

The Ufi / Learndirect *Learning through Work* level indicators

Introduction

This document is an extract from the Ufi / Learndirect *Learning through Work* (LtW) design principles developed in 1999-2001. It describes the nine levels in the England, Wales & Northern Ireland qualification and credit system in terms that are designed to apply to work-based learners.

LtW allows work-based learners to design individualised development programmes around their work activities and aspirations. The level indicators are used to match the programme to an appropriate qualification or credit level, and as assessment criteria to check that the work submitted for assessment is at the relevant level for the award.

Currently only the upper five levels are used in LtW. For more details of Learning through Work, see www.learndirect-ltw.co.uk.

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The level indicators

The following descriptions summarise the nine Learning through Work levels. The more detailed indicators which will be used to judge level are appended at the end. The descriptions indicate the level of work needed to complete an award at the relevant level, **not** to enter the programme.

Entry level

Entry level is about applying basic skills effectively. At this level you can be working under guidance.

Level 1

Level 1 concerns work and learning which involves straightforward tasks and developing basic understanding. You will need to be able to carry out basic tasks and procedures on your own initiative, but you will be able to work with access to guidance.

Level 2

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

At 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 which apply to your work, as well as drawing on your own ideas and experience to solve problems.

Level 4 (HE 1/C)

At Level 4, 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/I)

At Level 5, 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.

Level 6 (HE 3/H)

At Level 6, you will be thinking through, understanding and reviewing different courses of action, including for their impact outside of your immediate area of work. You will be making informed judgements on issues which affect your work, and working effectively with unpredictable issues. You will need to be able to draw on a broad personal or formal knowledge-base as well as concepts, theories and models which apply to your work.

You will be producing your own ideas and practical theories, and developing innovative responses in complex situations; you should be able to manage dilemmas and find ways forward in problematic situations. You will need to be able to design and make use of practical, methodologically sound research to contribute to your work or that of your organisation.

Level 7 (HE 4/M)

At Level 7, you will be developing thought-through courses of action which take into account alternative implications and issues beyond your immediate area of practice. You will be making informed judgements on issues which affect your work, and working effectively with unpredictable issues. You will need to be able to draw on mastery of a broad personal or formal knowledge-base relating to the area of your work and its wider context, as well as developing and evaluating concepts, theories and models which apply to your work.

You will be producing your own ideas and practical theories, and developing innovative responses in complex and unpredictable situations; you should be able to manage dilemmas and value-conflicts and find ways forward in problematic situations. One of the features of this level is that you will need to consider issues beyond your immediate area of practice, and take a critical approach to the thinking and assumptions which you and others are using.

You will need to be able to design and make use of practical, methodologically sound research to contribute to your work or that of your organisation.

Level 8 (HE 5/D)

At Level 8, you will be developing thought-through courses of action which take into account alternative implications and issues beyond your professional discipline or area of practice. You will be making informed judgements on issues which affect your discipline or area of practice, and working effectively with unpredictable issues. You will need to be able to draw on critical and creative mastery of a broad range of concepts, theories and practices, as well as being aware of the assumptions underlying them from perspectives which go beyond individual disciplines and contexts.

You will be producing your own ideas and theories and developing innovative responses in complex and unpredictable situations; you should be able to manage dilemmas and value-conflicts and find ways forward in problematic situations, including those which go beyond your organisation or discipline. One of the features of this level is that you will be taking forward an area of practice in a way which is of value beyond your organisation or community of practice, and developing as a leading practitioner in your field.

You will need to be able to design and make use of practical, methodologically sound research which contributes to your area of practice, and which results in new understandings or approaches which extend or redefine existing knowledge or practice

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	Entry level	Level 1 (FE)	Level 2 (FE)	Level 3 (FE)
	<i>Qualification type</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).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for straightforward tasks and procedures Making straightforward choices Coping effectively in routine situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for a range of straightforward tasks and procedures Making straightforward choices Coping effectively in familiar situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
Scope	This is about whether you are for instance working within a closely-defined situation or considering wider implications and impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working within well-defined rules or guidelines Accepting boundaries of work as given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working within rules or guidelines which require a minimal level of interpretation Accepting boundaries of work as given, querying if unsure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreting and applying rules and guidelines to the area of work Identifying different approaches within the overall guidance or boundaries of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising principles and issues applying to the area of work Identifying different outcomes and approaches within the overall boundaries of the work area
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and working with different types of information Selecting the information needed to complete a task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a basic level of knowledge, referring to others where gaps are identified Sorting and selecting different types of information Combining information from different sources to inform tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
Investigation and evaluation	This concerns how you are investigating information and evaluating situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with information more-or-less as provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking up information from easily-accessed sources Checking own progress on tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying information which is needed and using a range of straightforward sources Checking results of own work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying information which is needed and using a range of different sources, including from outside the immediate context Evaluating the appropriateness of different approaches
Innovation and originality	This is about the level of originality and innovation you are bringing to your work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checking that information is relevant to own situation Working within given procedures or instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using experience to check provided information Looking out for better ways of completing tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawing on own ideas and experience Putting forward ideas for better ways of working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using own ideas in addressing issues Improving and modifying approaches to working

Field	Description <i>Qualification type</i>	Level 4 (HE1) <i>CertHE</i>	Level 5 (HE2) <i>DipHE</i>	Level 6 (HE3) <i>Graduate</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).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility across a broad area including for planning, resourcing and quality as well as for outcomes and their immediate and wider impacts Developing thought-through courses of action Working effectively in complex and unpredictable contexts
Scope	This is about whether you are for instance working within a closely-defined situation or considering wider implications and impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising the implications of different issues and courses of action Identifying and evaluating the practical effects and impact of operating parameters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the implications of different issues and courses of action Understanding and managing dilemmas and value-conflicts Identifying interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawing on a broad personal or formal knowledge-base and set of mental models relating to the area of practice Developing and evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including to find ways forward in problematic situations 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing investigations to provide new information and affect practice, including through practical investigation Evaluating the appropriateness of different approaches and their impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing practical, methodologically sound research to provide new information and affect areas of practice Evaluating the actual and potential effects of theories 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing own ideas and developing innovative responses Developing novel solutions to problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking innovative approaches to address issues Developing novel solutions to sets of problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking innovative approaches in complex situations Developing novel approaches to systems

Field	Description <i>Qualification type</i>	Level 7 (HE4/M) <i>Postgraduate</i>	Level 8 (HE5/doctorate) <i>Doctoral</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).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full responsibility for methods, actions and immediate and wider impacts which extend beyond the immediate area of practice • Developing thought-through courses of action which take into account issues beyond the immediate area of practice • Working effectively in problematic contexts which contain value-conflicts and uncertainties which extend beyond the immediate area of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility as a leading practitioner in a community of practice and extending beyond the immediate area of practice • Developing thought-through courses of action which take into account issues beyond the immediate area of practice • Working innovatively in problematic contexts and engaging with value-conflicts and uncertainties which extend widely in and beyond the area of practice
Scope	This is about whether you are for instance working within a closely-defined situation or considering wider implications and impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding alternative implications of different issues and courses of action • Understanding and managing dilemmas and value-conflicts • Understanding and acting on interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding alternative implications of different issues and courses of action • Understanding and managing dilemmas and value-conflicts in a way which takes forward wider practice • Understanding and acting on interrelationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using mastery of knowledge relating to, and extending into the wider context of, the area of practice. • Developing and critically evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including to overcome dilemmas and find ways forward in problematic situations • Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify inter-relationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using critical and creative mastery of a broad range of concepts, theories and practices and the assumptions underlying them from perspectives which transcend individual disciplines and contexts • Developing and critically evaluating a range of practical theories, ideas and models, including to overcome structural dilemmas and find ways forward in problematic situations • Researching, analysing and evaluating information to identify inter-relationships between wider systems in which the area of practice is located • Generating new understandings and approaches which extend or redefine existing knowledge and practice
Investigation and evaluation	This concerns how you are investigating information and evaluating situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking substantial investigation to address significant areas of practice, using methodologies which are consistent with their purposes and contexts • Critically evaluating thinking, action and structural factors operating in the area of practice, including underlying assumptions, and identifying implications for wider systems beyond the area of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking original investigation to address significant areas of practice, using methodologies which are practically and philosophically consistent with their wider purposes and contexts • Critically evaluating thinking, action and structural factors operating in the area of practice, including underlying assumptions, and identifying implications for wider systems beyond the area of practice
Innovation and originality	This is about the level of originality and innovation you are bringing to your work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing innovative ways forward in complex and unpredictable situations • Developing novel approaches to systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing innovative approaches which redefine or extend the scope of practice • Developing novel approaches to complexes of systems

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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.