

Policy on Apprenticeship End Point Assessment

Introduction

1. In order to achieve their apprenticeship, all apprentices must undertake an End Point Assessment (EPA). The EPA is an independent 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 competence as 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 registered on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR).
3. In EPA terms, there are three types of apprenticeship:
 - a. higher apprenticeships: the EPA is delivered by an independent organisation, separate from the HE institution/university, and will be awarded separately from the university award (if any) for the programme. The Employer chooses the EPAO, although the HE institution will contract with the EPAO.
 - b. (non-integrated) 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.
 - c. integrated degree apprenticeships: the degree qualification is included in the apprenticeship, and the degree and EPA are delivered by the same provider. The assessment relating to the degree is fully integrated with the EPA; the degree and the EPA need to be completed, passed and awarded together.
4. This policy primarily covers the University's approach to EPA for integrated degree apprenticeships and where it is the EPAO 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 EPAO, the University must successfully register with the Department for Education (DfE)'s APAR. An application must be made for the relevant apprenticeship standard(s) and

the University must confirm that it is registered with the Office for Students (OfS), has the relevant level of degree awarding powers for the standard(s) it has selected and is registered on the APAR as the training provider.

7. Individual Schools will usually lead on the EPAO registration for their own integrated apprenticeship/apprenticeship, with support from CQSD and other relevant University functions.
8. The intention to register as an EPAO for a new standard will be discussed with members of the University Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (UBTLSE) and with Legal Services and 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 higher and degree apprenticeships, the OfS is the organisation responsible for the external quality assurance of EPA delivery in accordance with this EQA framework.
10. The detailed method and guidance for providers on [External quality assurance of apprenticeship end-point assessments for integrated higher and degree apprenticeships](#) is available on the OfS website. In summary:
 - a. Once a provider has registered with the DfE as an EPAO for a particular degree apprenticeship standard, it may need to complete a readiness check undertaken by the OfS before it can deliver EPAs. If an EPAO is already delivering EPA, the OfS will take account of previous readiness or monitoring checks for different apprenticeship standards in determining whether a readiness check is necessary, and if so the form it should take.
 - b. The readiness check is a desk-based assessment carried out by an OfS assessment team which requires the provider to prepare a self-assessment and submit supporting evidence for the relevant apprenticeship standard. The School that is undertaking the EPA will be responsible for engaging with the OfS to carry out the readiness check. The readiness check 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 OfS.
 - c. The OfS will review the EPAO's submission and will produce a readiness check report including an overall readiness rating ('exceeds expectations', 'ready to deliver', 'ready to deliver: improvements needed' or 'not ready to deliver'). The School will then be responsible for responding to the report, developing an action plan (where required) and completing any actions within the agreed timescales, with support from their Teaching and Learning Dean (TLD).
 - d. When an EPAO has completed at least one cycle of EPA, it may be required to undergo an EQA monitoring check by the OfS, which is designed to ensure that the actual delivery of EPA provides a relevant, reliable and independent assessment of occupational competence. EPAOs will be selected for OfS EQA monitoring checks of their delivery of EPA based on risk. The OfS monitoring check will typically include a desk-based analysis of evidence followed by a one-day visit conducted by the monitoring assessment team, which may be onsite or online.
 - e. As part of the monitoring check process, the OfS requires providers to submit a self-evaluation for the apprenticeship standard, along with supporting evidence (including the external examiner's report). Each School will be responsible for producing the self-evaluation and any associated action plan for their EPA provision, and for ensuring that this is submitted with the supporting evidence as requested. Prior to the submission of the self-evaluation to the OfS, it 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.
 - f. The monitoring check will result in a report summarising the assessment team's findings, identifying areas of strength and recommendations for improvement and setting out any

compliance risks. The report will include a graded outcome (outstanding/good/requires improvement/inadequate). The School will be responsible for submitting a response to the report (where appropriate/required) to the OfS.

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 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 apprentice's 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 an apprentice 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 within 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 apprentice to submit their work and prepare for any final exams within this timescale unless the EPA requirements for a specific Standard state otherwise.
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. 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 its awards and to ensure fair and consistent assessment for all apprentices.
21. As an EPAO, the University will conduct its own internal quality assurance of the EPA to ensure that it remains effective, valid, reliable and in line with the published assessment plan 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;
 - c. Schools will recruit, prepare and ensure ongoing 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 OfS-approved external examiners to oversee the EQA of the EPA (see 25 below);
 - 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](#), for future moderation and quality checks;
 - i. As noted above, Schools will produce the self-evaluation for their EPA provision and any associated action plan. Progress against the plan will be monitored by the relevant Board of Studies and Student Experience (BoSSE) (or Apprenticeship Board for the Henley Business School) and be submitted to the external examiner as required.
22. Schools must appoint at least one Independent Assessor (IA) for their EPA, drawn from the relevant occupation and outside of the University. In addition to independent assessors, the EPA plan may allow EPA assessors from other universities, professional bodies or from the School itself. Assessors must not have been involved in the training or employment of the apprentice and must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest in line with the University [Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment](#).
23. It is the IA's 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](#). If the EPA is not delivered solely by independent assessors, then the independent assessor(s) must make the final decision on whether an apprentice is occupationally competent.
24. The EPA assessors will be provided with guidance and undertake an induction and relevant training for the EPA delivery, which will be provided by the School. The EPA assessors will also undertake regular CPD related to their role as assessors for the Apprenticeship Standard and provide evidence of this to the School. EPA assessors will take part in moderation and standardisation activities for the EPA and attend the Examiners Board.
25. Schools must appoint one or more external examiner(s) (depending on the size and complexity of the provision) to oversee the quality and standards of the EPA. The external examiner should undertake sampling of assessment and internal quality assurance processes for the EPA, to confirm that national standards have been achieved and upheld. Where appropriate, EPAOs may engage an existing external examiner to review the EPA (which may be in addition to the external examiner role held with the associated qualification). The School must ensure, and be able to evidence that, external examiners have access to regular and appropriate opportunities to undertake relevant CPD and professional development to ensure their practice remains current and consistent with expectations in the sector.
26. The University will be required as part of the readiness check to provide details of the external examiner arrangements in place for the associated qualifications, including how the EPAO manages potential conflicts of interest and how they have the appropriate expertise.

27. The external examiner should visit the University for each cohort of apprentices completing EPA (visits can be conducted online where appropriate) and will present their findings through the production of a report. The report will inform the University's internal quality monitoring and forms important supporting evidence for the OfS monitoring check. The School will be responsible for responding to the external examiner's 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.
28. Schools will seek feedback from the external examiner, the IA, industry experts and recent apprenticeship graduates on the content and delivery of the EPA, to ensure continuous enhancements and improvements to the delivery of the EPA are made.
29. 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 Head of Post-Experience and Apprenticeship Programmes.
30. The performance and quality of the EPA delivery will normally be reported to, and overseen by, the relevant BoSSE. In the Henley Business School, the Apprenticeship Board will have oversight for the EPA. The BoSSE and Apprenticeship Board will report to UBTLS on matters arising.

Grading, Awards and Certificates

31. The requirements for a pass and other grading for the apprenticeship EPA are outlined in every assessment plan.
32. 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).
33. 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.
34. Within integrated degree apprenticeships (where the University is the EPAO), neither the degree nor the EPA result will be allowed to be awarded in isolation.
35. 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.
36. 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

37. Within an apprenticeship programme, apprentices 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.
38. The opportunities and arrangements for reassessment are outlined in the individual apprenticeship assessment plan.
39. Apprentices who pass their EPA may not re-sit to achieve a higher grade.
40. Apprentices are eligible for consideration of exceptional circumstances that affect their performance in the EPA, in accordance with the University's [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#).

Appeals and complaints

41. Apprentices who wish to appeal their EPA grade, where the University is the EPAO, can do so through the [University's Appeals procedure](#).
42. 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](#).
43. If an employer wishes to make a complaint about any element of the EPA, they can do so through the complaints process outlined in the [Apprenticeship employer complaints procedure](#).

Version Control:

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