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Level 6 Service Designer apprenticeship

Building better services around real user needs

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Challenges facing local govt/NHS	How this Level 6 Apprenticeship and ILM Level 7 Certificate will help
Budget pressure	Improves efficiency and reduces failure demand
User dissatisfaction	Creates simpler, more accessible services
Fragmented services	Encourages whole system redesign
Digital transformation risk	Embeds user centred delivery
Skills shortages	Develops internal specialist and leadership capability
Consultant dependency	Builds sustainable inhouse expertise
Workforce retention	Provides progression and development opportunities
Inclusion and accessibility requirements	Embeds equitable design principles
Save money	Reduce external consultancy spend

Service Improvement & Transformation Leader

L6 Service Designer apprenticeship

The **Level 6 Service Designer Apprenticeship** develops professionals who can redesign and improve services to meet the needs of residents, customers, employees and stakeholders.

Equivalent to a bachelor's degree, this apprenticeship combines practical workplace learning with industry-recognised service design methodologies to help organisations deliver more effective, accessible and user-centred services.

Designed for both public and private sector organisations, the programme equips apprentices with the skills to:

- improve customer and resident experiences
- streamline complex processes
- lead and direct digital transformation
- and create sustainable service improvements whilst maximising social value impact.

Duration: 15 months, 3 month EPA. Cost: £15,000 via the levy.

Future focused service transformation

As public sector organisations continue to modernise services and improve user experiences, service design and improvement is becoming an increasingly important capability across both public and the third sectors.

This apprenticeship and the underpinning Level 7 Certificate provides a practical and strategic route to developing professionals who can:

1. solve complex service challenges,
2. improve experiences,
3. lead and drive innovation,
4. and deliver measurable organisational impact.

Build In-House Capability

Develop long term service transformation expertise within your organisation.

Improve Services

Apply learning directly to live organisational challenges and service redesign projects.

Increase Collaboration

Encourage cross functional working between operations, digital, policy and frontline teams.

Support Workforce Development

Create clear progression pathways for employees and attract future talent.

Why this apprenticeship matters

This Level 6 apprenticeship and ILM Level 7 Certificate will provide local authorities and ALEOs and NHS Trusts with the capability to redesign services around user/resident needs while improving efficiency, accessibility and organisational resilience.

The programme will support learners to develop leadership, coaching and practical transformation skills that can be applied immediately to live service challenges, helping public bodies to deliver sustainable improvement with measurable public value.

Organisations face increasing pressure to deliver better outcomes with limited resources. This apprenticeship will help councils, NHS Trusts and public sector organisations:

- **simplify complex user/resident journeys**
- **improve accessibility and inclusion**
- **reduce avoidable demand**
- **support digital transformation**
- **and redesign services around community/patient needs**

The programme is particularly relevant for:

- **aspiring service designers**
- **transformation and change professionals**
- **customer experience specialists**
- **digital and innovation teams**
- **project and programme staff**
- **and employees involved in service improvement**

It is suitable for both: new entrants to the profession, and experienced employees looking to formalise and expand their skills.





Building better, more cost effective services around user needs.

Organisations increasingly investing in service design capability to e.g. improve customer satisfaction, modernise services, reduce operational inefficiencies, increase digital adoption, and build more resilient organisations.

The apprenticeship enables employers to develop these capabilities internally rather than relying solely on external consultancy support.

One of the biggest barriers in organisations is siloed working. This apprenticeship will encourage multidisciplinary collaboration, shared ownership of outcomes and system wide thinking.

Apprentices will learn facilitation, stakeholder management, collaborative design techniques, leadership and coaching styles and techniques that will help to bridge gaps between: policy, operations, digital, communications, finance, and frontline delivery teams.

Key benefits

- **Financial** – reduced consultancy spend, improved efficiency and process optimisation.
- **Operational** - improved service quality, better user/patient/resident experience, faster and more evidence-based redesign work.
- **Strategic** - supports transformation agendas, builds organisational resilience, develops future-ready capability.
- **Cultural** - Encourages innovation, improves collaboration, embeds user centred thinking.

What can an apprentice expect?

The programme develops practical, real-world capability across a range of disciplines including

User centred Design: learn how to design services around genuine user needs using research, testing and iterative improvement approaches.

Service mapping & blueprinting: Understand how to visualise end-to-end services, identify friction points and redesign operational processes.

Research & insights: use qualitative and quantitative research methods to uncover pain points, behaviours and opportunities.

Co-design & facilitation: work collaboratively with users, stakeholders and multidisciplinary teams to create better outcomes.

Agile & continuous Improvement: apply iterative design methods and agile approaches to deliver sustainable service improvements.

Accessibility & inclusion: Design services that are equitable, inclusive and accessible for all users and deliver wider impacts and social value.

Change & transformation: support organisational change initiatives through evidence-based service redesign and stakeholder engagement.

Leadership coaching: the value and step changes that can be achieved from coaching and being coached

Programme delivery & Assessment

- live group workshops (x 8 in person, x 5 virtual)
- coaching and mentoring (x12 121s)
- workplace project(s)
- portfolio development aligned to KSBs
- structured project action & accountability sessions (x 8).

Assessment will include

- a work-based project, report and presentation Q&A
- professional discussion supported by a portfolio of evidence.

ILM Level 7 Certificate – reflective journals and executive summary – project objectives, implementation and outcomes achieved will be completed post End Point Assessment.

Programme structure

The programme had four main modules, four project submissions and End Point Assessment. The programme will be delivered via workshops, project reviews, 121 coaching and additional masterclasses.

See the next few pages for an overview of the structure and learning process.

Service Designer L6 apprenticeship

Management Duties

Learning Module 1

Duty 1 Question and challenge the design brief in order to lead, influence and guide stakeholders to determine the scope of the service design work, both strategically and operationally.

Duty 2 Define and conduct research activities including primary/secondary research using both qualitative and quantitative data to fully understand users and their needs as well as the context of a service.

Duty 3 Synthesise research to build themes and clusters, find insights, and discover opportunity areas for improving the experience of the user.

Duty 4 Analyse, interpret and communicate complex information or data sets from the research to build a case and direction for change.

Learning Module 2

Duty 5 Develop multiple potential solutions to the design brief using ideation tools and techniques

Duty 6 Prototype, test with users and analyse potential solutions, making continuous improvements to designs and selecting ideas that best deliver the desired impact on a user's experience of a service and the environmental and economic needs of the organisation.

Duty 7 Direct the transition from prototype into pilot projects through working with the service areas who will take this forward and lead on-going evaluation, including creating clear success metrics for the improved service.

Learning Module 3 and Module 4

Duty 8 Lead the design of services through engaging with and influencing stakeholders, colleagues, and service users.

Duty 9 Develop others with the skills needed to contribute to the work through coaching, mentoring, shadowing, working collaboratively or delivering training.

Duty 10 Manage time frames and guide budget decisions, working within organisational project management processes, and manage risks in order to meet business needs.

Duty 11 Manage and lead ongoing change and identify individuals and groups who are able to make a case for a service design approach for future change requirements.

+ Project implementation

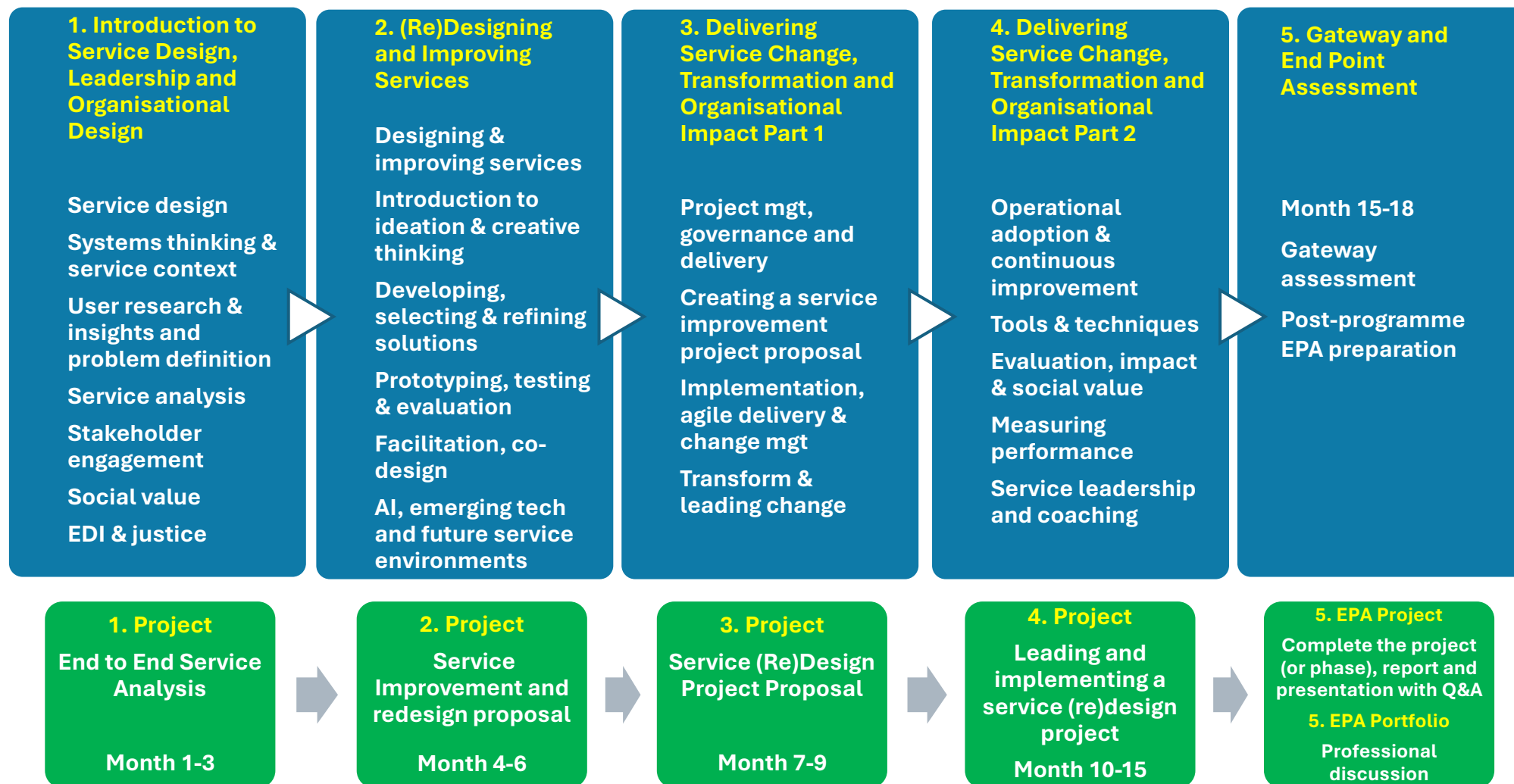


Service Improvement & Transformation Leader

Underpinned by Level 6 Service Designer apprenticeship & ILM Level 7 Certificate in Strategic Leadership & Management



Department for Education



8 Workshops (two per module)– full day, in person sessions
 5 virtual group tuition sessions
 8 Project action & accountability sessions (two per module)
 2 additional masterclasses: EDI and Social Value
 121 executive coaching sessions (x12)

Programme delivery structure

Apprentices will also undertake ILM Level 7 Certificate SLM. 2 learning units: Developing a strategic business case and Developing and maintaining a high-performance culture. These units will be encompassed within the Project stages and EPA.

The learning process



Workshops groups	face to face (full day), online (half)
Project reviews - Action and Accountability	online (1.5 hours)
Executive Coaching 1-2-1	online (1 hour)
L6 Service Designer Workbooks and Journals	online/pdf; reflective journal entry per module
Workplace project(s)	large project or project phases or enabling projects / mini-projects
Institute of Leadership and CMI study resources	online library, knowledge banks
Core texts	This is Service Design Doing and This is Service Design Methods (Stickdorn, Lawrence, Hormess & Schneider)
ILM Level 7 learning units: hi-level business case	reflective journal and executive summary report

The learning process



Management project(s)

1. End to end service analysis
2. Service improvement proposal
3. Service (re) design project proposal
4. Lead and implement project

End Point Assessment

5. Full Project report, presentation, Q&A
Portfolio of evidence and professional discussion

Off the job hours

418 hours over 15 months – regular timesheets c6-7 hours per week: learning, researching, management projects. 3 months EPA

Tripartite reviews and KSB skill scan

You, your coach and your line manager
Assess your performance against KSBs as you progress through the programme.

Systems

Moodle – learning and resource. Maytas – managing your learning, tasks, activities, events and interactions with your tutors and coaches.

The programme tutors, coaches and workshop facilitators.

John Patterson is a highly driven Business Leader with strong commercial acumen and extensive experience and expertise in senior management in manufacturing, construction and associated disciplines. He has developed a broad and transferable skillset, steering operations within such environments in alignment with core business objectives. Throughout a successful career in senior leadership, John has brought a results focus to his work. John holds an MBA, the ILM Level 7 Certificates in both Leadership and Management and Coaching and Mentoring.



Janice Clegg is one of our senior executive coaches. She has 30+ years' experience in global businesses including at Director level, has lectured at university within a Business School and holds an MBA. Janice has successfully developed organisations across diverse industries such as hi-tech computing, oil & gas to FMCG. As a business leader Janice has experience in various facets of supply chain development, supplier management, customer relationship management, project and change management and is skilled at developing strategy and implementing solutions.



Rob Snell, an experienced change leader with strong HR and programme and project management credentials, possessing flair for leading and motivating effective teams and acting on own initiative. Operating at the strategic level, able to manage complex programmes whilst meeting demanding budgetary and strategic targets in diverse environments. Specialties: Executive coaching and mentoring; management and organisational development; change management; continuous improvement; programme & project management; facilities management.



Krasi Toneva, an ILM accredited Executive Coach and Leadership Development Specialist with 24+ years of experience transforming leaders across education and corporate sectors. Proven track record of delivering measurable results through 400+ coaching hours, with expertise in executive transitions, leadership development, and organisational change. Krasi has held strategic leadership roles combining executive coaching, organisational development, and workforce transformation across education and corporate sectors.



The Academy of Leadership & Management

The Academy is a specialist provider of executive education and key people development in the fields of leadership, management, coaching & mentoring, and business and enterprise development. www.academylm.co.uk

We are dedicated to developing people into outstanding leaders, managers and executive level coaches through our practical work-based and distance learning programmes.

The core learning programmes we offer lead to globally recognised qualifications from an awarding body e.g. Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM), City & Guilds (C&G), Chartered Management Institute (CMI) or the Small Firms Development Initiative (SFEDI). We are also an Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE) approved academy.

We offer distance learning courses in the following subject areas:

- Leadership & Management (C&M)
- Coaching & Mentoring (C&M) – delivered by the Academy of Coaching & Mentoring
- Business & Enterprise (B&E)
- Apprenticeship programmes in L&M and C&M (England & Wales)

Our development programmes are available to both individual students and employers who want to develop their people at an organisational level.

Our courses are delivered online and in-person – making for a flexible and cost effective learning option which can fit into a busy schedule. We also have a strong track-record of designing tailored in-house programmes suitable for employers.

Additionally, we also provide programme management, accreditation and learning consultancy services for businesses and organisations. See next page for a brief introduction to our services for employers.

As one of the largest ILM learning centres in the UK, and more recently an approved CMI learning centred we attract a diverse client base and have a strong record of developing new qualifications under the guidance of the Institute.



You can read more detail on the [qualifications](#) and [apprenticeships](#) on our website.

And some recent Apprenticeship stories [>videos](#)

Guiding Principles of The Academy

We aim to deliver high-quality, inclusive, and impactful learning experiences that develop confident, capable, and ethical leaders. We are driven by a set of guiding principles that shape our strategy, culture, and daily practice, ensuring our programmes empower learners to thrive and organisations to grow.

We are committed to:

Learner Success and Wellbeing

We place learners at the heart of everything we do. Our provision is designed to challenge and support learners to succeed academically, professionally, and personally. We are proud to set an ambitious organisational goal of 95% learner attainment, and all elements of our curriculum, assessment and support strategies are structured to help every learner achieve and surpass this target.

Integrity and Accountability

We operate with transparency, professionalism, and ethical responsibility. We are accountable to our learners, staff, employers, and regulators and hold ourselves to the highest standards of compliance and quality assurance.

Excellence and Continuous Improvement

We foster a culture of reflection, innovation, and performance improvement. Our programmes evolve in response to evidence, learner feedback, and sector developments to ensure ongoing relevance and excellence.

Inclusivity and Equity

We actively promote fairness, dignity, and the celebration of diversity. Our delivery is accessible, inclusive, and responsive to individual needs. We challenge discrimination and provide equal opportunities for all learners to participate, progress, and achieve.

Collaboration and Partnership

We value strong, collaborative relationships with employers, delivery partners, and stakeholders. By working together, we co-create meaningful learning experiences that are grounded in real-world practice and organisational goals.

Safeguarding and Learner Protection

We embed safeguarding, Prevent, British Values, and welfare into all aspects of our delivery. We are committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment for all apprentices, staff, and partners.



You can read more about the Academy, our recent Ofsted report (Good, June 2025) and our faculty on our [website](#).

You can keep up to date with the latest thinking and trends in coaching, mentoring, leadership and management by giving us a follow on [LinkedIn](#)

Appendix

Level 6 Service Designer apprenticeship – Duties and KSB's

ILM Level 7 Certificate Strategic Leadership & Management – learning unit 701 overview

Service Designer L6 apprenticeship

This occupation is found in the private, public and third sector, local, national, and multinational organisations and employers. Relevant sectors include the health sector, finance sector, business and professional services, retail sector, technology sector, government, public sector, and the charity sector.

There has been a growing demand for service design skills to be embedded within culture and governance structures to support future ways of working.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to improve/redesign services currently offered or develop/design new service propositions to meet the needs of the user as well as the business and other stakeholders. Service designers take a user-centred, collaborative and exploratory approach to design the new service, iterating toward implementation.

They work collaboratively with service/product owners and multidisciplinary teams; to (re)design services:

- from end to end (the start of a process to the very end step they take),
- from front to back (both user-facing and back office to create a seamless service) and
- cross-channel (to seamlessly and often interchangeably deliver the service through the various available platforms, which sometimes - but not always - include digital touch points).

In short, the purpose of a services designer is to (re)design services collaboratively and iteratively, taking a user-centred approach.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with a wide range of internal stakeholders, from front-line staff to service managers, senior leaders to heads of the organisation.

If involved in the research, they also interact with a range of external stakeholders, which may include members of the public and individuals working in other organisations.

They may, in large organisations, report to programme boards and to shareholders in private sector organisations. They often work in collaboration with multidisciplinary teams (through formal or informal arrangement) which may include marketing, finance, communications, logistics, project management, HR, digital (developers, systems/solutions architects) and user research.

Service Designers enable services to be (re)designed in a user/customer-centred way and therefore the most important stakeholder is the end user/service beneficiary.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for guiding and facilitating the (re)design of a service, product, or solution; ensuring the work is user-centred. Increasingly, service designers design with the environment as a key stakeholder, creating services that serve the triple bottom line (profit, people, planet).

Service Designers are responsible for guiding, leading, facilitating and educating those involved in the (re)design, providing adequate challenge to ensure that they are responding to the right problem statement, that the scope of the work is appropriately sized and the limitations (i.e. with technology or the outcome an organisation wants to achieve) are understood to ensure anything (re)designed is viable.

They are responsible for selecting the most useful methodologies, tools, and techniques for use in the service design and continually work between a macro and micro view, ensuring the work has pace/is progressing and that the strategic view is not lost within the work.

Service Designers are expected to understand and contribute to budgets and return on investment considerations. In larger organisations, they may have management oversight of their own budgets.

KSBs

Knowledge

K1: The theory and history of the discipline of service design, including definitions and principles, the different perspectives, approaches, or schools of thought.

K2: How and when service design practices can be used to design and improve services.

K3: Other business areas and professions involved in the design of services such as research, UX, technology, policy, and delivery.

K4: The use of creative processes involved in design such as user-centred design approaches and design thinking methods.

K5: Approaches to mapping a service and when to use them.

K6: Methodologies for user research and data collection to understand user needs, pain points, opportunities and areas that should be prioritised.

K7: Ideation tools and techniques to developing potential solutions.

K8: Methodologies to evaluate prototypes and ideas.

K9: Continued improvement of a service, using iterative and agile approaches.

K10: Methods and tools for working collaboratively with groups, teams, and individuals.

K11: Project management and agile principles and methods.

K12: Approaches to change management.

K13: Tools and techniques for prioritisation.

K14: Techniques for measuring cost, value, risk, and impact of decisions

K15: Use of current and emerging technologies to inform the design of services.

K16: Principles of design and research ethics for service design.

K17: Equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion and how they impact on outcomes for people and organisations.

K18: Relevant regulatory and legislative requirements such as data protection, GDPR, confidentiality, for the handling and processing of data and its application during a project.

K19: How a service designer can contribute to a service becoming more environmentally sustainable.

K20: How to support the continuous development requirements and training and learning needs of people they work with.

K21: Organisation structures; business modelling; global and horizon scanning perspectives; governance and accountability; technological and policy implications.

KSBs

Skills

S1: Champion and advocate the benefits of service design and user centred solutions.

S2: Interpret, analyse, and challenge a design brief.

S3: Systematically analyse and apply problem-solving techniques to complex service design challenges.

S4: Use service design methods to design new propositions, products, and services, and improve existing ones.

S5: Co-design, workshop, and facilitation of service design activities with stakeholders and users.

S6: Map the current and future states of a service journey collating information from multiple sources to form a single view of the service.

S7: Select, formulate and apply qualitative and quantitative user research methods and approaches.

S8: Analyse and evaluate findings from qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand and prioritise user needs.

S9: Evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts, and data to make judgements, and develop questions to achieve a solution to a problem.

S10: Select and use ideation methods to generate multiple solutions to complex problems.

S11: Prioritise potential solutions to select which to take forward to further development.

S12: Prototype concepts and solutions from low to high degrees of fidelity.

S13: Evaluate prototype solutions, selecting the most appropriate methodology.

S14: Select, formulate and apply a range of user testing methods to ensure any service changes create the desired impact.

S15: Apply user-centred design processes to iteratively develop concepts and solutions.

S16: Evaluate solutions in place to continually improve the service for users and stakeholders.

S17: Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information and concepts.

S18: Communicate complex information, concepts and ideas adapting for different audiences.

S19: Influence, negotiate and challenge stakeholders in the delivery and decision-making process.

S20: Considers multiple viewpoints including those of the internal stakeholders, service users and service providers.

S21: Work with multidisciplinary teams.

S22: Work ethically and sustainably, to ensure research and design activities are carried out to the highest practice in ethical standards.

S23: Manage project to timescales and budget requirements.

S24: Identify and apply emerging industry developments to continuously improve service design practice.

S25: Provide support, specialist advice, and guidance.

S26: Identify the training requirements for their teams and stakeholders.

KSBs

Behaviours

B1: Role models ethical behaviour and practices.

B2: Considers the “big” picture and the detail together.

B3: Works flexibly and adapts to circumstances.

B4: Seeks learning opportunities and continuous professional development.

B5: Takes responsibility, shows initiative, and is organised.

B6: Championing the user and putting them at the centre of the design process

ILM Level 7 Certificate in Certificate Leadership & Management

The ILM Level 7 qualifications are delivered through Enquiry-based Learning (EBL). This is an approach to learning based on the investigation of questions, scenarios or problems.

For each unit of the qualification, you are required to complete an enquiry-based project. This process will involve you:

- creating questions (an enquiry) of your own. This will be derived from a real strategic level issue / problem or opportunity within your organisation.
- identifying supporting evidence to answer your enquiry. You will gather this in your portfolio.
- explaining the evidence you have collected to stakeholders, your executive coach and your assessor.
- connecting this explanation to the knowledge you have obtained from your investigations.
- creating an argument and justification for the explanation, by way of an Executive Summary

This approach will help you develop a number of skills including self-reliance, independence and the ability to identify, investigate and solve problems and achieve results.

The first stage of this process will be for you to explore, in more detail, what an enquiry-based approach means for you and your organisation. You will then progress to your enquiry, which will ultimately involve developing your knowledge and capability in the area of leadership and management.

Unit 701 Developing a High-Level Business Case

This unit involves developing a high-level business case for improvement that is aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives and other planned improvements, including

- understanding the strategic context for change in order to identify a high-level business case
- being able to generate and evaluate viable options and apply decision-making techniques.
- understanding how to manage the high-level business case through to the desired business outcomes

Building a business case

This theme will enable you to understand the process of compiling and presenting a business case. It will demonstrate a range of techniques that can support the process, including making the case, evaluating a range of options and selecting the most appropriate one. Although by no means an exhaustive coverage of the subject, it provides a solid background for senior managers seeking to put together a business case and getting it passed and implemented.

This theme will help you to:

- examine the concept of the 'business case', in both private and public sector arenas.
- consider the process of financial appraisal and its impact on the decision making process.
- consider and evaluate a range of decision making strategies and their applications.
- be able to apply appropriate decisions making strategies in the context of your organisation.
- improve your own managerial practice





Web: academylm.co.uk

Email: info@academylm.co.uk

Contact details: Craig McArthur, Associate Director

Email: c.mcarthur@academylm.co.uk



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