

SUPERSTAR – 9 top tips for STAR template success

Select a strong example from your own work experience to demonstrate your professional achievements. Example activities are provided in the guidance but don't worry if your experience doesn't match - everyone's employment history is unique so it is impossible to give examples that are relevant to all. Use the self-reflection questions to help you identify potential examples from your work and choose the one that gives you the most scope to write about your own actions and achievements.

Use the full word count. Ensure you don't use up too many words on descriptions in the situation and task sections of the template – the action and results section are most important in terms of demonstrating your own personal achievements so prioritise these sections.

Pause every time you write "we" or "our". It may be a sign that you are focussing on your team or organisation's activities instead of writing about your own actions and achievements.

Examples don't need to come from high profile projects or one-off activities. While these can be the first to spring to mind when thinking about examples to use, don't dismiss day job activities and tasks that you may do regularly as a matter of course.

Reverview each time you use an acronym, name or terminology specific to your organisation. Have you provided enough context so that someone outside of your organisation would be able to read your STAR template and understand the situation?

Start each STAR template afresh. While it might be tempting to reuse or adapt wording from other sections of your IPD application, or from your performance appraisals, training or personal development records, these are unlikely to meet the specific requirements of this assessment or the selected professional achievement. However, these documents can be really helpful in reminding you of work examples that you may have forgotten but approach each example with a fresh pair of eyes and evaluate their suitability as evidence to include in your application. Use the prompt questions in the STAR template along with the self-reflection questions and example activities for the professional achievement you're writing up to help you structure a response which is clear, succinct and targeted towards demonstrating the required achievements.

Try to be positive if the example activity you have chosen did not fully achieve its desired outcomes or met some challenges along the way. Be honest about the challenges encountered in your STAR template but avoid negativity or criticisms of others. Instead focus your write up on how you took action to address the challenges, what you learned and what you would do differently next time.

Assess your draft STAR template against the Achieved/Not achieved criteria. This is the criteria your IPD Supervisor and CIMA will be using to assess your application. Use the table of descriptors as a checklist and assess your response against these. Can you improve your answers in order to be confident that you are clearly meeting all of the bullet points in the "Achieved" column?

Results and benefits to the business don't have to be organisation-wide. They could be at project, team or department level or have an impact on one or more stakeholder groups (internal or external). Impact or value may not always be measured in financial terms – think about how your actions may have contributed to process improvement, efficiencies, better ways of working or to your organisation's CSR or ESG obligations, for example.