

## Certificate of Credit in the Principles of Commissioning Assignment Template

**Please fill in your details here:**

<b>Student name:</b>	
<b>Student number:</b> <i>(also enter in header)</i>	
<b>Date assignment due:</b>	
<b>Date submitted on VLE:</b>	
<b>Student word count:</b>	2074
<b>Important Note:</b>	Your submission, excluding the reference list and appendices, must be no less than 1,800 words and no more than 2,200 words: no tolerance is given. This is a mandatory criterion i.e. your assignment will not be passed if it does not adhere to the word count.

**Assessor to complete:**

<b>Word count:</b>	State word count and any comments
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**Instructions to Students**

Write a reflective commentary that describes a commissioning activity you have undertaken and how you managed the process. You should show how you applied the best practice you learnt on the course and what the challenges and barriers were, and any lessons there have been for your future practice.

The criteria used to assess the assignment are:

- a) Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the different stages and activities of the commissioning cycle
- b) Demonstrate understanding of appropriate commissioning principles and practice
- c) Evaluate the effectiveness of the activities undertaken
- d) Provide a reflective commentary that demonstrates personal learning and development

You must submit your assignment by the deadline given. Submit your assignment as a WORD document using the blank pages of this template.

The assignment must be between **1,800 and 2,200 words** as no tolerance is given. The word count refers to the main body of your assignment and does not include the assignment title, reference list or any appendices. The word count **does include** headings and sub headings, footnotes, tables and in-text citations.

We require you to submit the assignment text to Turnitin and to report your Turnitin originality score on your statement of originality below.

**Ensure that you complete the front sheet details above and the statement of originality below.**

**Please include your full name within the filename when you save this template.**

Details of the relevant regulations are in the Student Handbook.

Ensure that you keep both an electronic and a hard copy of your assignment.

### Assignment Statement of Originality

Except for those parts in which it is explicitly stated to the contrary, this work is my own. It has not been previously submitted for assessment at this or any other higher education institution.

#### Checklist

Please check the following statements are true. Tick each box (or write YES):

I have referenced all research from my source material	YES
I completed this work without any unauthorised help	YES
I have submitted my work to Turnitin	YES

Please state your Turnitin originality score below and sign the declaration (or write YES if you do not have an electronic signature):

Please state your Turnitin originality score here: 5%
Student signature:

#### Use of Artificial Intelligence

Please confirm if you used any Artificial Intelligence technology to support the writing of your assignment	NO
IF YES, please confirm you have completed the <a href="#">Oxford Brookes University Artificial Intelligence Declaration Form</a>	
IF YES, please confirm you have emailed your academic advisor a copy of your declaration form and added this as an appendices in this assignment document	

#### Extract from [Definitions of cheating](#)

All assessments are intended to determine the skills, abilities, understanding and knowledge of each of the individual students undertaking the assessment. Cheating is defined as conduct (whether successful or not) aimed at deceiving the University into acknowledging a false level of attainment by a student. Any form of cheating is strictly forbidden under the University regulations but, in order to assist understanding of what is meant by 'cheating', a number of specific forms are described here:

- *Submitting other people's work as your own* – either with or without their knowledge. This includes submitting work you have paid for as your own.
- *Collusion* - you must not collude with others to produce a piece of work jointly, copy or share another student's work or lend your work to another student when it is likely that some or all of it will be copied.

- *Falsification* – the invention of data, its alteration, its copying from any other source, or otherwise obtaining it by unfair means, or inventing quotations and/or references.
- *Plagiarism* – taking or using the words, ideas or work of others as your own. To avoid plagiarism you must make sure that quotations from whatever source are clearly identified and attributed at the point where they occur in the text of your work by using one of the standard conventions for referencing. It is not enough just to list sources in a bibliography at the end of your essay if you do not acknowledge the actual quotations in the text. Neither is it acceptable to change some of the words or the order of sentences if, by failing to acknowledge the source properly, you give the impression that it is your own work.

## Assessment Scheme

### Guidance for students/Assessor's Feedback:

Assessment scheme	Pass	Did not Pass	Guidance for students	Weighting
a) Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the different stages and activities of the commissioning cycle			Introduce the commissioning activity you will be writing about in the context of the wider commissioning cycle. Outline which stage(s) this activity is part of, and how it helps inform excellent commissioning practice across the whole cycle.	25%
b) Demonstrate understanding of appropriate commissioning principles and practice			Describe the specific principles of good commissioning practice for the identified activity  Provide reference to the course materials, as relevant, and cite any relevant research / reading from the associated reading list.	25%
c) Evaluate the effectiveness of the activities undertaken			Describe what you did, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your activities. What went well, less well and why? What were some of the challenges or barriers to implement good practice?  Based on the above, what might you do to improve the practice in the future – for your teams and organisation?	25%
d) Provide a reflective commentary that demonstrates personal learning and development			Reflect on what you have learned personally from undertaking the course and this assignment - including how you felt and your personal experiences and learnings, and how your practice will change in the future. You might also wish to consider future developmental or training opportunities.  You might want to use a reflective framework such as Driscoll's model of reflection or the Gibbs reflective cycle to help you do this. See <a href="#">top tips on reflection</a> .	25%

#### General Guidance to support a well -presented and referenced essay

Effectively and coherently communicate your points. Use a structure and layout that makes your submission easy to follow. Proof read before submission.

Ensure you cite all your references in the body of the text, and via a reference list at the end. Use the Harvard Referencing Style.

**Assessor's comments:**

Summarise the strengths and possible improvements of the submission, including any suggested action such as proof read more carefully.

Clearly state which assessment criteria have been met and the provisional grade awarded.

Assessed by		Date	
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**The marking and moderation process**

Your work will be assessed in accordance with the university's regulations that seek to ensure fairness, accuracy and clarity of feedback. In judging the quality of your work, assessors follow the assessment criteria outlined above. They also follow IPC's [Marking and Moderation](#) policy and abide by the University's assessment regulations. When your work is submitted it will go through the following process:

1. It will be initially assessed and given a provisional grade by a member of the IPC assessment team.
2. It may then be subject to moderation i.e. an internal examiner will mark it and, in discussion with the first assessor, confirm the provisional grade. A sample of assessments are moderated by an internal examiner.
3. We strive to give you feedback within three weeks. You will receive this feedback via the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle).
4. Once a provisional grade has been agreed upon it will be finalised at the next Examination Committee meeting.
5. Your work may also be selected to be in the sample sent to our External Examiner – an academic from another university – who comments on the fairness, quality and consistency of the internal assessment of our programmes as a whole.

If you are concerned about your feedback, arrange to speak to your Academic Adviser to help you better understand the reasons for the assessment judgement and our feedback. If you think that there was a flaw in the assessment process, you can submit an Academic Appeal. More information about the appeals process can be found at [Student Investigation and Resolution Team](#). However, please be advised that the University does not "re-mark" work and you cannot request an appeal on the grounds that you disagree with the academic judgement of the Examination Committee.

**Assignment Title Page**

Embedding outcome based monitoring in contract review meetings

## Background

As a public health lead at MY County Council (MYCC) I am responsible for the commissioning and public health technical support to our Integrated Health Improvement programme; MY County Council Wellbeing. This programme provides health improvement information, advice and support to anyone aged over 18 who lives and/or works in MY County Council with a focus on reducing health inequalities and risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD). The programme operates as a partnership agreement with the seven district and borough (D&B) councils of MY County Council, operating as six wellbeing 'hubs', one within each D&B geographical area.

The programme is in year two of a five year agreement working to a mutually agreed Service Specification. Additional ad hoc public health initiatives are introduced into the programme as and when agreed (such as the recent introduction of vaping as a quit aid within our stop smoking offer) and contract review meetings allow continuous monitoring of service outcomes and service improvement.

## Demonstrating knowledge and awareness of the different stages and activities of the commissioning cycle

In order to ensure outcomes are met and the service is operating to a high standard I utilise the commissioning cycle, seen here in Figure 1 (Institute of Public Care (IPC), 2002), and as set out in the Principles of Commissioning course delivered by IPC (IPC, 2024), as this acts as a framework for service improvement and service provision:

### The IPC Commissioning Cycle



I use the commissioning cycle when looking at what I want the service to deliver as part of the 'analyse and plan' stages of the cycle, through identifying need, understanding what services are already in existence that support residents and then developing a Service Specification which uses local and national evidence around the health and wellbeing of MY County Council residents, the demography of the area and the prevalence is of behaviours such as smoking, alcohol use and adults above a healthy weight, as well as longer term outcomes such as all age mortality to consider the burden of disease that have an association with these health behaviours. The Service Specification clearly sets out what and how the service needs to operate in order to meet the high level outcomes of reducing health inequalities and risk of CVD for those who live and or work in

MY County Council which are significantly impacted through the health behaviours previously listed.

Where the programme is already commissioned and operating I focus my day to day work on the 'do and review' stages of the commissioning cycle through contract management, the management of provider relationships and the review and evaluation of outcomes and service quality. Contract monitoring allows for the effective management of outputs and ultimately outcomes. This means that I can use the knowledge of whether outcomes are being met to move into the analyse part of the commissioning cycle to understand whether these services are effective and resulting in positive health outcomes. I can use this information to inform future planning, refining the service and planning for the new agreement at the end of the current five years in order to develop a Service Specification which addresses needs appropriately, informed by our existing commissioning practice.

### **Demonstrating understanding of appropriate commissioning principles and practice**

In order to effectively manage provider relationships and ensure the service is meeting the outcomes I carry out quarterly review meetings with each provider. I undertook the first of the routine Q4 review meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 with one of the Borough Councils who provide the integrated service. The learning from the commissioning course where we were discussing the management of provider relationships allowed me to consider my own contract management practices.

Relationships with providers can fluctuate, as discussed in day two of the IPC Principles of Commissioning course where we were looking at the different types of relationships – be those adversarial, constructive or passive (IPC,2024). I understand from my own working practice and from the course that there is a need to work in a constructive way with providers, however, due to the long standing nature of the relationships with the D&B councils and my time in this role I feel I can sometimes act in a passive way when it comes to some of the outputs and outcomes being monitored, not tackling underperformance sufficiently due to concerns that the provider relationship will be damaged.

To address this I wanted to use the learning from the course to approach the upcoming quarterly review meeting in a different way, setting out a more formalised and constructive approach that will allow for greater embedding of outcome based monitoring in the review meetings. This is also important because I am going on secondment for a year and I want to ensure that this approach is formalised to support both the D&Bs and whoever covers my role with a structure that is easy to follow, all parties agree to and that maintains consistency and quality.

The provider is expected to submit performance reports at least one week prior to the contract review meeting. Previously I would review the paperwork and add comments to the action log querying and asking for clarification of issues across the breadth of the report - a mixture of Key Performance Indicator (KPI) performance alongside other general service queries, and I recognise that this can at times, result in issues with KPIs being lost in more general conversations. To address that I amended the agenda and reporting focus of the meeting to only raise queries in the action log based on where performance was not meeting the KPIs – so those that are amber and red, in order to focus the meeting on performance issues more formally.

## **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities undertaken**

The action log was sent to the provider prior to the meeting with positive comments summarised in one section only and the actions requiring response focused on those that were either areas of concern from the provider, or areas that needed discussion (red and amber KPIs). I opened the meeting by explaining the revised approach in order to focus the meeting on areas that needed addressing and any risks that needed to be logged. This was acknowledged and supported. The meeting went well and to time which I feel the revised process was a contributing factor. I reminded the provider that I was available outside of the contract review meetings for joint working and support with service improvement.

A positive outcome of the meeting was that the review was more focused on performance and contract monitoring which I feel if becomes the norm the expectations for both parties will be clearer. I was able to lead the discussion with greater confidence, and this approach meant I felt more articulate and efficient in reporting to my line manager the key concerns for the service and the mitigations for next steps where KPIs were not meeting outcomes. This also meant that the discussions were focused on what the provider was going to go away and do about those KPIs that were not being met, and they also suggested themselves that they consider other service quality indicators for those underperforming programmes – such as featuring them in the case studies that are routinely submitted with the review paperwork to show the wider impacts of the service.

What emerged from the conversation was the opportunity for the provider as our partner to more formally bring forward their concerns – there is an AOB section on the agenda where these are often logged, but from discussion with the provider in the meeting it was felt that to balance the meeting in terms of performance, a standing item should be added more formally as 'risks and issues' to allow contractual issues to be raised from their side. This is something that I will implement in considering their feedback as positive partnership working and a reflection to the provider that they are listened to and their feedback taken on board.

Whilst I put in place this approach for the initial review meeting (provider 1 of 7) in this contract round, I will implement this for all future contract reviews across the programme and ask for feedback. This will also allow for clear instructions to all providers in advance of the Q1 reviews (due to take place in July) that additional proactive narrative at the point of report submission is required on underperforming KPIs. To support this a standing agenda that is structured to focus on KPI delivery as the main area to be addressed in the review meetings would be helpful for all. This will allow for the contract management approach to be consistent regardless of who is performing that role, for a more formal record of performance issues, and for both parties to have clearer expectations.

## **Providing a reflective commentary that demonstrates personal learning and development**

In terms of my own personal reflection I referred to the Gibbs model of reflection (Gibbs G, 1988, cited in University of Edinburgh, 2020) which broadly focuses on the following: the description of the experience, feelings and thoughts about it, evaluation both good and bad, analysis to make sense of it, conclusion about what was learnt and what could be done differently and an action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future – or general changes that might be appropriate.

The experience felt somewhat uncomfortable, the contract review meetings are often quite chatty and informal, and it was hard to start with that then launch into the performance issues straight away. I enjoy the ability to work in a positive way with partners, praising good practice and being constructive about areas that need greater focus. This approach in advance did feel like I would be following a more punitive contract management approach, and less about partnership working, which is not my usual or preferred style. In fact however, the meeting felt more productive and focused by addressing those outputs that were not meeting the KPIs and whilst bringing a different emphasis to the meeting it wasn't a negative one. This surprised me and made me reflect that some of my previous reluctance to be more formal was about how I perceived it would be received. I can also reflect that this particular provider is high performing so this approach may be received differently by each provider which needs some further thought on how to best manage.

Outside of the contract review meeting, in considering my perceived discomfort about the more formal meeting style I reflect that I want to ensure there is still the forum for the positive relationship with the providers to be maintained and to prevent the collaborative style of working being lost. I feel that the best way to achieve this could be through more regular informal meetings between each provider and the public health lead to discuss wider issues and successes, therefore not diluting the contract management meetings.

I reflect that my collaborative working approach has many benefits, but that in order to achieve best outcomes there are opportunities to use a more structured approach and style in contract review meetings. Whilst this is not how I build relationships it does not need to create discord as from making this relatively small change with one provider it was well received overall. Some of my reluctance is based on a lack of confidence and established habits that have felt comfortable. However I also recognise that these are strengths in my approach and I don't need to lose these, I can use them in different areas to strengthen the relationship with providers.

I intend to roll out this new approach to allow for a clear and consistent message for providers which does not rely on a person led, personal relationship that has the risk of being a passive contract management style.

If I were to be faced with a similar situation in future I would consider my approach and style more closely at the start of managing a contract. Its very hard when you have long standing relationships with providers to change your working style but I would reflect more regularly on the different approaches I have used and the level of success achieved with those. Shadowing other commissioners to gain insight into other styles and ways of working could also be useful and would allow me to develop my skills in this area. This has been a very worthwhile exercise for me that has highlighted some areas for personal development and reflection.

## Reference List

Gibbs G (1998) *Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods*. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford. as cited by The University of Edinburgh (2020). Available at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle> (Accessed: 21st April 2024).

Institute of Public Care (2002) *IPC commissioning cycle*. Oxford: IPC

Institute of Public Care (2024) *Certificate in the Principles of Commissioning Course 13 and 14 March 2024*. Oxford: IPC