presentations and question/answer sessions - **to showcase their apprenticeship journey and bring their evidence to life** through the provision of robust examples to demonstrate application of their skills within the workplace.

- **Apprentices using their EPA presentations to demonstrate** not only **how they resolve needs within the business, supporting their colleagues through change**, but also what the **return-on-investment and impact their work-based projects has had on their organisations**.

- That the introduction of the new assessment plans for L3 Team Leader or Supervisor and L5 Operations or Departmental Managers enabled apprentices to utilise additional opportunities for **bringing their showcase portfolios to life through their professional discussion.**

- Apprentices demonstrating their application of learning - with the removal of the knowledge test in the v1.2 assessment plans there has been a real need for apprentices to demonstrate their application of knowledge during the Live Assessment Day.

- Apprentices feeling more comfortable in declaring any **Reasonable Adjustments** required at their End Point Assessment. CMI welcomes the declarations of ALN ahead of the live assessment day so that all adjustments can be considered in advance and shared with Independent Assessors as appropriate.
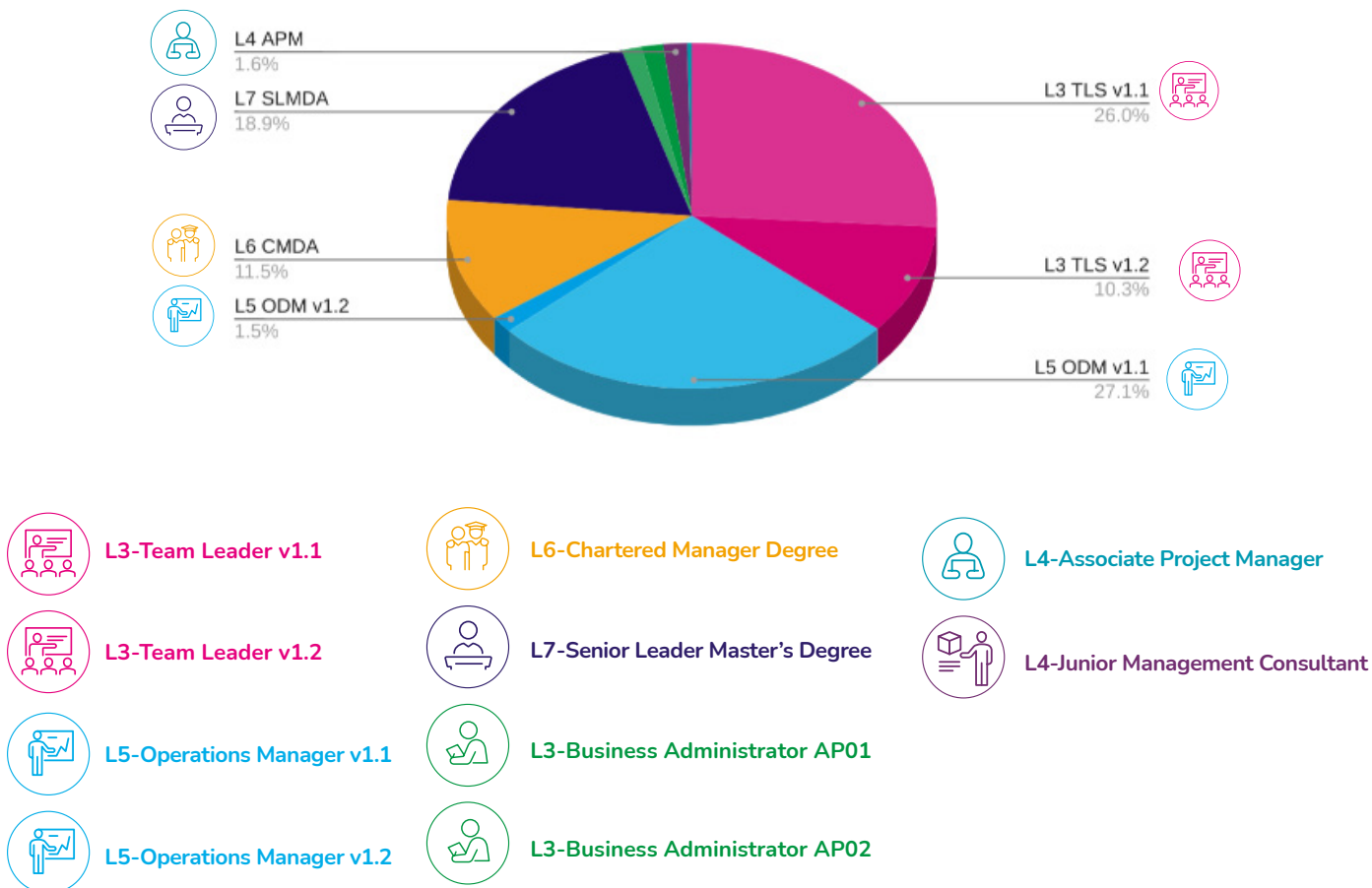
NEGATIVE

However, there continues to also be:

- **An over-reliance on qualification and/or academic assignments**, rather than work-based activities, being mapped to skills and behaviours within the portfolio of evidence.

- **An over-reliance on pre-constructed portfolios, rather than showcase portfolios**, that have automatically been completed on-programme. This not only limits the apprentices ability to choose their own evidence but also means they are unlikely to relate the evidence in their portfolio to their answers used during the live assessment.

- **A lack of clear mapping of the evidence to the relevant knowledge, skills, and behaviours** within the apprentice's showcase portfolios and/or work-based project reports. This means it is very often hard to locate, identify or validate. CMI has created mapping document templates within the Toolkit for all of our Standards but they are not always being used. Mapping is now mandatory.

- **Project management** - there has been a lack of understanding around the project aspect and in some cases this has been presented as a 'task' as opposed to a 'project'

- **Poorly defined, overly-academic, and/or research projects** that do not specifically relate to a business issue or need. This means that apprentices then struggle to demonstrate their leadership skills and behaviours within this assessment method.

- **A lack of understanding of the requirements of the Project Scoping document**, especially for the L5 ODM v1.2, which results in these documents being rejected at the gateway.

- **Apprentices that are not prepared for their live assessment (LAD)**, and some apprentices lacked understanding of the requirements of their endpoint assessment. (An example of this is the evidence requirements for their portfolio of evidence, which for some of the standards now mandates the number of pieces of evidence.)

- A **lack of understanding of the command verbs used within the distinction criteria** (such as Analyse and Evaluate). As the merit grade is no longer available for L3 TLS v1.2 and L5 ODM v1.2, it is important that apprentices are clear on the distinction criteria within the grading descriptor statements if they want to gain a distinction overall.

END POINT ASSESSMENT COMPLETIONS - ALL LEVELS

In the time period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022, CMI completed End Point Assessment (EPA) activities across the 4 Leadership and Management Standards, as well as 3 non-Leadership & Management Standards. This is broken down as follows:

Total for 2021/2022 By Level

- L4 APM — 1.6%
- L7 SLMDA — 18.9%
- L6 CMDA — 11.5%
- L5 ODM v1.2 — 1.5%
- L3 TLS v1.1 — 26.0%
- L3 TLS v1.2 — 10.3%
- L5 ODM v1.1 — 27.1%

L3-Team Leader v1.1

L3-Team Leader v1.2

L5-Operations Manager v1.1

L5-Operations Manager v1.2

L6-Chartered Manager Degree

L7-Senior Leader Master's Degree

L3-Business Administrator AP01

L3-Business Administrator AP02

L4-Associate Project Manager

L4-Junior Management Consultant

Across all standards, 62% of apprentices achieved a Distinction grade, and 26% achieved a Merit grade. CMI's 'pass first time' rate is 98%.

EPAs completed during the period 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022, is an 11.5% increase on the number of End Point Assessments completed in the 12 months prior to this report (1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021).
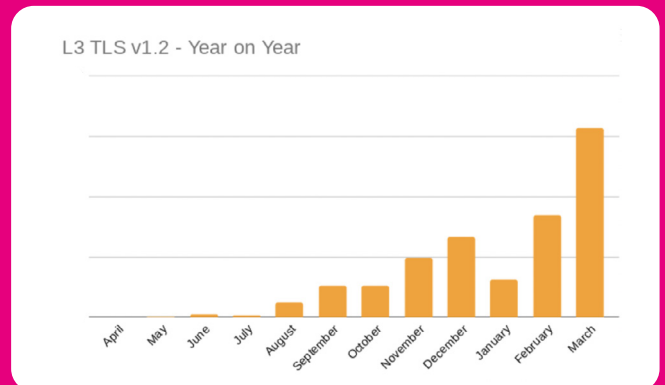
ANALYSIS

LEVEL 3 TEAM LEADER OR SUPERVISOR (V1.1 AND V1.2)

The level 3 Team Leader or Supervisor apprenticeship continues to be our most popular standard at 36% (v1.1 and v1.2).
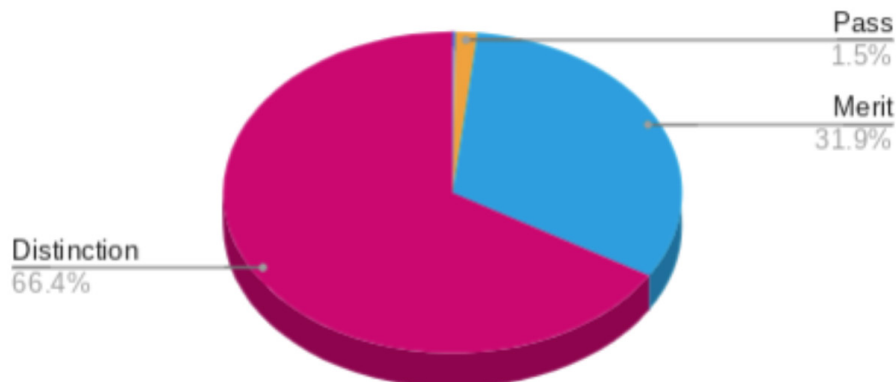
L3 TLS (v1.1) Year on Year
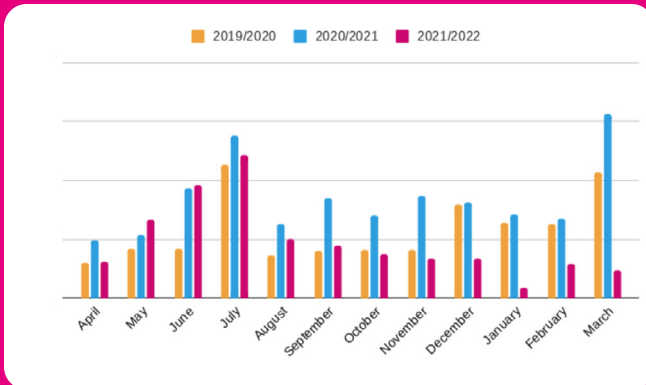
L3 TLS (v1.2) Year on Year

L3 TLS v1.1 By Grade - 2021 to 2022

Pass 1.5%
Merit 31.9%
Distinction 66.4%

L3 TLS v1.2 By Grade - 2021 to 2022
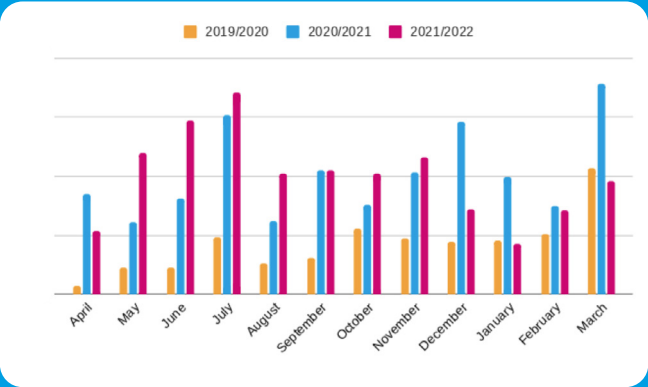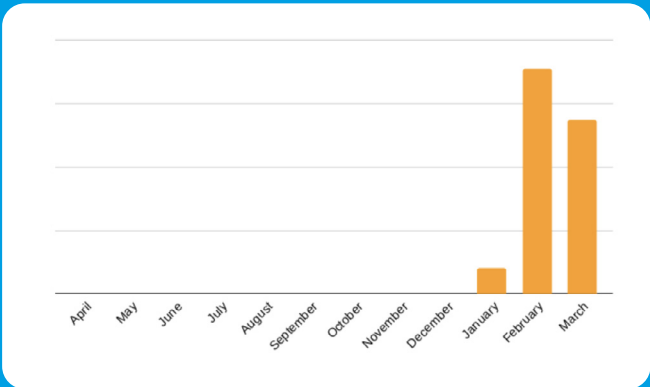

Pass 23.8%
Distinction 76.2%

LEVEL 5 OPERATIONS OR DEPARTMENTAL MANAGER V1.1

The level 5 Operations or Departmental Manager apprenticeship continues to be our 2nd most popular standard at 29% (v1.1 and v1.2)

L5 ODM (v1.1) Year on Year
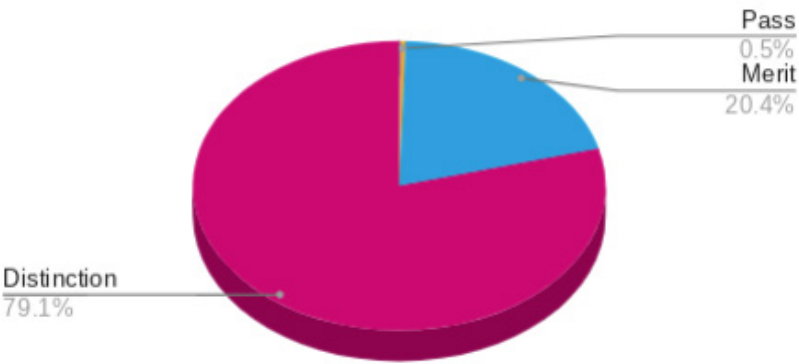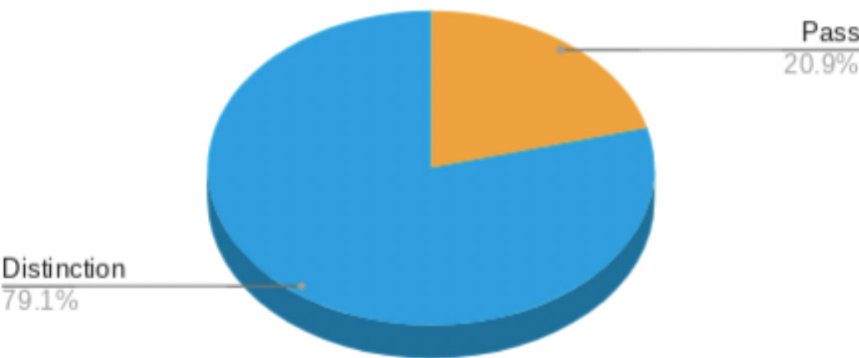

Legend: 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022

L5 ODM (v1.2) Year on Year

L5 ODM v1.1 By Grade - 2021 to 2022

Pass 0.5%
Merit 20.4%
Distinction 79.1%

L5 ODM v1.2 By Grade - 2021 to 2022
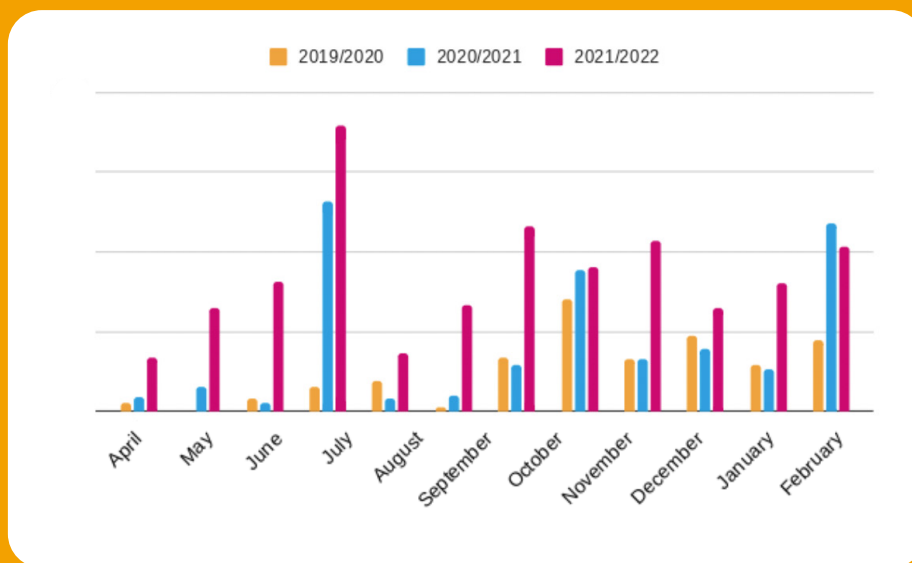

Pass 20.9%
Distinction 79.1%

LEVEL 6 CHARTERED MANAGER DEGREE

The level 6 Chartered Manager Degree apprenticeship is the oldest of the Management and Leadership Standards and also has the longest on-programme period of 3 to 4 years which is why it has taken a few years to see the numbers grow.

L6 CMDA Year on Year

Legend: 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022

Months: April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February

L6 CMDA By Grade - 2021 to 2022

- Fail 1.2%
- Pass 10.5%
- Merit 33.4%
- Distinction 54.9%
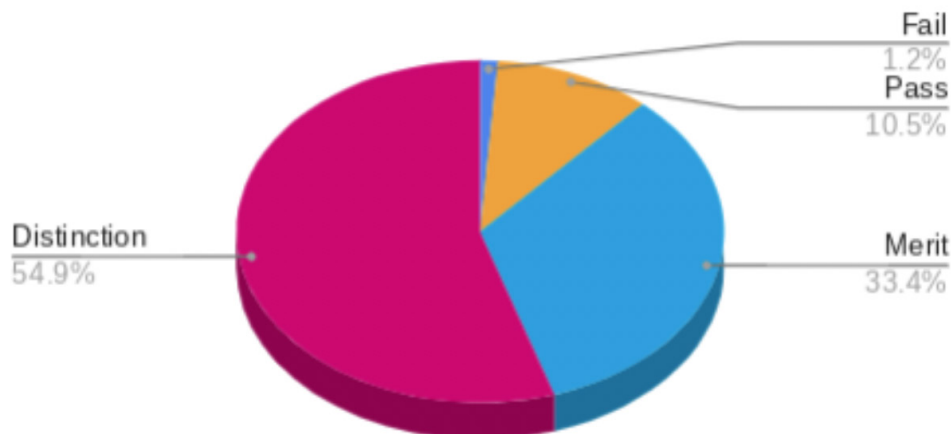
LEVEL 7 SENIOR LEADER MASTERS DEGREE

The level 7 Senior Leader Masters Degree apprenticeship continues to be our most popular degree apprenticeship standard.

L7 Senior Leader Masters Degree (SLMDA) - Year on Year

Legend: 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022

Months: April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March

L7 SLMDA By Grade - 2021 to 2022

- Distinction 30.3%
- Fail 0.7%
- Pass 26.9%
- Merit 42.1%

ANALYSIS
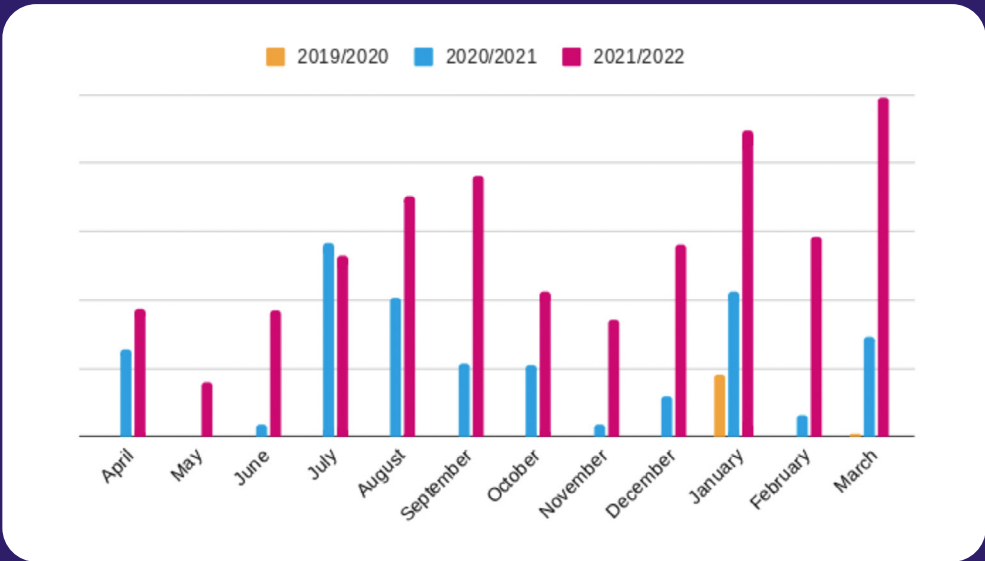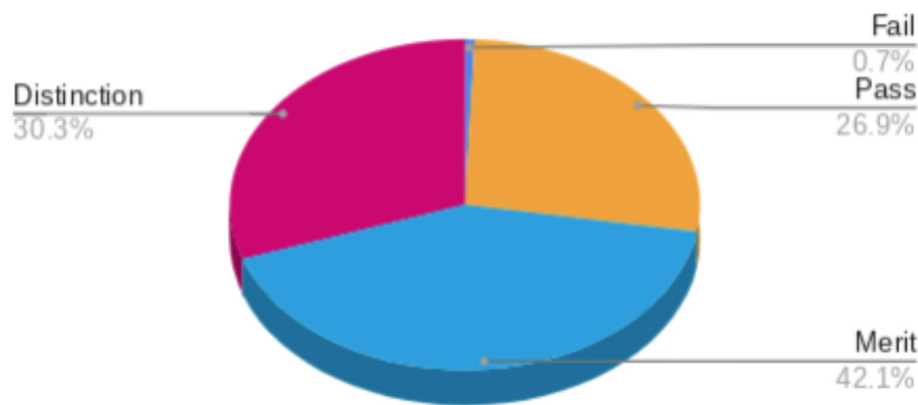
LEVEL 3 BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR AP01 & AP03
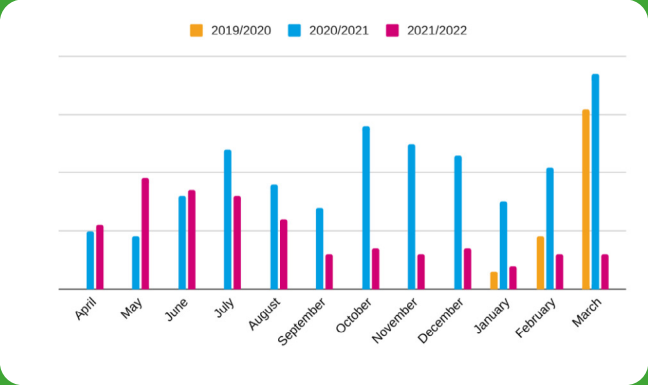
The level 3 Business Administrator apprenticeship continues to be our most popular non Management and Leadership standard.

L3 BA AP01 - Year on Year

Legend: 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022

L3 BA AP03 - Year on Year
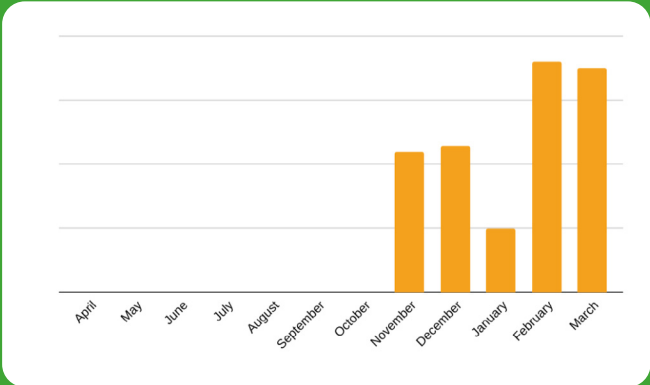
L3 BA AP01 By Grade - 2021 to 2022

Distinction 35.0%

Pass 65.0%
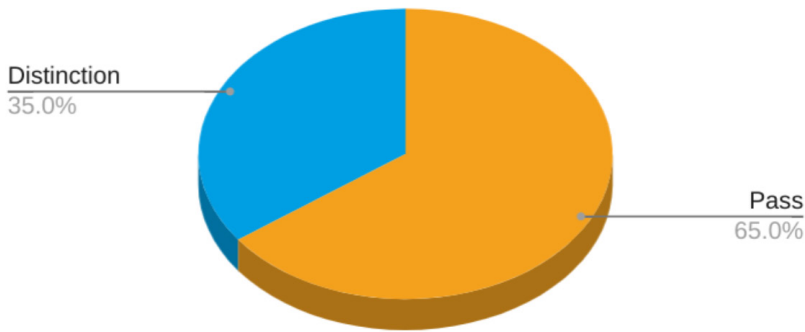
L3 BA AP03 By Grade - 2021 to 2022

Pass 38.9%

Distinction 61.1%
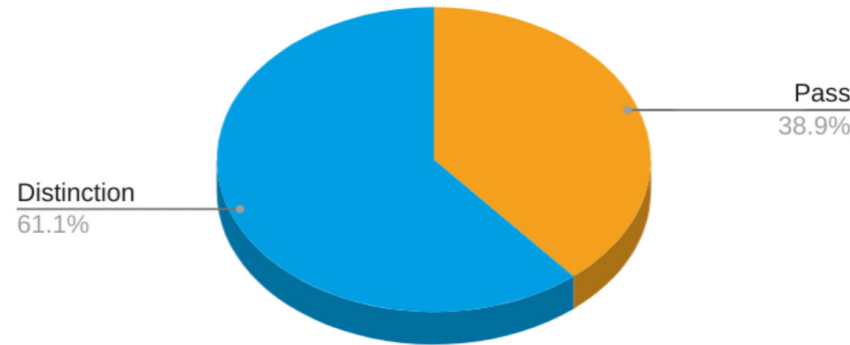
LEVEL 4 ASSOCIATE PROJECT MANAGER

The level 4 Associate Project Manager is another of our non Management and Leadership Standards.

L4 Associate Project Manager (APM) - Year on Year

L4 APM By Grade - 2021 to 2022

Fail 1.4%
Pass 35.0%
Merit 32.9%
Distinction 30.7%
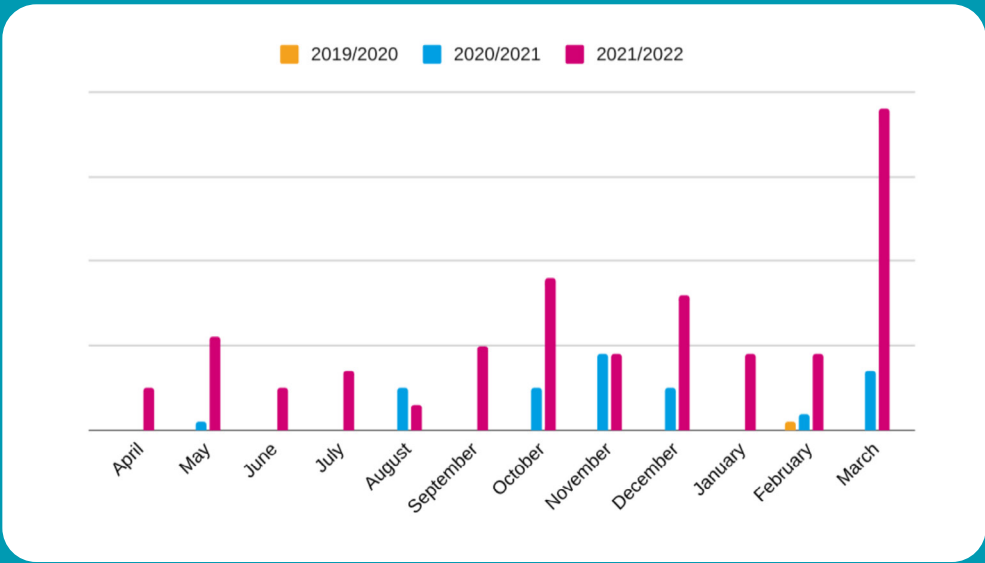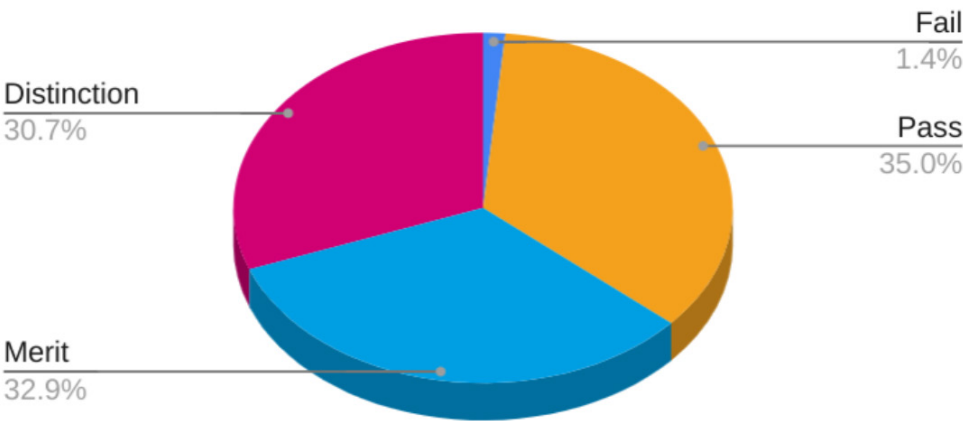
LEVEL 4 JUNIOR MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

The level 4 Junior Management Consultant is another of our non Management and Leadership Standards.

L4 Junior Management Consultant (JMCA) - Year on Year

Legend: 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022

Months: April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March

L4 JMCA By Grade - 2021 to 2022

Pass 14.3%

Distinction 85.7%

BEST PRACTICE - KNOWLEDGE TEST

Used to test the knowledge learned whilst on-programme against the relevant areas within the assessment plans for:

L3-Team Leader or Supervisor - V1.1

L5-Departmental or Operations Manager - V1.1

L3-Business Administrator AP01 & AP03

The changes to the new L3 and L5 has not significantly impacted upon the overall grades attained; it has just changed the format and what the IAA is required to review.

Apprentices are still receiving strong scores across the board; the changes to BA means the apprentice cannot now gain a distinction if they do not do well in the knowledge test.
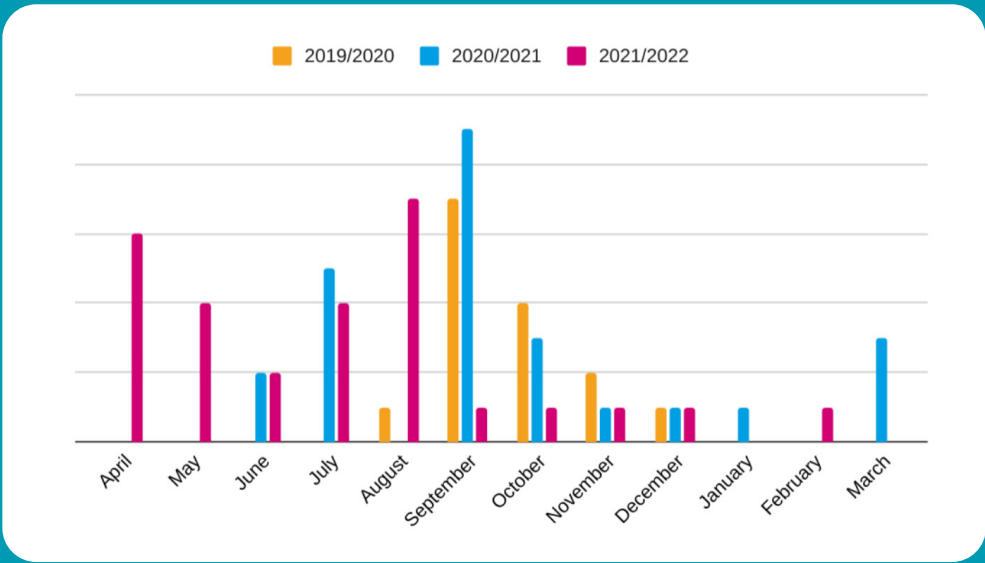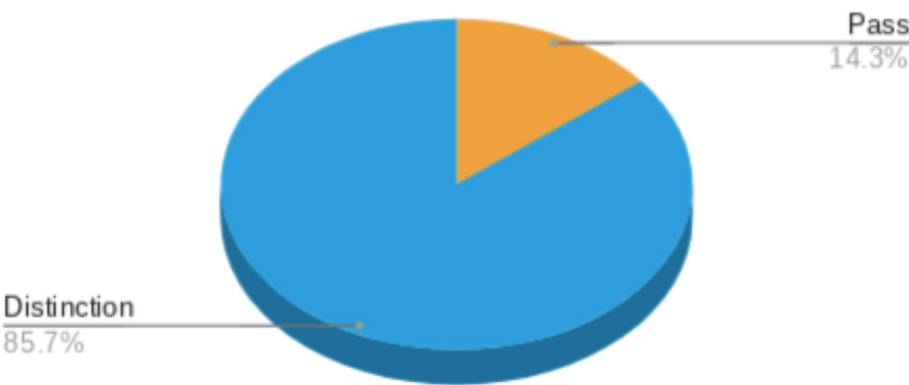
BEST PRACTICE - PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

Currently all 10 assessment plans require the Apprentice to complete a portfolio of evidence whilst on-programme that showcases what they have learned and how they have applied this into their skills and behaviours.

CONTINUE...

- **Ensuring the evidence is specific to the apprentice** and clearly demonstrates their competence through work based activities.
- **Maximising the benefits of positive witness testimony** to validate the specific work activities being showcased
- **Engaging with employers** from an early stage to capture information on Apprentice activity and skills development throughout the entire Apprenticeship, as well as providing the opportunity for discussion around Apprentice opportunity and evidence gathering.
- **Giving the Independent Apprenticeship Assessor (IAA) prompt access** to the portfolio, including password for associated portfolio platforms, in order to maximise their time to complete their review/assessment activities prior to live assessment day. The L3 TLS v1.2, L5 ODM v1.2, L7 SLMDA, and L3 BA AP03 assessment plans all require showcase portfolio which must be reviewed prior to the Live Assessment Date. Apprentices therefore need to ensure they are utilising their best evidence across their apprenticeship journey within this portfolio and that portfolios are individual to the apprentice.

CONSIDER:

- Providing effective **mapping documentation that signposts the exact location of the evidence**, timestamps recordings, and indicates the page/paragraph number for any longer written documents. (Note: See the CMI template evidence locator documents for each assessment plan within the EPA Toolkit.)

- Presenting **more quality evidence, less quantity** – support the apprentice in identifying their best work that showcases their competence in the knowledge, skills and behaviours within the Standard. One qualitative piece of evidence can cross reference into multiple knowledge, skills and behaviours. (Note: Check out the CMI 'Mapping 101' Start With The End In Mind webinar)

- Ensuring the majority of evidence used focuses on work-based activities that demonstrate the apprentice's **application of knowledge and demonstration of skills** in their day to day role.

- **Triangulating evidence** as this allows the apprentice to provide context, an example of the activity being undertaken, as well as validation from a third-party via a witness testimony, observation or other feedback.

- **Remembering to evidence the behaviours** ideally within the contextualisation and/or third party validation of the work-based activities. Other examples of evidence for the behaviours includes 360-degree feedback, annual appraisals, and performance reviews.

- Ensuring that **there are final checks in place** including Pre-Gateway checks, to ensure all of the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours have been evidenced, and that it is authenticated, current and sufficient.

- **Clearer communication between CMI and Partners to ensure up to date documentation is being used** by apprentices. Improved communication will provide opportunities for issues and updates to be quickly resolved so that future apprentices are not impacted.

- **Using the CMI Mapping documents**, especially for L3 TLS v1.2, L5 ODM v1.2, and L3 BA AP03

BEST PRACTICE - PROJECTS

WORK BASED PROJECTS - require the apprentice to complete a significant and defined piece of work that meets the needs of the business, is relevant to their role and allows the relevant KSBs to be demonstrated for the EPA. It usually requires the apprentice to write a report about their project, as well as deliver a presentation as part of the live assessment which is then followed by a question/answer session. The assessment plans that currently include a project or project proposal as part of the EPA are:

L5-Departmental or Operations Manager V1.1 and V1.2 (proposal)

L6-Chartered Manager Degree

L7-Senior Leader Master's Degree

L3-Business Administrator AP01 & AP03

CONTINUE...

- Ensuring that the Apprentices undertake a work-based project which gives them the **opportunity to put their leadership and management skills into practice** in the workplace.

- Ensuring **the topic of the work-based project meets the parameters outlined in the published assessment plan**.
  (The chosen project needs to provide a substantive evidence base that not only meets a real business issue/need but also clearly links the content of the project to the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours in the published assessment plan.)

- Working with Employers to ensure the work-based project chosen addresses a work-based issue/need, **is achievable within the employer's business constraints**, meets the needs of the Standard, and is conducted as part of the Apprentice's normal work.

- **Supporting the apprentice in planning their project** by providing them with the knowledge and tools needed, especially in relation to gaining buy-in/support, problem-solving skills, collaborative working, the project life-cycle, and writing their report. For L5 ODM v1.2 - employer support is required to allow the apprentice time to complete a real-life project via time and resources.

- **For the L3 BA AP03** - Apprentices need to ensure that their project activities and presentation allows them to **showcase their written communication and IT Skills**.

CONSIDER:

Ensuring the apprentice **chooses specific project-related activities to** showcase within the relevant assessment methods that meet the knowledge, skills and behaviours, and:

- also **demonstrates their management and leadership skills**
- clearly **shows how they approached the planning and implementation of their project**
- **considers any lessons learned and the impact their project has had** on their area of responsibility and organisation

Ensuring that for those projects requiring **a written work-based project report**, it is:
- presented at Gateway (unless stated otherwise within the relevant assessment plan)
- **summarises the project title, aims, outcomes, activities undertaken, how they mitigated against any possible risks, how they dealt with any barriers, and the impact their project has had on the organisation**

Mapping the content of the project assessment activities (report and/or presentation) against the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours. (Note: CMI recommends these are included as a summary within the report, or as a footer on the presentation slides.)

Checking that the project assessment activities (report and/or presentation) **meet the requirements set out within the relevant assessment plan, such as specific topics to be covered and/or word count.** For the L3 Business Administrator, the project must be undertaken prior to Gateway and relate to either a work-based issue/need or process improvement. This needs to be advised at Gateway as the apprentice will then complete their presentation post-Gateway once the title has been set by CMI, as the EPAO.

Continue to liaise with CMI to ensure clearer guidance and correct documentation is used.

Use of CMI mapping documents is recommended and the project must be both relevant and meaningful which benefits both the apprentice and organisation.

For the Level 7 SLMDA, apprentices need to:
- ensure that their work based projects **have a clearly evidenced financial strategy** and contain relevant project financial information such as a project budget, options appraisal, revenue spend on projects, capital investment decisions, cost benefit analysis or linked financial KPIs so it is clear how the project benefits the organisation in some way.
- ensure that the **timing of the work based project is in line with the requirements of the Standard**.

PROJECT - EPA PRESENTATION AND QUESTIONING

All of the assessment plans listed above require the apprentice to deliver a presentation relating to the work-based project as part of their live assessment.

CONTINUE...

- Ensuring the Apprentice **uses the presentation to bring their project activities and documentation to life.**
- **L5 v1.2** Mapping against the grading descriptors alongside the project proposal is good practice.

CONSIDER:

- Reminding the Apprentices that **the presentation must be delivered within a defined time period,** and they should practice to ensure that they do not over-run or fall short. (Time management is a key learning outcome within the Standards.)

- Guiding the Apprentices to ensure that the presentations focus on **how the project has progressed since it was submitted**, and the **impact, outcomes and lessons learned**.

- Including a summary that shows **how the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours map to the activities** demonstrated within the Apprentice's presentation and/or work-based project report.

- Having a copy of their report, as well as **using prompts and/or speaker notes** that the Apprentice can refer to **during their presentation and/or questioning**.

- Reminding Apprentices that they need to **ensure that their presentation makes it clear how and why the problem is being addressed through the use of a project with recognised project** tools and techniques, and it is not a 'business as usual' activity or tasks completed using the discipline of a project approach.

- **Ensuring that the presentation aligns to the project and/or task set**. Each assessment method is discrete and therefore cross-referencing between the methods is not allowed. The presentation is not a process but should demonstrate how the Apprentice has applied their learning within their journey.

- **Including speaker notes or a speaker brief with the presentation when it is submitted**, as this will help the assessor to understand what is going to be said and will therefore support their review prior to the live assessment.

- **For L5 ODM v1.2**. It is important to remind apprentices that their **project must not start pre-Gateway.** Apprentices also need to **be clear on their timelines** and ensure that they are aware of **what the requirements of the word count are**. Apprentices should also ensure that they use and/or refer to their scoping document in their final report.

- **For the L3 BA AP03**. It is important that Apprentices understand that their project, or process improvement, are not just a task that needs to be completed. They are a **project related activity and should therefore follow a typical project life cycle**.

BEST PRACTICE - EPA INTERVIEW

EPA INTERVIEWS - requires the Apprentice to answer a series of questions that assesses their competence against the relevant KSBs within the Standard. It differs from a professional discussion in that the interview is led by the Independent Assessor (IAA), and it is restricted to set questions. The assessment plans that currently include an interview as part of the EPA are:

L3-Team Leader or Supervisor V1.1

L5-Departmental or Operations Manager V1.1

L6-Chartered Manager Degree

L3-Business Administrator AP01 and AP03

L4-Junior Management Consultant

CONTINUE...

- Ensuring Apprentices have plenty of **opportunity to practice their interview skills, and become used to giving in-depth answers based upon real workplace examples**. These examples should relate to the evidence used within the Apprentice's portfolio but can be expanded to include additional examples to add further breadth/depth or complexity.

- **Using the STAR technique** (situation, task, action, result), or other similar techniques can always help Apprentices to ensure they give a full account of their activities

- Encouraging the Apprentices to take the opportunity in their competency based interview or professional discussion to really **showcase their best work and tell us about their achievements**.

- **Preparing the Apprentice for their live assessment interview** and reminding them to practice using Google Meet by booking onto a CMI Test Meeting.

CONSIDER:

- **Using the CMI Mock EPA practice assessments** which will enable Apprentices to gain a better understanding of what to expect during the live assessment, and practice their interview skills.

- Ensuring Apprentices understand that they need to focus on **what THEY did within the timeframe of apprenticeship**, as there is a tendency for Apprentices to talk about what their team achieved. At EPA the focus is on the individual - so remind them to use 'I' and not 'we'.

- Encouraging Apprentices to **think of a workplace example for the skills and behaviours** learning outcomes and then practice using them, so that regardless of what question is asked, they will have a suitable situation firmly fixed in their minds to talk through.

- Ensuring (where applicable) that **Apprentices are familiar, and comfortable, with using technology** to interact, especially in regard to delivering presentations using remote meeting software.

- Reminding Apprentices that for the Management and Leadership Standards, we are seeking **examples that best demonstrate their personal ability to lead and manage in their workplace.**

- Continue to practice professional discussions as most revised Standards incorporate a professional discussion rather than an interview..

BEST PRACTICE - PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSIONS - require the apprentice to lead a two-way discussion between themselves and their Independent Assessor (IAA) that assesses their understanding of their work. Unless indicated otherwise, the professional discussion is underpinned by a portfolio of evidence that the apprentice needs to use and/or refer to as part of their discussion and in order to demonstrate their competence in the relevant KSBs mapped to this method. The assessment plans that currently include a professional discussion as part of the EPA are:

L3-Team Leader or Supervisor V1.1 (underpinned by a CPD log and v1.2

L5-Departmental or Operations Manager V1.1 (underpinned by a CPD log) and v1.2

L7-Senior Leader Master's Degree

L4-Associate Project Manager

CONTINUE...

- Ensuring that Apprentices know what activities are included within the assessment method being tested (either the showcase portfolio or CPD Log) and how these activities align to the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours within the Standard.

- For the Standard where the professional discussion is underpinned by a portfolio of evidence - ensuring Apprentices are able to effectively articulate robust workplace examples that demonstrate the strategic nature of their role and their ability to lead and influence effectively with evidence of decisions being made and making a positive impact on their workplace.

- For those assessment plans where the professional discussion is underpinned by a CPD Log - that the CPD Log presented at Gateway is unique to each Apprentice and includes a range of formal/informal and personal/professional learning activities entered. In the absence of a CPD log which does not allow for reflection it is recommended that the CMI Template for CPD is used.

- For the L4 Associate Project Manager - ensuring Apprentices are prepared to discuss the 10 topics chosen to be tested at their End Point Assessment and that their answers relate to the activities and evidence within their portfolio.

CONSIDER:

- Ensuring Apprentices know what is meant by and are prepared to lead their EPA professional discussion.

- Working with Apprentices, and providing additional support such as undertaking mock professional discussions, to ensure that they are confident in providing in-depth answers to open-questions.

- Where the professional discussion is based on the Apprentice's CPD Log, and is uploaded as a separate document to their portfolio, focuses on what they have learned from each activity, should demonstrate how they own and drive their own CPD and demonstrate the impact the learning opportunities have had within their workplace.

- Ensuring Apprentices are familiar and comfortable with their showcase portfolio as this is the basis of the professional discussion and will reflect the grading descriptors.

- Ensure Apprentices are clear on their understanding of command verbs, e.g. analyse, evaluate, describe etc.

SUMMARY

2021/2022 was the fourth year that CMI has undertaken End Point Assessment against Apprenticeship Standards and was a year that saw significant growth and change. We have now completed over 22,000 EPAs since February 2018 which means we have managed to gather a wealth of information as well as multiple opportunities for learning. We have become the 'EPAO of Choice' for a number of Training Providers and are known for offering a quality service that takes a pragmatic approach in ensuring a synoptic and holistic End Point Assessment that is fully supported by our 'Start With The End In Mind' programme of activities, guidance and webinars.

The year also saw continued significant change as a result of COVID-19, revisions to the assessment plans for L3 Team Leader Supervisor, L5 Operations Departmental Manager, L7 Senior Leader and L3 Business Administrator. These have all seen significant changes in grading with the loss of the merit grade with the knowledge test ceasing for L3 Team Leader Supervisor and L5 Operations Departmental Manager. We have not undertaken any End Point Assessments for L7 Senior Leader as yet and expect our first ones to come through in September.

It is really important that Partners familiarise themselves through the Start with the End in Mind CMI offer and documentation available to them through the Toolkit to ensure correct mapping documents are being used and timescales are being adhered to for Projects.

We are also expecting change later in the year, resulting from Ofqual becoming the EQA for EPA, Ofsted now inspecting HE Providers, the impact of the Augar Report, and the revision of the assessment plans for L6 Chartered Manager Degree, L4 Junior Management Consultant, and L4 Associate Project Manager.

We would encourage apprenticeship employers to join all Start with the End in Mind activities, including webinars and monthly drop-in sessions, to ensure that they are fully supporting their Apprentices during the on-programme phase and for any post-Gateway activities.

Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) works with business and education to inspire people to unleash their potential and become skilled, confident and successful managers and leaders.

With a wealth of practical qualifications, events and networking opportunities on offer throughout the UK and Asia-Pacific, CMI helps people boost their career prospects and connect them with other ambitious professionals in any industry and sector.

In fact, CMI has more than **130,000** people training to be better managers right now. Backed by a unique Royal Charter, CMI is the only organisation allowed to award Chartered Manager status – the ultimate management accolade.

CMI's thought leadership, research and online resources provide practical insight on critical issues for a **182,000** plus membership community and anyone looking to improve their skills, nurture high-performing teams and help pave the way for the next generation of managers and leaders.

For more information, please visit **www.managers.org.uk** Chartered Management Institute on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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