



Qualification Specification for:

KPA Level 3 Certificate
In
Pensions Administration (RQF)

Qualification Number: 600/4971/6

Kaplan Professional Awards

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1. Introduction

About KPA

Kaplan Professional Awards (KPA) is a nationally recognised Awarding Organisation which offers high quality accredited qualifications. KPA works with national and local organisations to develop and widen access to high quality and flexible education and learning.

Our mission is to offer the best possible qualifications and resources, and to put these opportunities in the hands of as many people as possible.

KPA Qualifications

KPA Qualifications are developed to ensure they provide a clear measure of the individuals' achievement while highlighting their ability to meet the requirements of the industry in which they wish to operate. KPA work with industry specialists to ensure the qualification modules/units and their assessments are set at a suitable level for the age range and industry requirements.

2. Qualification summary

This specification will provide key information about the KPA Level 3 Certificate in Pensions Administration (RQF) qualification.

This qualification is regulated by Ofqual and listed on Ofqual’s Register of Regulated Qualifications:

Name of qualification	Qualification number
KPA Level 3 Certificate in Pensions Administration (RQF)	600/4971/6

The KPA Level 3 Certificate in Pensions Administration (RQF) qualification has seven mandatory units. The Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals deliver the training to its learners working towards this qualification. The qualification has a total credit value of 18 credits assigned for completion of the full qualification.

This qualification has been developed with pension practitioners to ensure it meets the needs of the industry. Given the recent legislative changes impacting on pensions, there is more of a requirement than ever for businesses to ensure their employees are equipped with the necessary pension knowledge and practical skills to ensure this crucial process is carried out accurately and efficiently.

The structure is set at seven mandatory units with one examination and six projects identified as the assessment methodology. The learners will be able to demonstrate their level of knowledge and understanding while achieving the qualification as a pass/fail.

This qualification provides a clear opportunity for learners to develop and demonstrate their level of knowledge, understanding and application of job roles in the pensions industry. Learners will undertake seven key areas related to pension’s administration, assessment of these areas will include written assignments and an exam. Upon successful completion, learners will achieve a nationally recognised KPA Level 3 Certificate in Pensions Administration.

The qualification is graded at pass or fail.

Qualification Target Group

The KPA Level 3 Certificate in Pensions Administration (RQF) qualification is suitable for individuals who either currently work or want to work within the following job roles:

- Pensions Supervisor
- Pensions Manager
- Pensions Team Leader
- Pensions Clerk
- Pensions Assistant
- Pensions Administrator

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Progression opportunities

The CIPP Foundation Degree in Pensions Administration and Management.

Entry Requirements

KPA qualifications are designed for learners who are typically 16 years of age or older.

Exemptions and/or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

There are no exemptions for this qualification.

Delivery Languages

This qualification is available in English only at this time.

3. Structure and Content

This qualification is composed of 7 units. The individual must successfully complete all required assessment to obtain the qualification certification. The total qualification time is 175 hours.

The Qualification consists of the following Mandatory Units:

Qualification Structure	Number of mandatory and or optional units			
	Assessment method	Mandatory /Optional	Level	GLH
Module/Unit title				
Transferring into and out of Pension Schemes	Assignment	Mandatory	3	20
Overview of UK Pension Schemes	Assignment	Mandatory	3	20
Providing Pension Scheme Information	Assignment	Mandatory	3	20
Creating and Maintaining Pension Scheme Member Records	Assignment	Mandatory	3	20
Payment of Scheme Benefits to Pensioners	Assignment	Mandatory	3	20
Amend Pension Records to Reflect a Member's Change of Circumstances	Assignment	Mandatory	3	40
Working as a Member of the Pensions Team	Computer-based exam	Mandatory	3	20

Rules of Combination

This qualification is composed of 7 units. The learner must successfully complete all 7 units to achieve this qualification.

The units can be taken in any order.

Offering the Qualification

This qualification is only available through KPA recognised centres. If you would like to find out more about either becoming a recognised centre or working in partnership with a recognised centre please access the 'Become a KPA Recognised Centre' tab under the 'Centres' area of the website or contact KPA on 0207 645 8912.

Becoming an approved KPA centre

To become an approved KPA centre you will be required to meet both general and specific requirements to ensure the standard and quality of the qualification delivery is maintained year on year.

All approved centres will be subject to KPA's ongoing quality assurance processes including centre visits which will focus on the internal quality assurance process, management of the qualification delivery and the service provided to the student.

4. Units

How the qualification works

This qualification is made up of unit(s) representing a small block of learning focusing on a particular topic or area of study relevant to the qualification.

Each unit includes a:

1. Level – which indicates the unit difficulty
2. Total Qualification Time (TQT) - the total amount of time a typical learner would take to complete the different activities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of a whole qualification. TQT includes guided learning hours (GLH) plus tutor directed unsupervised learning and assessment activities.
3. Learning outcome – statement of our expectations of the learner and what the learner can expect to know, understand or do as a result of a process of learning.
 - a. Each learning outcome is linked to a number of assessment criteria.
4. Assessment criteria – descriptions of the requirements a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved
5. Indicative content - the scope of knowledge required in order to fulfil the assessment requirements and achieve the learning outcome; it also outlines the technical components of the programme.

Understanding learning outcomes

There are two main types of learning outcome:

- skills that can be performed
- knowledge that can be learned

It's possible that they can cover a combination of the two.

Competence/Skills based learning outcomes:

- Linked to a practical skill that can demonstrate competence and/or performance of a specific activity or skill.

Knowledge based learning outcomes:

- Reflects evidence that can be recorded in ways other than observation.

Achievement at level 3

Reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to complete tasks and address problems that, while well defined, have a measure of complexity. It includes taking responsibility for initiating and completing tasks and procedures as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within limited parameters. It also reflects awareness of different perspectives or approaches within an area of study or work.

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Unit number	1		
Unit title	Transferring into and out of Pension Schemes		
Level	3	Code	PE301
GLH	20	TQT	22
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1. Understand the regulations and requirements placed on pension schemes when dealing with transfers.	1.1	Explain the importance of applying the regulatory and scheme regulations after receiving a request.	
	1.2	Discuss the information required prior to instigating a transfer into or out of pension scheme.	
	1.3	Describe the limitations and consequences around financial issues when dealing with groups or individuals in relation to pension scheme.	
	1.4	Explain the need to have complete security and confidentiality of all data and information including consequences of failure to do so.	
	1.5	Explain the importance of applying the regulatory and scheme regulations after receiving a request.	
2. Be able to meet all requirements and verify all data to enable pension transfers both into and out of a pension scheme.	2.1	Describe how you will verify all data received or issued is complete, and in the appropriate format for transfers both into an out of a pension scheme.	
	2.2	Explain the implications of working with documents and forms documents and forms which are not duly authorised, or a scheme which is not HMRC registered.	
	2.3	Calculate and communicate transfer values in line with regulations, organisational processes and procedures, including service level agreements (where appropriate.)	
	2.4	Discuss the process of making amendments including requesting additional information.	
	2.5	Explain the need to have complete security and confidentiality of all data and information including consequences of failure to do so.	
	2.6	Review, interpret and enter the transfer into a pensions system to enable the valuation to take place.	
Assessment method	Assignment		

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Unit number	2		
Unit title	Overview of UK Pension Schemes		
Level	3	Code	PE300
GLH	20	TQT	22
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1. Know the different types of Pensions available in the UK.	1.1	Discuss the aspects used to differentiate between the types of pension provision available.	
	1.2	Explain the structure of occupational pension schemes.	
	1.3	Describe the main alternatives to an occupational pension scheme.	
	1.4	Discuss the general interactions between the state pension scheme and the alternatives.	
	1.5	Describe the funding and benefit structures of various UK pension schemes.	
2. Understand the role of the HMRC, the Pension regulators and other key groups and individuals in relation to UK pension schemes.	2.1	Discuss the role and impact of HMRC legislation on contributions and benefits relating to occupational pension schemes.	
	2.2	Identify the bodies involved in advising, administering, governing regulating and protecting UK pension schemes.	
	2.3	Discuss the roles relating to those bodies identified in 2.2 above.	
	2.4	Demonstrate the ability to undertake appropriate research to find the necessary information relating to different pension schemes and individuals.	
3. Know the annual and triennial requirements HMRC apply to UK pension schemes including the reporting requirements.	3.1	Explain the annual reporting requirements relating to pension schemes in the UK.	
	3.2	Describe the information and content required for all types of reports.	
	3.3	Explain the nature of the triennial requirements placed on UK pension schemes.	
	3.4	Discuss the impact on an organisation if they are non-compliant with the UK pension scheme requirements.	
Assessment method	Assignment		

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Unit number	3		
Unit title	Providing Pension Scheme Information		
Level	3	Code	PE302
GLH	20	TQT	22
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1. Know the criteria for membership of UK pension scheme/s.	1.1 Explain the eligibility criteria required for an individual to join UK pension schemes.		
	1.2 Demonstrate the ability to interpret information provided by individuals seeking to join a UK pension scheme.		
2. Be able to provide information to potential members of UK pension schemes.	2.1 Identify the best fit pension scheme for individuals.		
	2.2 Describe the requirements of pension schemes to achieve maximum return.		
	2.3 Explain how pension benefits can be built up within a scheme.		
3. Be able to provide information to members where their changing circumstances can impact on their potential pension benefits/rights.	3.1 Explain the concept of pension transfers and how they may benefit some individuals.		
	3.2 Discuss the options for increasing service by purchase of additional years.		
	3.3 Describe the various additional voluntary contribution schemes enabling maximum return for the member.		
	3.4 Identify changes in circumstance and describe the implication these might have on pension rights.		
	3.5 Explain the implications of leaving a pension scheme to an individual.		
Assessment method	Assignment		

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Unit number	4		
Unit title	Creating and Maintaining Pension Scheme Member Records		
Level	3	Code	PE303
GLH	20	TQT	22
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1. Understand the scheme rules and organisational procedures for creating and amending member pension scheme records	1.1	Describe the organisation's processes, procedures and scheme regulations for updating members' records.	
	1.2	Explain the organisation's processes, procedures and scheme regulations for updating members' records.	
	1.3	Discuss the need for signatories and authorisations in relation to both internal and scheme policies and procedures.	
	1.4	Communicate the scheme requirements for medical evidence (if any) to a member of the scheme.	
2. Be able to complete the new member process within the relevant timescales.	2.1	Collate and input the required information to a new record on the scheme database using the appropriate pension administration system, within the required timescales.	
	2.2	Inform the new member of their pensionable status within the required scheme and/or organisational service level agreements.	
	2.3	Discuss the importance of maintaining and updating the information on the scheme database.	
3. Be able to investigate and where possible resolve discrepancies in new member applications.	3.1	Discuss the importance of maintaining and updating the information on the scheme database.	
	3.2	Describe how you would ascertain whether the error is within the limits of your remit or whether it requires a more senior member of staff to intervene to resolve the error.	
	3.2	Discuss the discrepancies found and where possible resolve these discrepancies in accordance with scheme, organisational and regulatory procedures and processes.	
Assessment method	Assignment		

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Unit number	5		
Unit title	Payment of Scheme Benefits to Pensioners		
Level	3	Code	PE304
GLH	20	TQT	22
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1. Understand the scheme and regulatory rules relating to the data required to set up a pensioner payroll database.	1.1	Interpret the scheme and regulatory rules to ensure that the software used for payment of pension benefits is in line with current legislation.	
	1.2	Explain the importance of ensuring a member's record is amended to accurately reflect the current position.	
	1.3	Demonstrate how the scheme's processes and procedures ensure that all data received is authorised as required before processing for payment takes place.	
	1.4	Discuss the separation of duties and provide the appropriate audit trail to confirm actions taken which lessen the instances of fraud.	
2. Understand the scheme and regulatory rules relating to the calculations and processes involved in processing a pensioner payroll.	2.1	Explain the payment methods and frequency to administrators and those members receiving payments.	
	2.2	Describe how you would deal effectively and efficiently with returned payments (e.g. BACS failure, returned cheques etc.)	
	2.3	Discuss the need to monitor bank reconciliation to review outstanding payments and any link this may have to protecting the fund from fraud.	
	2.4	Discuss the level of specialist knowledge required to evaluate the impact of applying Pay As You Earn (PAYE) income tax rules on pension payments.	
	2.5	Demonstrate the ability to manually calculate payments due to a deceased member's estate and ensure that all entries are made within the payment system.	
	2.6	Demonstrate the ability to manually calculate payments due to a deceased member's estate and ensure that all entries are made within the payment system.	
	2.7	Discuss the need to ensure that any payments made are in line with current PAYE and other legislation which is applicable to the payment of pension benefits.	
	2.8	Describe the need to ensure that all statutory deadlines and returns are made to HMRC as set out for the schemes.	

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3. Understand the scheme and regulatory rules for determination of continued payment of pension benefits.	3.1	Discuss how you would determine which scheme member needs to provide evidence that they are still alive and the frequency of existence checks.
	3.2	Explain the need to collate and manage the return of the required evidence.
	3.3	Describe the process to be followed if you arrange for payment to be suspended prior to investigations into last whereabouts of the member.
4. Be able to communicate with the pension member in line with scheme, regulatory rules, organisational processes and procedures and service level agreements as required.	4.1	Describe a typical process to be followed once all required information has been accepted in relation to the payment suspension.
	4.2	Explain how you would commence investigations into last whereabouts of the member for the pension benefit before any recommencement of payments.
	4.3	Demonstrate how you would ensure the member's record is accurately amended to reflect the current position of the member.
Assessment method	Assignment	

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Unit number	6		
Unit title	Amend Pension Records to Reflect Member's Change in Circumstances		
Level	3	Code	PE305
GLH	40	TQT	43
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can:		
1. Know the regulatory and scheme rules relating to a member leaving the scheme before retirement.	1.1	Describe the requirements placed on a pension scheme by the regulator when they are notified that a member is leaving.	
	1.2	Identify potential reasons for an individual deciding to leave a pension scheme before retirement.	
	1.3	Explain the reasons for providing financial information only, while showing awareness of the consequences of non-compliance.	
	1.4	Identify the potential of deferred benefits that may be accrued.	
	1.5	Provide the former member with their pensionable status within the required scheme and/or organisational service level agreements.	
	1.6	Review and resolve discrepancies found, in accordance with scheme, organisational service level agreements.	
2. Understand the regulatory and scheme rules relating to various circumstances which impact on pension benefits.	2.1	Discuss the circumstances other than 'normal' retirement when other pension benefits might become payable in line with the regulatory and scheme rules and the benefits payable.	
	2.2	Explain the circumstances when employer-driven pension benefits (redundancy/efficiency) may become payable in line with the regulatory and scheme rules and the benefits payable.	
	2.3	Describe the types of discretionary compensation an employer may award, the circumstances of such awards in line with the regulatory and scheme rules and the benefits payable.	
	2.4	Identify a member's entitlement to long-term pension benefits, in line with the regulatory and scheme rules and the benefits payable. Interpret the scheme and regulatory rules to determine the type of benefit payable in the event of a member's death.	

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3. Understand the various circumstances dictating the type of death benefits in line with the scheme and regulatory rules.	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) In service b) While receiving pension payments c) After a divorce
	3.2	Explain the sequence of data gathering to ensure that all information required is available to ensure that no unnecessary delay occurs.
	3.3	Provide information and communicate with the member's executor in relation to the amount of benefits payable.
	3.4	Discuss the reason for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not giving financial advice b) Giving financial information only c) Being fully aware of the consequences for non-compliance
	3.5	Identify the splitting of pension benefits on divorce, in line with the regulatory and scheme rules and the benefits payable.
	3.6	Explain the conditions relating to dependants' benefits, identifying the type of benefit (s), the method of calculation and their duration.
4. Be able to calculate and communicate pension benefits while using the organisational processes and procedures to meet agreed service levels with all requirements.	4.1	Review, interpret and enter the benefit data into a pension's administration system to enable the calculation to take place.
	4.2	Identify where corrections need to be made, request further information if necessary, then update the system and recalculate.
	4.3	Arrange for the commencement of payment of pension benefits once all required information has been received/accepted.
	4.4	Ensure that the member's record is amended as appropriate and that the information held accurately reflects the current position of the member.
	4.5	Calculate the value of the refunds, deferred pensions and transfer values.
	4.6	Describe the method of communicating the calculation of any deferred benefits that may be accrued to the member.
	4.7	Discuss the circumstances when an entitlement to a transfer value may be acquired and the methods of its calculation.
Assessment method	Assignment	

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Unit number	7		
Unit title	Working as a Member of the Pensions Team		
Level	3	Code	PE306
GLH	20	TQT	22
Learning outcome	Assessment criteria		
The learner will:	The learner can: learning outcome		
1. Be able to work effectively as part of a pensions team	1.1	Describe how an individual could operate effectively within the team environment.	
	1.2	Explain the processes and deadline a member of the pensions team needs to understand.	
	1.3	Discuss the importance of communication within the pension's team including communicating with the team leader/manager.	
2. Understand the importance of clear and timely communication with scheme members.	2.1	Describe the possible ways to communicate effectively with scheme members.	
	2.2	Discuss the various methods that they could use to provide a response to a question/query and give three clear examples of the methods they have used.	
	2.3	Demonstrate how they would communicate with someone to ensure they understand the message being relayed to them.	
	2.4	Explain the importance of following the house style and tone of the pension scheme with all forms of written communication (including email and text messages).	
3. Be able to consistently meet the customer service standards defined for the pension's team.	3.1	Explain the importance of providing a response to enquiries while meeting expectations set by the service standards.	
	3.2	Discuss how they would choose the appropriate language to ensure the enquirer understands the response to their query.	
	3.3	Describe the impact of poor communication in relation to providing updates on progress.	
Assessment method	1.5 hour computer-based test		

5. Quality Assurance Processes

Assessment

KPA will put in place a system of QA which allows it to maintain a high level of control over the development, delivery and awarding of the qualification. In particular it will require centres to meet the particular requirements for each type of assessment. KPA External Quality Advisor's will be responsible for ensuring centres meet the approved centre requirements relating to specific types of assessment and/or examination delivery.

Centre Resources

KPA approved centres are required to provide the right human and physical resources needed to ensure the quality of the learner experience. Centres must ensure that staff have the appropriate level of subject knowledge, practical experience of the sector and are normally qualified to at least a degree standard. It is desirable that staff have a teaching and/or assessing qualification.

The physical resources required will vary depending on the style of delivery. Where distance or blended learning is used, KPA expects centres to have appropriate learning support materials, infrastructure and technology in place to meet student needs.

Control and Oversight

The qualification will be subject to moderation processes as part of CIPP's centre agreement with KPA.

Certification

On completion of the qualification, KPA will confer upon the learner the award of

KPA Level 3 Certificate in Pensions Administration (RQF)

KPA will send learners' certificates will be sent to learners within 21 working days.

Fees

The qualification charge per learner is £193. Learners may register on individual units at a cost per unit of £50. Please note this is for the qualification/unit only and does not include the cost of delivery. Please contact your centre for the full cost inclusive of the training.

Further details relating to KPA charging structure can be found on the website at Kaplan- under Fees.

6. Access arrangements and Reasonable adjustments

KPA complies with the Equality Act 2010 and Ofqual general conditions of recognition regarding fair assessment. Students are asked to notify KPA on registration so that their needs may be considered.

Candidates are able to request alternative access due to short-term or long-term indispositions. Applications must meet the relevant deadlines as laid out in the Access Arrangements for Examinations policy. Students who have been granted access arrangements must inform KPA immediately if the circumstances related to their access arrangements change prior to the sitting of the examination in question.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements allow candidates with specific needs; such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to access an assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. The purpose behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment and are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments

The awarding body is required to make reasonable adjustments for a candidate with a disability, as defined in the Equality Act 2010*; who would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

An adjustment to be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors, which will include, but are not limited to the:

- needs of the disabled candidate;
- effectiveness of the adjustment;
- cost of the adjustment
- likely impact of the adjustment