

BLUE SKY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEWSLETTER

2020?

Well what a year it has been!

We had no idea last March that we would still be working from home and delivering learning over Zoom more than a year later. It has been challenging but not all bad, far from it. Our tutors showed amazing flexibility and resilience, adapting to online workshops and coaching sessions with aplomb. Students also embraced the new way of learning with enthusiasm and patience.

In the last year we have delivered 122 online workshops, and 38 students achieved their qualification.

As we start to return to the office and back to face to face training we can begin to look forward at our plans for the coming year. There is so much in the pipeline...two new apprenticeships, a full suite of new CIPD qualifications at three levels, a new ILM qualification and a new mode of learning for us using an online learning platform.

So although we have found it difficult to predict how business will be as we recover from the effects of the pandemic, we are optimistic for busy times ahead.



NEW APPRENTICESHIPS

Along with the new CIPD qualifications launched this spring, Blue Sky, in partnership with Colchester Institute, have developed two new apprenticeships - the long awaited Level 7 Senior Human Resources Professional and the Level 5 Learning and Development Consultant Business Partner.

You can now use apprenticeship funding to study a post graduate qualification in HR, helping develop senior managers in strategic and leadership skills. The Senior HR Professional Apprenticeship includes the opportunity to gain the CIPD Diploma in Strategic People Management and apply for CIPD Chartered Status. It is a 36 month programme, studied through blended learning - online or with face to face workshops, and includes a professional coach to support you through the End Point Assessment.

For the learning and development specialist, the level 5 L&D apprenticeship explores organisational L&D over 2 years, covering knowledge and skills such as design and facilitation as well as newer approaches to learning, eg social and self directed learning. As with all the apprenticeships we offer, you can achieve the relevant CIPD qualification (Associate Diploma in Organisational L&D) at the same time.



THE FUTURE OF HR?

by Lorna Taylor, Tutor with Blue Sky Professional Development

When I started my HR career 18 years ago, my experience of HR was one steeped in paper work and administration. Triple signed memos for dealing with salary corrections and a policy and process for just about anything in my organisation. At the time you could treat part time and fixed term employees differently to full time permanent employees, you could insist on employees retiring at a default retirement age and the idea of working flexibly was not welcomed with open arms. My experience was not one of providing a service to employees or line managers but one of helping them to navigate through endless policies to get anything done with often the answer being 'no, you can't do that'.

All of which seems culturally strange now given, over the same period of time, we have enjoyed increased individual employment rights, a push for the People Profession to be more strategic and most recently all of us have had to work flexibly in some way given the changes in restrictions to our everyday lives.

If my past experience represents what's to come, the future of the People Profession is **change**, and lots of it. *"Change is a fact of life that we all have no choice but to deal with. Those of us who are able to acknowledge this fact and cope with change will survive. Those who are able to seek out change - and actively embrace it - will thrive."* The Power of Change, Macpherson, 2021, p5.

For the People Profession, there are some key skills we can hone in on to help us proactively embrace change:

- Develop core **business acumen** skills; Understanding what our businesses do and our real impact on them can not only be empowering for us as individuals but also improve the internal view and credentials of the profession.
- Embrace **technology** and the opportunities this brings to allow us to do more strategic, creative and innovative towards work rather than focusing on repetitive tasks.
- Change our focus from being policy led to **principles led**; we are uniquely placed in organisations to utilise the energy in society from movements such as Black Lives Matter or #Metoo to make real change in our workplaces. Including starting with our own profession, greater diversity leads to competitive advantage for our organisations. This should be an easy sell.
- Own your own **continuous professional development**; providing expert knowledge to our organisations will ensure we are seen as a valuable resource rather than an additional cost. It will also allow us to make a valuable contribution to its success.
- Treating employees as a **valuable resource** and as **individuals**. The recent pandemic has shown we are more globally connected than ever. Depending on your role you can work from anywhere and at any time. The world really is your oyster and as such People Professionals will need to entice the top talent with potential employees demanding more, such as a greater work-life balance and ethical corporate behavior.

The future of HR?...I think there are exciting times ahead; keep professionally updated and let's lead from the front.

CIPD NEWS



After a stressful few months we were pleased to find out that Blue Sky had gained approval to deliver CIPD's new qualifications and are planning to launch them with a new Advanced cohort in May, followed by Foundation and Associate groups in September.

So what has changed? The content has been brought right up to date and is based on CIPD's new Profession Map at each level, reflecting the international standards for People Management. Level 5 is now known as Associate and not Intermediate and there is a CIPD membership grade to reflect all three levels which there wasn't before. With just one qualification at each level and options for a People Management or a Learning & Development route at levels 5 and 7.

The Foundation Certificate in People Practice is aimed at individuals at the start of their career in either People Management or Learning & Development, or those already in a support role and looking to take the next step on the ladder. The Foundation Certificate typically takes 10 months to complete and comprises of 4 core units.

The Associate Diploma in People Management is aimed at individuals with some people practice experience who are looking to grow and develop their role. The qualification includes knowledge of how to manage employment relations, foster talent, guide strategic workforce planning and build reward schemes that drive performance and contribute to business success. Likewise, the Associate Diploma in Organisational Learning and Development is aimed at individuals with some L&D experience and this qualification includes knowledge of methods and techniques to measure your company's performance and culture, how to plan different forms of learning and ways to boost individuals' development.

The duration of both Associate Diploma programmes is approximately 16 months and both qualifications comprise of 3 core units, 3 specialist units and a choice of 1 optional unit.

The Advanced Diploma in Strategic People Management is aimed at individuals who are already in or looking to take the next step into a more strategic role. This qualification will help you learn how to manage employment relations, recruit and nurture talent to sustain success, reward and motivate your workforce as well as develop your own people management skills, personal effectiveness and business acumen. The duration of the Advanced Diploma programme is approximately 24 months and comprises of 3 core units, 3 specialist units and a choice of 1 optional unit

If you are studying a pre-2021 qualification, don't worry, it is still valid - HR doesn't change over night, and you have plenty of time to complete.



NEW ILM COACHING & MENTORING

We are now approved to deliver the new ILM Certificate in Coaching & Mentoring at level 5. This qualification covers 3 units, including the practical skills required to be a successful coach and mentor, and implementation of coaching/mentoring in the workplace.

This would be a good time for organisations to look at developing managers to be coaches as staff return to the workplace. That extra support and focus on growth and performance would benefit the employee as well as the business after this difficult phase.

PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Foundation Level 3 Certificate in People Practice
Associate Level 5 Diploma in People Management
Associate Level 5 Diploma in Organisational Learning and Development
Advanced Level 7 Diploma Strategic People Management

HR Apprenticeships in partnership with Colchester Institute

Level 3 HR Support Apprenticeship
Level 5 HR Consultant/Partner Apprenticeship
Level 5 Learning and Development Consultant Business Partner Apprenticeship
Level 7 Senior HR Professional Apprenticeship

Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management
Level 4 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management
Level 5 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management

Bespoke Training

We design and deliver bespoke training packages for HR and Managers that can also be linked to nationally recognised qualifications on subjects such as

- Leadership
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Recruitment
- Developing staff
- Delegation
- Motivation

ABOUT BLUE SKY

After working together for over 25 years on CIPD and Management programmes, Beth and Kate started Blue Sky 8 years ago. Established in Norwich, with the aim to deliver first class programmes with individualised support leading to high success rates, this was soon extended to Colchester and now includes HR and L&D apprenticeship programmes.

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