

## **APC: the critical analysis**

### **Making a good impression**

**22/04/2020**

**Choosing a project and following simple formatting guidelines are crucial to the success of your critical analysis, says Jon Lever - even before you meet the assessors**

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The critical analysis is a key APC final assessment document that requires the candidate to demonstrate their competence by reviewing components of one of their specific projects or processes, and where they resolved or mitigated the issues of a unique situation.

The candidate has to submit their report with the final assessment submission documents, deliver a 10-minute presentation on its content and answer questions about the reported situation and their role in resolving the issues.

Candidates must ensure their project meets the following criteria:

- Did the candidate have sole control/management (under supervision) of the project or process, and can the assessors see them taking control of a situation and resolving the issues?
- Is the project or process simple enough to articulate within a succinct word count and a 10-minute presentation, yet technical enough to demonstrate the depth and breadth of the candidate's experience and cover as many (if not all) of their declared competencies and levels?
- Will the project raise the interest of the assessors? (This does not mean it is 'prestigious' but that it covers the APC requirements adequately.)
- Can the candidate discuss the project at length, their role and how they resolved any issues, while convincing the assessors that their experience has been well obtained and learnt from?

If the answers to all of the above are 'Yes', then the next step is to ensure the report is written correctly.

### **Layout and structure**

**Assessors will make judgements about the candidate based upon the quality of their critical analysis**

The candidate must demonstrate their ability to write a professional report. This must obviously include a beginning, middle and an end, and include a contents page and supporting appendices, front and back covers, candidate name and number on each page, page numbering, etc. Spelling and grammar must be perfect.

The word count is a maximum of 3,000 words, excluding appendices, and candidates should comply with this. Relevant photographs and plans should be no larger than A4 when folded, of good quality and be properly annotated (including scales).

The structure and headings should follow

**Title Cover**

**Index Page**

**Statement confidentiality**

**Brief Introduction of assignment**

**Client Objectives**

**Your role**

**Key issues**

- **Options**
- **Your proposed solution**
- **Conclusion and analysis of experience gained.**
- **Appendices**

Sign off by the candidate, supervisor and counsellor is important and this can be done by including a short statement noting the confidentiality and the authenticity of the content. These requirements are now generally catered for in Template 1 in the Final Assessment Templates and so, while not formally required in the critical analysis, I think it adds professionalism to the report and shows that all parties have paid attention to the content and sources of information. I think it is acceptable that the declaration is outside of the word count.

The report should be properly printed (e.g. black and white on A4 white paper), be spiral-bound or similar and the covers should be kept simple (e.g. clear plastic front, white card back).

**Dos and don'ts**

There are some very simple criteria here:

**Do**

- write a professional report
- remember to follow the suggested headings
- pick a project that includes as many of your technical competencies as possible
- choose a project that demonstrates your full range of abilities

- realise that you will have to present your critical analysis and discuss it at length
- remember to address confidentiality issues.

### **Don't**

- write a piece of coursework or a textbook answer
- write more than 3,000 words
- think half measures will be good enough.

The critical analysis is one of the key documents the assessors see before they meet the candidate. While the assessment process is holistic and the final decision about a candidate's competency is not decided until after the interview, assessors will make judgements about the candidate based upon the quality of their critical analysis.

Candidates must ensure they get this right first time, otherwise it can be a much harder interview, as questioning will focus on areas that could have been covered by a good critical analysis. If in doubt, seek advice; don't forget training and assistance is available. Nothing less than 100% quality is acceptable.

You must explain not only the project itself but the processes you followed and the rationale behind your decision-making. Your focus must be on analysing the project: do not simply provide a summary of what it involved. It is quality not quantity that counts.

If at any time ISU Membership Committee, discover your case study is over the word count they reserve the right to cancel your interview.

You should include the following four aspects:

### **1. Introduction**

In this section you should provide a summary of the project and what your role was – include the following. We suggest this section should be approximately 500 words.

- What did you do?
- What was your level of responsibility?
- Who were the stakeholders?
- What was the timeline?

### **2. My approach**

In this section you should describe the key issues or challenges on the project. You may write about one or more key issues but remember you only have a limited word count for the case study.

Explain the issues. Make it clear to the assessors why it became a challenge for you, include the options you considered and the solutions that you identified explaining why some options weren't feasible.

### **3. My achievements**

In this section you should describe what you achieved and how. Demonstrate your ability to think logically, laterally and professionally giving examples of where you gave reasoned advice to a client for your level 3 competencies.

### **4. Conclusion**

In this section you need to reflect on and analyse your performance and make reference to the lessons you learnt and what you would do differently next time.

This section is very important in showing the assessors your analytical thinking and how you develop as a professional. The assessors will use your case study as a starting point to question you beyond what you actually did, probing your understanding of your project's wider issues. You will need to think about these processes while you are writing your case study, so that you are well prepared for the interview.

#### **Appendix A – Competencies demonstrated in this case study**

You need to use the template to list the mandatory and the competencies that you believe are demonstrated in your case study.

#### **Appendix B, C etc**

You may insert illustrations, photographs or plans to this section. Please keep the attachments to a minimum ensuring they are relevant to the case study. Appendices should support your report, not add to or expand on it.