

APPRENTICESHIP END POINT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. End Point Assessment (EPA) provides a holistic and independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been acquired through an apprenticeship programme, in order to demonstrate occupational competence. The approach to EPA is outlined in the Assessment Plan for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard. In accordance with the Standard, EPA is either (i) assessed as part of the course, known as integrated EPA or (ii) an additional stage separate to meeting the requirements for the relevant University award (known as non-integrated EPA).
2. This procedure outlines arrangements for the conduct of EPA (both integrated and non-integrated) for apprenticeship programmes delivered at the University of Suffolk.

Integrated End Point Assessment

3. Where EPA is integrated into the programme of study and forms part of a credit-bearing module, the Level 6 assessments that form part of the EPA should be clearly documented as part of the initial course validation process, so that they can be recorded correctly in the University's student records system.
4. For integrated EPA, the University is required to ensure that there is a clear separation between apprenticeship programme delivery and the conduct of EPA in order to deliver an independent, objective assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard. The University's [Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment](#) should be observed in this regard. The Academic Administration team will maintain a record of all academic staff involved in programme delivery and assessment to facilitate this.
5. The Assessment Plan for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and the University's standard policies and procedures relating to assessment should be adhered to, in order to ensure that assessment decisions relating to EPA are reliable, consistent and fair.

Roles and responsibilities

Course team

6. The course team will be responsible for:
 - recruiting a sufficient number of independent assessor(s);

- early planning to identify potential conflicts of interest with the independent and external assessor(s) for each EPA cohort;
- production of an annual schedule of activity, detailing visits and observations;
- provide any relevant training to the independent assessor(s) including co-ordinating standardisation meetings to ensure consistency of assessment and marking practice;
- creation of assessment materials, in line with the Assessment Plan;
- responding to the external assessors report and recommendations.

Independent assessors

7. Where required by the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan, an independent assessor will be appointed for the apprenticeship. The independent assessor(s) will be nominated by the course team, in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment and the Assessment Plan, and approved by the Dean of School, or equivalent.

8. The course team will recruit a sufficient number of independent assessors to ensure that EPA is conducted efficiently to meet the needs of the number of apprentices.

9. The independent assessor has the responsibility to:

- disclose any conflicts of interest in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment;
- undertake annual continuing professional development related to the sector/occupation;
- attend any training required by the University, including standardisation and moderation meetings;
- assess and grade the EPA for assigned apprentices in accordance with the requirements set out in the Assessment Plan and the relevant University assessment framework and regulations;
- provide feedback in line with the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework;
- provide feedback on the EPA.

EQA External Assessor

10. All integrated EPA must have an external assessor appointed to undertake the external quality assurance (EQA) aspects of the apprenticeship.

11. External assessors will be recruited using the same recruitment procedure outlined in the External Examiners Policy and will be able to demonstrate:

- no conflicts of interest with the apprentices, employers, independent assessors or the University, as outlined in the Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment;
- knowledge about, and competence in, assessing apprentices achievement in higher education at levels relevant to the subject(s) and award(s) to which their appointment relates;
- have a high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the EPA, and have a good understanding of degree apprenticeships;
- are appropriately experienced in apprentice assessment design and delivery at the level of the award;
- can assess standards in an effective manner, identify good practice and recommend enhancement to enable informed EPA development;
- have experience in acting as an external quality assurer or be prepared to undertake training and/or mentoring to undertake the role;
- have had sufficient experience in quality assurance to enable them to discharge their role effectively;
- can engage in open and transparent dialogue with key stakeholders within the EPAO to build relationships and provide guidance and support;
- are prepared to undertake relevant training and continuing professional development;
- comply with all relevant employment legislation, including safeguarding, as appropriate.

12. External Assessors should normally hold no more than one other substantive external examining appointment (excluding research degrees), and should normally reside in the UK.

13. A sufficient number of external assessors will be recruited to ensure that EPA is conducted efficiently to meet the needs of the number of apprentices.

14. The external assessor has the responsibility to:

- disclose any conflicts of interest in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy for Apprenticeship End Point Assessment;
- undertake annual continuing professional development related to the sector/occupation;
- attend any training provided by the University and, where relevant, observe assessor standardisation or moderation meetings;
- submit an annual report;
- attend the assessment board where final EPA decisions are made;
- meet with independent assessors and other EPAO staff for each EPA cohort;

- review documentation related to the EPA, for example assessment materials, delivery plans and internal quality assurance documentation;
- meet with apprentices and, where possible, employers;
- where the EPA is credit-bearing, in line with the Assessment Moderations Policy, review a sample of EPA assessed work, including observing live assessments where relevant.

Selection of End Point Assessment Organisations (non-integrated EPA)

15. Non-integrated EPA requires the involvement of an authorised independent End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) listed on the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Register of End Point Assessment Organisations for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.

16. The relevant University academic school will collate and provide information to employers about possible EPAOs on the Register for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard (including the standard fees charged by each organisation), but the selection of the EPAO and negotiation regarding price is the responsibility of the apprentice's employer. The cost of EPA should be within the funding band for assessment and should include any cost of external quality assurance of the EPA. The cost will not usually exceed 20% of the funding band maximum. Where the total negotiated price does exceed the funding band maximum, the difference must be paid by the employer.

17. The EPAO must normally be selected by the employer at the start of the apprenticeship programme, in liaison with the relevant course team, and notified to the Apprenticeships Hub and the ILR and Funding Manager so that EPAO details can be included in the written agreement between the University and the employer and recorded on the apprentice's Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

18. In selecting a suitable EPAO, employers are advised to consider the following criteria:
- a. whether the organisation is listed on the ESFA Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations for the required Apprenticeship Standard
 - b. whether the organisation and its assessors are completely independent of the apprentice, the employer and the University (including a requirement that the organisation has in place an appropriate conflict of interest policy)
 - c. the organisation's experience of delivering EPA for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard (including any existing relationship with the University and, if so, prior performance in the conduct of EPA)

- d. arrangements for the appointment, induction, training and continuing professional development of assessors (including whether assessors are appropriately qualified and have practical experience within the relevant profession)
- e. location of the organisation and suitability / flexibility / accessibility of arrangements for the conduct of EPA (including provision for reasonable adjustments)
- f. support offered in preparation for EPA, such as briefing sessions for providers and/or employers; online support for apprentices; provision of mock assessment material, project topics or interview questions
- g. arrangements for management of the EPA process and communication with the University, including reporting mechanisms, management of information, and opportunities for the University and/or employer to provide feedback on service delivery
- h. internal quality assurance arrangements to ensure quality and consistency of assessment decisions (including assessment standardisation practices, marking and moderation processes, and arrangements for reviewing standards over time and across locations)
- i. cost (to be funded by the University from the apprenticeship fee paid to the University).

19. Once the EPAO is selected by the employer, the relevant University academic school is responsible for leading the relationship with the EPAO and liaising with the organisation to confirm contractual arrangements. The contract between the University and the EPAO must set out the arrangements for sharing relevant information about the apprentice so EPA and certification can take place, including arrangements for any re-takes and payments. The contract should also cover arrangements for a change of circumstances, which may delay, or lead to the cancellation of, the EPA.

20. The contract between the University and the EPAO should be approved by the relevant Dean of School, or equivalent, and the Finance team prior to onward submission to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or nominee for signature. The signed contract must then be lodged with the Apprenticeships Hub, with a copy also sent to the Academic Administration team, so that the EPAO and assessment price can be included on the ILR, the contract can be stored in the apprentice's evidence file, and preparations can be made for the administration of EPA.

The gateway to EPA

21. An apprentice can only take the EPA once they have completed all on-programme training (as confirmed by the relevant Assessment Board) and satisfied the gateway requirements set out in the Assessment Plan (including attainment of English and Mathematics at Level 2). To go

through the gateway, the University, the apprentice and, ultimately, the employer must be confident that the apprentice has attained sufficient knowledge, skills and behaviours through the apprenticeship programme to be provisionally competent to meet the Apprenticeship Standard, and that they are adequately prepared for EPA. The apprentice's evidence file should include EPA gateway declaration forms signed by the apprentice, employer and University which confirm that the apprentice meets the gateway requirements and is ready to undertake EPA, and that they will remain employed until the EPA is completed.

22. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring that each apprenticeship programme has a structured approach for monitoring the performance of apprentices and making decisions on progression through the gateway to EPA. The approach may involve, for example:

- gateway preparation workshop sessions
- preparatory formative / mock assessment activities
- gateway readiness checklists to monitor progress and coverage of the Apprenticeship Standard (which will include successful completion of the degree programme)
- monitoring reviews / interviews involving the apprentice, employer and University.

23. Apprentices and employers should be provided with information and guidance on the EPA process at the commencement of their apprenticeship programme, and this should be reinforced to apprentices at relevant stages throughout their apprenticeship, to ensure they clearly understand the requirements and are well-prepared. This should include provision of information about EPA on the online learning environment, Brightspace, and discussion of the EPA process at tripartite review meetings.

24. The Course Leader should liaise with the Academic Administration team to confirm the requirements of the EPAO in relation to the assessment. The Academic Administration team will communicate with the EPAO to set up the gateway and EPA assessment process. The Academic Administration team will also support the course team in preparing apprentices for EPA, for example by providing copies of relevant documentation and confirming EPA assessment requirements, deadlines and practical arrangements. The Apprenticeship Hub will monitor apprentices' progress on their programme and provide regular updates to the 'At-risk meetings' highlighting any apprentices who may be delayed in reaching the EPA gateway.

Administration and funding of EPA

25. For non-integrated EPA, the Academic Administration team is responsible for liaising with the EPAO to schedule the EPA, and for supporting the course team to communicate EPAO

assessment requirements and timescales to the apprentice and their employer. To ensure timely delivery of EPA, the EPAO should be given at least three months' notice of when the apprentice is expected to be ready for EPA.

26. The Academic Administration team will collate all information required for the EPA, including (but not limited to):

- signed EPA gateway declaration form (apprentice, employer, University)
- Commitment Statement
- Level 2 English and Maths certificates (or approved equivalent)
- apprentice data sharing GDPR statement
- University award letter and module summary
- any EPA assessments submitted via the University's online learning environment
- information on any required reasonable adjustments.

27. Following receipt of all required information, the Academic Administration team will upload the documents to the relevant EPAO portal, trigger the EPA process and confirm EPA arrangements and deadlines with apprentices.

28. For both integrated and non-integrated EPA, the Academic Administration team will liaise with the Course Leader to monitor progress with EPA, to ensure timely completion in accordance with the apprentice's expected end date. Any concerns regarding an apprentice's progress with EPA should be raised with the Apprenticeships Hub through the relevant School Apprenticeship Panel.

29. The University will fund the cost of the EPA from the apprenticeship fee paid to the University. One EPA for each apprentice will normally be funded, with funding for any re-sits based on the agreement between the University and the employer as set out in the written agreement. For non-integrated EPA, the apprentice's evidence file should include evidence of payments made to the EPAO for conducting the EPA.

30. Upon completion of EPA, the Academic Administration team will notify the apprentice, course team, employer, Apprenticeships Hub and the ILR and Funding Manager of the outcome and grading (usually fail, pass, merit or distinction, as outlined in the Assessment Plan for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard). Where EPA is not integrated into the programme, apprentices who fail to successfully complete the EPA may still receive the relevant University of Suffolk award

where the requirements for that award have been met, but will not receive the apprenticeship completion certificate from the ESFA.

31. A final Assessment Board will be convened to record the completion of the apprenticeship and confirm that the apprentice is eligible to attend graduation to receive their University of Suffolk award. Following notification from the Assessment Board, the ILR and Funding Manager will complete the apprentice on the ILR.

32. For non-integrated EPA, the EPAO is responsible for claiming the apprenticeship completion certificate from the ESFA. For integrated EPA, the Academic Administration team will process the application for the apprenticeship completion certificate. The Academic Administration team will collate apprenticeship certificates (including certificates provided to the University by the EPAO) for onward submission to the apprentice and the Apprenticeships Hub.