Introduction

1. In order to achieve their apprenticeship award, all apprentices must undertake an End Point Assessment (EPA). The EPA is a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship programme and as outlined in the Apprenticeship Standard. The purpose of the EPA is to ensure the apprentice has reached occupational competencies outlined in the Standard.

2. EPAs are taken by apprentices at the end of their programme and must be administered by an approved End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) who is on the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO).

3. In EPA terms, there are two types of apprenticeship
   a. Non-Integrated Degree Apprenticeship and all other non-degree apprenticeships: the EPA is delivered by an independent organisation, separate from the HE institution/university, and may be awarded separately from the degree award. The Employer chooses the EPAO, although the HE institution will contract with the EPAO.
   b. Integrated Degree Apprenticeship: the EPA is delivered by the HE institution/university and is linked to the award of the degree.

4. This policy primarily covers the University’s approach to EPA for integrated degree apprenticeships and where it is the End Point Assessment Organisation involved in the delivery of the EPA.

5. High quality end point assessment is of pivotal importance to the integrity and credibility of apprenticeships for employers and apprentices alike. As a provider of end point assessment, the University is responsible for determining whether an apprentice has achieved occupational competence in accordance with the requirements of the relevant apprenticeship standard. To do this, the University must deliver for each apprentice a consistent, independent, objective assessment of knowledge, skills and behaviours as set out in the relevant assessment plan that accompanies each apprenticeship standard.

Regulatory Environment

6. In order to be registered as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), the University must successfully apply to join the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations, which is managed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). An application must be made for each individual Apprenticeship Standard and the University must demonstrate how it will deliver a high-quality, fair and independent assessment process, in line with the Apprenticeship Standard’s assessment plan.
7. Individual Schools will usually lead on the EPAO application for their own integrated degree apprenticeship, with support from CQSD and other relevant University functions.

8. The application to the ESFA’s Register of EPA Organisations (RoEPAO) will be shared with members of the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) and with Legal Services for comments, prior to submission. All RoEPAO applications must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor prior to submission.

9. All EPA delivery is regulated in accordance with the External Quality Assurance (EQA) framework for end point assessment, maintained by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE). For all integrated degree apprenticeships, the Office for Students (OfS) is the organisation responsible for quality assuring EPA delivery in accordance with this EQA framework.

10. The OfS will carry out its EQA for all integrated degree apprenticeships via the QAA, as its designated quality body. The QAA will lead the on-going monitoring of the EPAO, and this includes:

   a. When the ESFA has approved a provider as an EPAO for a particular Degree Apprenticeship Standard, the QAA will undertake further ‘readiness checks’. This will largely consist of a self-assessment by the EPAO and accompanying evidence. The School who is undertaking the EPA will be responsible for engaging with the QAA to carry out the readiness checks. The readiness checks documentation will be reviewed and approved by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience (Professor McCrum), in their capacity as Chair of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience, prior to submission to the QAA.

   b. The QAA will judge providers as ‘exceed expectations’, ‘ready to deliver’, ‘improvement needed’ or ‘not ready to deliver’. The School will be responsible for implementing any actions to address the QAA feedback where they are deemed ‘improvement needed’ or ‘not ready to deliver’, with support from their Teaching and Learning Dean (TLD).

   c. In addition, Schools must appoint an external examiner to oversee the quality and standards of the EPA and they must ensure the external examiner has been approved by the QAA. The School must also ensure that the external examiner has appropriate opportunities to undertake relevant CPD and professional development to assist them in their role.

   d. The QAA requires providers to maintain a self-assessment report (SAR) for each EPA they deliver. Each School will be responsible for maintaining their own self-assessment report and any associated quality improvement plan (QIP) for their EPA provision, and for ensuring that this is submitted to their external examiner as requested. Prior to the annual submission of the SAR and QIP to the external examiner, they will be submitted to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience (Professor McCrum), in their capacity as Chair of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience, for review and approval.

   e. The external examiner will visit the School at least once per year and will report on their findings to both the School and the QAA. This will include making a graded judgement of the University’s (as the EPAO) performance against specified lines of enquiry – of ‘Outstanding’, ‘Good’, ‘Requires improvement’, or ‘Inadequate’ (mirroring Ofsted’s overall judgement grades). The School will be responsible for responding to the external examiner report as necessary and will work with their Teaching and Learning Dean (TLD) to consider any follow up actions required and any enhancements to their EPA provision.

**EPA Assessment Plans and Gateway**

11. Each Apprenticeship Standard has a linked assessment plan which outlines the requirements for the EPA and what assessment methods should be used. The assessment plan outlines how to assess

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1 NB: the QAA plans to publish final guidelines for the External Quality Assurance of EPA in autumn 2021, the following is informed by the draft framework circulated by UVAC in March 2021 - [https://uvac.ac.uk/eqa-of-epa-ofqual-qaa/](https://uvac.ac.uk/eqa-of-epa-ofqual-qaa/)
whether the apprentice has met the occupational standards (defined by the Standard’s knowledge, skills and behaviours), and the passing and Grading requirements.

12. All assessment plans for each apprenticeship are published alongside the relevant Apprenticeship Standard description, on the IfATE webpages.

13. It is the employer’s responsibility to decide whether an apprentice has met all of the requirements to be put forward for their EPA. When an apprentice has met all of the learning requirements, completed mandatory parts of the Standard and are believed to be occupationally competent they may enter the ‘EPA Gateway’, only after the Gateway has been passed can an apprentice undertake their EPA.

14. Once a School verifies that an apprentice has completed all of the mandatory learning requirements, they must update the apprentices Independent Learning Record (ILR) with the ‘programme end date’. It is the School’s responsibility to meet with the apprentice and their employer to decide if a student can enter Gateway and begin preparing for their EPA. The EPA can only take place once all on-programme training has been completed and after the Gateway has been passed.

15. Whilst work carried out prior to Gateway can be used as supporting evidence for the EPA (for example as part of a portfolio discussion), the EPA itself is independent from previous summative and formative work undertaken by the apprentice. There is usually a time period in which the apprentice should complete their final EPA after they pass Gateway (specified within each standard’s assessment plan), the School is expected to support the student to submit their work and prepare for any final exams within this timescale.

16. Once Gateway has been passed, it is the School’s responsibility to organise any internal EPA requirements (eg: exam paper preparations, booking meetings with examiners, setting up assessment hand-in points etc).

17. The School must provide all EPA resources (for example exam papers, or questions for a directed portfolio discussion) and these should be based on the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours mapped to the different assessment methods in the Standard’s assessment plan. Assessors need to be provided with assessment guidance and the grade descriptors outlined in the assessment plan.

18. Schools are expected to put in place employer and learner guides for each EPA, with information about what is required for the EPA and how they can prepare, and for the employer particularly, what their role is and how they can support the apprentice to be successful.

19. Where an apprentice’s workplace and role means that they deal with confidential and commercially sensitive information they may need to consider what evidence they use in their EPA and the University has provided guidance on this in the Integrated EPA Policy and Guidance for Confidential and Commercially Sensitive Evidence.

Quality Assurance and Governance

20. The University has in place appropriate measures to ensure the standards and quality of their awards and to ensure fair and consistent assessment for all students.

21. As an EPAO the University will assure the quality of the EPA and ensure consistency in the following ways:

a. Where an EPA includes a work-based project, the School will work with industry and technical experts to ensure the assessment has appropriate depth and breadth to meet the knowledge, skills and behaviour outlined in the assessment plan and that it is reliable, fair and valid;

b. Apprentices and employers will be provided with guidance on the EPA and will be provided with the marking guidance which they will be assessed against, in advance of the EPA;

2 https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/
c. Schools will recruit, prepare and ensure on-going development training for Independent Assessors (see 22 below);
d. Schools will develop protocols for each assessment to ensure it is carried out consistently;
e. Schools will regularly moderate assessments to ensure consistent marking practices and assessors will meet at least annually to discuss and standardise assessment practices;
f. Schools will appoint QAA-approved external examiners to oversee the EQA of the EPA;
g. Schools will monitor outcomes through the Board of Examiners;
h. Assessments will be recorded and retained, where appropriate, according to the University’s retention schedule\(^3\), for future moderation and quality checks;
i. As noted above, Schools will maintain their own self-assessment report for the EPA and any associated quality improvement plan. Progress against the plan will be monitored by the relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience (or Apprenticeship Board for the Henley Business School) and be submitted to the external examiner as required.

22. Schools will appoint Independent Assessor(s) (IA) for their EPA. The Independent Assessor may be appointed internally or externally but must not be involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship training. It is the Independent Assessor’s (IA) role to carry out the EPA, as set out in the assessment plan, and to ensure the assessment processes are reliable, fair and transparent and that they operate in line with the University’s Assessment Handbook.

The IA will be provided with guidance and undertake an induction and relevant training for the EPA delivery, which will be provided by the School. The IA will also undertake regular CPD related to their role as the IA for the Apprenticeship Standard and provide evidence of this to the School.

The IA will take part in moderation and standardisation activities for the EPA and attend the Examiners Board.

The IA will declare any Conflicts of Interest in line with the University Conflict of Interest policy for apprenticeship End Point Assessment.

23. As noted above, Schools will appoint external examiners, who must be approved by the QAA, and will undertake an external quality assurance function for the EPA, reporting to both the School and the QAA annually.

24. Schools will seek feedback from the external examiner, the IA, industry experts and recent apprenticeship graduates on the content and delivery EPA, to ensure continuous enhancements and improvements to the delivery of the EPA are made.

25. The Programme Director for the apprenticeship programme will have responsibility for the delivery of the EPA, reporting to the School Director of Teaching and Learning (SDTL); in Henley Business School, reporting on the delivery of the EPA will be to the Henley Pro-Dean (Education and Innovation).

26. The performance and quality of the EPA delivery will normally be reported to and overseen by the relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience (BoSSE). In the Henley Business School the Apprenticeship Board will have oversight for the EPA. The BoSSE and Apprenticeship Board will report to the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) on matters arising.

### Grading, Awards and Certificates

27. The requirements for a pass and other grading for the apprenticeship EPA is outlined in the assessment plan.

\(^3\) [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/14_Retention_of_exam_scripts_and_coursework.pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/14_Retention_of_exam_scripts_and_coursework.pdf)
28. The IA is responsible for grading the EPA and for providing feedback to apprentices on their assessed work within 15 working days (or other specified timeframe as outlined in the assessment plan).

29. An EPA is usually made up of two or more assessment types and the apprentice must pass all parts of the EPA in order to pass the EPA and be awarded their apprenticeship.

30. Within integrated degree apprenticeships (where the University is the EPA provider), neither the degree nor the EPA result will be allowed to be awarded in isolation.

31. It is the responsibility of the EPAO to apply for the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate on behalf of the learner. The School and relevant Support Centre / Henley School Office will be responsible for claiming the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate from the Apprenticeship Assessment Services for each apprentice, upon successful completion.

32. The School and the Support Centre / Henley School office is responsible for updating the apprentices’ records on RISIS and on the ILR upon successful completion of the EPA.

**Reassessment**

33. Within an apprenticeship programme, students may have the option to re-sit or re-take the EPA multiple times. A re-take is defined as when an apprentice requires further learning before another assessment is taken, while a resit does not.

34. The opportunities and arrangements for reassessment are outlined in the individual apprenticeship assessment plan.

35. Students who pass their EPA may not re-sit to achieve a higher grade.

36. Students are eligible for consideration of extenuating circumstances that affects their performance in the EPA, in accordance with the University’s [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

**Appeals and complaints**

37. Apprentices who wish to appeal their EPA grade, where the University is the EPAO, can do so through the University’s Appeals procedure.

38. If an apprentice wants to make a complaint about any element of the EPA they can do so using the University’s Student complaints procedure.

39. If an employer wishes to make a complaint about any element of the EPA, they can do so through the complaints process outlined in their Contract with the University.

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