Guidance on Assessment

Contact your local Investors in People Centre

The first step is for you to contact your local Centre. All assessments are organised and quality assured by the Centres.

Talking to your Centre will soon establish whether your organisation is ready for assessment and you can agree the best timing for your assessment to take place. Your Centre will allocate an assessor to your organisation.

Preparing for your assessment

Your assessor will normally hold a meeting with you in advance to discuss your business priorities, what is involved in an assessment and agree how the process will work. It may be helpful if you can provide some information in advance about what your organisation does, so the assessor can gain an early insight into your organisation and its approach.

The first thing that you will want to do with your assessor is to agree what the scope of the assessment should be. The starting point for this should be for you to establish what the key priorities are for your organisation – what are the performance targets that you are aiming to meet in the next year.

One of the best ways to establish what the focus of your assessment should be is to have a consensus meeting with your senior management team. This can be a workshop facilitated by your assessor. It can be very valuable way to engage your top team. It can also help get everyone's expectations clear. But most importantly it can help your organisation to agree what your business priorities are, if these are not already clear, which will give your assessment a clear focus and ensure that your assessment is of maximum relevance to your organisation's needs.

The consensus meeting will help you and your assessor to establish what the scope of your assessment should be. Will it be sufficient to limit the assessment to the 39 evidence requirements of the Investors in People Standard? Or will there be more value in selecting some additional requirements beyond The Standard from the Investors in People framework?

The other consideration you may want to discuss with your assessor is whether you want to achieve additional recognition beyond The Standard – i.e. be recognised as Investors in People – Bronze, Silver or Gold. Your assessor can best advise you on this and how to best relate it to the areas that you want to focus on to meet your organisation's priorities.

Sampling and data protection

The minimum size of organisation that Investors in People can assess is of two people.

With most organisations, your assessor will interview a representative sample of your company. You will need to supply a full list of all employees, including their names, job titles, length of service, working hours and whether or not they are a Trade Union Representative. This may include temporary staff, voluntary staff, or anyone who makes a significant contribution to your organisation. Your assessor can then select a balanced variety of employees, ensuring the views of all groups are represented and the outcome is impartial and unbiased.

Although personal data is not usually collected throughout the assessment process, various data protection policies are maintained to ensure that we and our delivery network adhere to the regulations.

For more information about how our data protection policies, please email the Investors in People Customer Service Line at information@iipuk.co.uk or contact your Investors in People Centre.

How does assessment work?

For most medium to large sized organisations, your assessor will interview a representative sample of your employees. Smaller organisations usually have all their people interviewed. If you want all your people to be involved you can agree it with your assessor at the start of the process.

Investors in People assessments are entirely interview-based. This means that you don't need to supply your assessor with a single piece of paper, policy document or strategy. The reason for keeping paperwork to an absolute minimum is that what matters is that the organisation can give practical examples of how they meet Investors in People requirements, not just having paper policies that aren't being acted on or reviewed.

You may also find it useful to have an employee survey prior to your assessment. This can help canvas the views of a larger number of people in your organisation and you can compare results by department etc. Ask your assessor about how this can be arranged for your organisation. You can also ask your assessor to do focus groups or observations in addition to the usual interviews.

Most evidence is collected by the assessor via confidential one-to-one interviews. Your assessor will interview people from across your organisation, top managers, managers and people. The purpose of this is to establish whether the aims and ambitions of the top managers are understood and being implemented by those throughout the organisation. The evidence collected during interviews is not attributed to individual employees.

What will your assessment cost?

Our new approach, customising our assessments around your specific needs means that the cost will also be tailored, which means you will be getting even better value for money.

The assessment process is priced up to a maximum of £750 per day (excluding VAT and extra expenses). The number of days required for assessment depends on the size of your organisation and how much of the Investors in People framework you choose to be assessed on, linked to your objectives.

With the introduction of the new approach Investors in People is offering a small amount of additional evidence requirements beyond The Standard at no extra charge, to encourage organisations to take on some additional stretch beyond The Standard. Assessments that focus on more substantial areas of the framework will be priced accordingly. Once you have agreed the scope of your assessment and framework choices, your Investors in People Centre will provide you with a full and clear estimate of the price.

What is included in the price?

While packages may vary, Investors in People aims to help your continuous improvement by providing you with timely support before, during and after your assessment. Therefore, for many organisations, your package will include:

- **Planning meeting** - This is where you, your senior management team and your Investors in People assessor talk through your priorities to establish which parts of the framework are most relevant.
- **On-site assessment** - This is the assessment itself, including interviews with different parts of your organisation and brief feedback.
- **Assessment report** - Reflecting on the assessment, the Investors in People Assessor provides a written report. This includes feedback on areas for suggested future development work.
- **Continuous improvement feedback** - After your report, this will provide you with development recommendations related to your organisational objectives.
- **Annual visit or discussion** - This is to ensure that you are making the most of the continuous improvement process and ongoing support available from Investors in People.

Please check with your Investors in People Centre to find out what will be included in your assessment package.

Feedback and assessment reports

Following a short period of reflection, your assessor will provide immediate feedback at the end of the assessment. This is intended to give you an outline of the findings and to highlight the assessor’s initial response to what they have seen and heard.

In most cases, your assessor will indicate whether or not, your organisation has achieved the Investors in People Standard.

Your assessor will also need time to reflect on the findings, to digest and evaluate all the data they have collected. A final comprehensive assessment report will then be compiled and presented to you with the opportunity for a detailed discussion of the findings. Suggestions about possible strategies and priorities for improvement will be provided as part of an action plan for the organisation. Any reports or information made available to the Assessor or resulting from the assessment are kept in strictest confidence between the organisation, the assessor and your Investors in People Centre.

Many customers find the feedback from our assessors and the assessment reports an invaluable source of information. It is the ideas and suggestions on where the organisation needs to focus development work that is often most useful.

'Building block' recognition

Some large organisations adopt a 'building block' approach towards gaining Investors in People recognition. This means that they do Investors in People on a subsidiary, departmental or divisional basis, so that recognition builds up across the organisation over a period of two or three years.

This approach works best when it is managed within an 'overarching recognition strategy', to ensure that there is a plan for when each part of the organisation will be assessed and to ensure that the organisation is assessed in a cost-effective way.

Contact your local Centre to discuss how your organisation can best achieve recognition.

Joint or Parallel Assessments

Investors in People Centres may also offer the option of conducting an assessment on other standards at the same time as your Investors in People assessment. For example, LEXCEL, ISO or Charter Mark.

- A Joint Assessment is when one Assessor conducts multiple assessments on an organisation at the same time.
- A Parallel Assessment is when multiple Assessors enter the organisation at the same time to conduct separate assessments.

Please contact your local Investors in People Centre to discuss the options available to your organisation.

Next assessment

Once you have gained Investors in People recognition you will be need to be reviewed within the next three years. Many organisations are choosing to have more frequent reviews, often to link their Investors in People assessment with their annual planning processes.