

Superstar

Nine top tips for STAR template success

Select a strong example from your 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 ones that give you the most scope to write about your own actions and achievements.

Use the full word count. Don't use up too many words on descriptions in the situation and task sections of the template. The action-and-results section is most important in terms to demonstrate your 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 actions and achievements.

Examples don't need to come from high-profile projects or one-time 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.

Revise 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 practical experience requirements (PER) application, or 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 help remind you of work examples that you may have forgotten. So, 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 that is clear, succinct and targeted towards demonstrating the required achievements.

Try to be positive if the example activity you choose did not fully achieve its desired outcomes or meet 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 PER Supervisor and CIMA[®] will use to assess your application. Use the table of descriptors as a checklist and assess your response against them. Can you improve your answers 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.