



Function design: *a guide to using the Profession Map*

The Profession Map sets the international benchmark for the people profession and helps leaders understand the knowledge and behaviours people professionals need to make an impact in the changing world of work.

We've created this step-by-step guide to support leaders who are reviewing the design of their people function as a result of a change of strategy, an external event or organisational reconfiguration, and who would like to draw on the Profession Map to inform their approach. (Please note, this guide is about how to use the standards within function design, so it assumes knowledge of function diagnostic and design tools).



Step 1

Assess the organisation's needs and identify the key capabilities required to deliver the people strategy

The [Profession Map](#) outlines three types of standards

- **Eight core behaviours** – the behaviours all people professionals need to demonstrate
- **Six core knowledge areas** – the knowledge all people professionals need to acquire
- **Nine specialisms** – technical expertise relevant for specialist people roles.

Within the Profession Map, the standards sit at four levels, each describing a different level of impact that people professionals make in the work they do. The [Find your level](#) section provides a summary and a more detailed description of the levels.



Foundation level: Tactical, day-to-day work, delivering immediate and short-term outcomes.



Associate level: Operational work, influencing colleagues and customers to deliver short-term value.



Chartered Member level: Thinking at a strategic level, delivering work that has complexity, and working with and influencing a range of stakeholders to create medium-term value for the organisation.



Chartered Fellow level: Thinking and working at a strategic level, influencing stakeholders across the profession to create long-term organisation value.

Review the standards at both a headline and detailed level to consider the different people knowledge, behaviours and specialist expertise you may need to deliver your people strategy and create organisation value. Draw on a range of internal and external evidence and diagnostic tools to fully understand the organisation's needs now and in the future. For further information on other tools and frameworks, view the Organisation design factsheet.

Step 2

Design your function based on the key capabilities identified

The following questions will help you to use the standards to inform your function design or operating model:

- How many levels will there be in the function's design, and how will these map to the CIPD's four levels of impact?
- To what extent will roles be generalist or specialist, and how will they map to the CIPD's new standards?
- Which people specialisms are needed to deliver your people strategy, and how will you structure and resource these? (eg through permanent employment, contractors, external sourcing, digital and AI technologies) *Note: There are nine specialisms in the Profession Map, but how organisations combine the required expertise from a role or function design perspective will differ. Depending on the size of your organisation, its strategic needs and operating model, you may, for example, choose to combine some specialisms (such as L&D, Talent Management and Resourcing) into an overarching talent centre of excellence, or bring OD&D and Talent Management together as one function.
- Do other areas of the organisation have roles which focus on the same capabilities? If so, what implications will this have? How can you encourage collaboration and joint working?

- To what extent do line managers in the organisation require any core knowledge and core behaviour standards, and how might this inform the design of line management roles?

When you have a design for your function, map each role to the four levels in the standards and identify which roles require specialist knowledge (how to do this is covered in [Your team or function's professional development: a guide to using the standards](#)). There is also a separate guide on using the standards to design individual roles and create job descriptions, which you can find inside [Role design: a guide to using the standards](#).

For further information on how people profession operating models are changing and evolving read the [CIPD's research paper](#).

Step 3

Implement and embed your function design

If you already have a team of people professionals, you can use the standards to support their transition into new roles. Coach them to evaluate their current level of knowledge against the core knowledge standards (and any specialist standards), and their current approach and confidence against the core behaviour standards for the new role.

Ask individuals or teams to use the insight to identify up to three development objectives to focus on at any time. Remember to encourage your people professionals to maximise strengths and address any development gaps by using a range of development opportunities, particularly work-based and peer learning. Agree on what ongoing leadership support will be in place, and how and when progress will be reviewed.

Consider how to establish career and development pathways based on the new function design to manage and develop talent. In addition, create opportunities for people professionals to share knowledge and learning and collaborate with peers in other parts of the function or team.



Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201
E cipd@cipd.co.uk **W** cipd.co.uk

Incorporated by Royal Charter
Registered as a charity in England and Wales (1079797)
Scotland (SC045154) and Ireland (20100827)

Issued: April 2021 Reference: 7600 © CIPD 2021