

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 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 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 on the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO).
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 and the EPA are delivered by the same organisation as part of the same programme. The EPA and the degree must be integrated; both 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 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 apprenticeship/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, 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)¹. 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 in England (DQB). The detailed method and additional guidance on EQA of EPA is available on the DQB website². In summary:
 - a. Once the ESFA has approved a provider as an EPAO for a particular Degree Apprenticeship Standard, providers will need to complete a two-stage readiness check process before they can deliver EPAs. The first stage is completed by the ESFA. The DQB will then undertake a second stage readiness check and approval process, which requires the provider to prepare and submit a Readiness Check document along with supporting evidence. The School that is undertaking the EPA will be responsible for engaging with the DQB to carry out the readiness checks. 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 DQB.
 - b. The DQB will review the EPAO's submission and will agree 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 developing an action plan (where required) and completing any actions within the agreed timescales, with support from their Teaching and Learning Dean (TLD).
 - c. Schools must appoint an external examiner (the EQA external assessor) to oversee the quality and standards of the EPA and they must ensure the external examiner has been approved by the DQB. This role may be in addition to the external examiner role held with the associated qualification. The School must ensure that the external examiner has appropriate opportunities to undertake relevant CPD and professional development to assist them in their role.
 - d. An EQA monitoring process follows the initial readiness check and includes ongoing monitoring, external assessor monitoring and monitoring checks. A risk-based approach will be adopted in determining the frequency and nature of checks. The monitoring process for each apprenticeship is likely to involve a combination of desk-based reviews of action plans and evidence, onsite visits to the EPAO and/or online visits (including the observation of assessment activities).
 - e. The EQA external assessor will visit the EPAO for each cohort of apprentices completing EPA (visits can be conducted online where appropriate) and will report on their findings to both the EPAO and the DQB. The School will be responsible for responding to the external assessor'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.

¹ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/5505/eqa-framework-august-2020-a.pdf>

² <https://dqbengland.org.uk/apprenticeships/>

- f. As part of the monitoring check process, the DQB requires providers to submit a self-assessment report (SAR), along with supporting evidence (including the EQA external assessor report), for each EPA they deliver. Each School will be responsible for maintaining their own self-assessment report 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 SAR to the DQB, 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. The monitoring check will result in a report including a graded outcome (outstanding/good/requires improvement/inadequate). The School will be responsible for submitting an action plan (if required) to the DQB in response to the report.

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 webpages³.
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 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 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

³ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

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;
 - c. Schools will recruit, prepare and ensure on-going development training for Independent Assessors (see 23 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 DQB-approved external examiners (EQA external assessors) 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 schedule⁴, for future moderation and quality checks;
 - i. As noted above, Schools will maintain their own self-assessment report for the EPA 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 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.

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.

⁴ <https://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/-/media/project/functions/cqsd/documents/gap/14-retention-of-exam-scripts-and-coursework.pdf>

24. As noted above, Schools will appoint EQA external assessors, who must be approved by the DQB, and will undertake an external quality assurance function for the EPA, reporting to both the School and the DQB annually.
25. 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.
26. 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).
27. 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 UBTLSE on matters arising.

Grading, Awards and Certificates

28. The requirements for a pass and other grading for the apprenticeship EPA are outlined in every assessment plan.
29. 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).
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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

34. 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.
35. The opportunities and arrangements for reassessment are outlined in the individual apprenticeship assessment plan.
36. Students who pass their EPA may not re-sit to achieve a higher grade.
37. Students 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

38. Apprentices who wish to appeal their EPA grade, where the University is the EPAO, can do so through the [University's Appeals procedure](#).
39. 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](#).

40. 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:

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Effective from	Next Review	Keeper (responsible for Policy maintenance and review)
1	3 November 2021	UBTLSE	November 2021		CQSD
2	14 March 2023	UBTLSE	Date of approval	Summer 2023	