



Senate Handbook

The University as an End-point Assessment Organisation

This Handbook provides guidance for staff where the University acts as an End-point Assessment Organisation for integrated apprenticeship programmes.

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Major changes to this document since version 1.0 (November 2023):

- Change of reference from School to Faculty (throughout)
- Addition of statement on staff responsibilities (Introduction)
- Addition of statement defining working days (Introduction)
- Revised section on EPAO Registration (3)
- Reference to new Assessor manual (5)
- Revised section on EPA design (7.2)
- Removal of exceptional circumstances policy and reference to correct Handbook added (7.7)
- Revised roles and responsibilities section (Appendix A)

Terminology used in this Handbook

This Handbook uses a number of acronyms and terms throughout, of which the key ones are defined below.

APAR	Apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR) - the APAR is a record of organisations that can receive apprenticeship levy funding to train apprentices and may register to undertake end-point assessments.
Apprenticeship Levy	The apprenticeship levy is paid by UK employers with an annual pay bill of over £3 million. The money collected through the levy is used to fund apprenticeship training for their (or other) employees and is intended to encourage employers to invest in apprenticeship programs.
Apprenticeship Standard	An apprenticeship standard is a document that outlines the skills, knowledge, and behaviours (KSBs) that an apprentice should have upon completion of an apprenticeship program, and sets out the assessment plan for the apprenticeship.
EPA	End-point Assessment – the assessment that all apprentices must undertake at the end of their apprenticeship, delivered by an independent party who has not been involved in the training or employment of the apprentice to determine whether or not the apprentice has met the required standards and has acquired the necessary skills and knowledge.
EPAO	End-point Assessment Organisation – which is an organisation that is responsible for conducting independent assessments of apprentices at the end of their apprenticeship training. For integrate apprenticeships the University may act as the EPAO.
EQA	External Quality Assurance (EQA) monitors the end-point assessment that apprentices undertake at the end of their apprenticeship, to ensure that it is fair, consistent and robust across different apprenticeship standards and between different assessment organisations. EQA ensures that EPAOs all work to a high standard and that an apprentice would get the same result from their EPA regardless of the EPAO. EQA also ensures the apprenticeship standard and end-point assessment plan are fit-for-purpose and actually delivering the outcomes that are required.
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency – the Government agency accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults, and responsible for distribution of Apprentice Levy Funds.
IfATE	The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education - An independent public body in the United Kingdom that oversees the development and management of apprenticeship standards and technical education qualifications.
IRP/Professional Project	Individual Research Project – a final project that students on Master’s awards must complete in order to achieve their award. These may be referred to as a thesis, dissertation or portfolio. For integrated Masters apprenticeships the IRP is usually replaced by the EPA.

At undergraduate level the equivalent project to the IRP is known as the Professional Project.

KSBs

Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours – these are the three key elements that are assessed in an End-Point Assessment at the end of an apprenticeship training program.

Ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills - the independent regulator of education and training in England.

1 Introduction

This Senate Handbook incorporates the previously published Senate Guide, and provides information for staff involved in the University's role as an End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). EPAOs undertake the End-point Assessments (EPAs) for students on Apprenticeship programmes. End-point Assessments are independent of the academic delivery aspect of an apprenticeship, and must be conducted by independent Assessors.

This Handbook assigns responsibilities for various processes and decisions to particular postholders in the University. Where required for the operation of the University, specific responsibilities may be given to other members of the University by agreement between the relevant University Officers, such arrangements to be recorded by the Secretary to Senate until such time as the Handbook is updated.

Throughout this Handbook timescales are referred to as measured in working days. Working days do not include any weekend days or days where the University is closed (public bank holidays or published University closure days).

1.1 Apprenticeship types

Cranfield currently offers four types of apprenticeship:

Award-bearing Integrated Apprenticeships, where apprentices will work towards completion of their apprenticeship and an academic award. Completion of the apprenticeship and completion of the academic award are linked, and completion of either is dependent on completion of both elements. For this type of apprenticeship the rules set out in the apprenticeship standard take precedence over any conflicting University policies, with any rules around the EPA being followed from the apprenticeship standard.

Award-bearing Non-integrated Apprenticeships, where apprentices will work towards completion of their apprenticeship and towards an academic award. The academic award and apprenticeship are not co-dependent, with apprentices assessed for the final outcome of both elements independently. For this type of apprenticeship the rules set out in the apprenticeship standard must be followed alongside University policies.

Non-award-bearing Credit-accumulation Apprenticeships, where apprentices will work towards completion of their apprenticeship, and earn academic credit as part of their apprenticeship training. This credit may then be transferred towards an academic award (which may or may not require further study). For this type of apprenticeship the rules set out in the apprenticeship standard must be followed alongside University policies.

Non-award Apprenticeships, where apprentices will work towards completion of their apprenticeship only, with no credit accumulation or academic award linked to the apprenticeship. For this type of apprenticeship the rules set out in the apprenticeship standard must be followed.

Of these apprenticeship types, Cranfield will usually only act as an EPAO for Integrated Apprenticeships.

1.2 Apprenticeship Standards

An apprenticeship standard is a document that outlines the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that an apprentice should have upon completion of an apprenticeship program in a specific occupation or industry. The standard defines the standard of excellence that the apprentice is expected to achieve and the benchmark for the End-point assessment (EPA) that the apprentice must pass to be certified as having completed the apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship standards are developed by industry experts, employers and professional bodies, and are designed to reflect the current and future needs of the industry. They include information on the occupation or industry, the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that an apprentice should have, and the assessment plan for the EPA.

1.3 Apprenticeship standard assessment plans

Each apprenticeship standard has an associated Assessment Plan, which outlines specific details about the EPA that apprentices on that standard will have to pass in order to complete their apprenticeship. The assessment plan will set out details of the types of assessments to be used (usually at least two assessment methods), the criteria that apprentices will be assessed against, the schedule for the EPA and the resit policy for the standard.

The assessment plan is a key document for course teams preparing for and designing the EPA, and course teams must ensure that the requirements of the assessment plan are met through the EPA. For integrated apprenticeships, where there is a conflict between the requirements of the assessment plan and University Regulations, policies, handbooks and other guidance, the requirements of the assessment plan must take precedence.

1.4 Regulatory Oversight

A number of different agencies have regulatory oversight or interest in apprenticeships, including:

ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency), who are a UK government agency responsible for funding and regulating education and training for children and young people aged 3 to 19, as well as adults studying for apprenticeships. Acting on behalf of the Department for Education, ESFA has overall accountability for the apprenticeship programme and all aspects of apprenticeships policy and strategy. This includes overall programme governance and operational management of the apprenticeship funding system. Specific functions include operation of the Apprenticeship Service, the apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR) for training providers and end-point assessment organisations, and the funding and auditing of training providers.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is responsible for supporting the development of occupational standards and assessment plans and assuring the quality of occupational standards and assessment plans approved for delivery. It is responsible for designing and operating approvals and review processes for standards and assessment plans and for advising employers on the policy and process for developing standards and End-Point Assessments. This includes ensuring all End-Point Assessment delivery is quality assured against the requirements set out in its [External Quality Assurance \(EQA\) Framework](#).

IfATE appointed the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) and the Office for Students (OfS) to carry out external quality assurance of end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs).

IfATE is also responsible for advising the Government on the funding bands for new and existing occupational standards, ensuring that the design of occupational standards and funding band recommendations represent good value for money.

Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), who are the independent regulator of education and training in England. Ofsted's oversight includes apprenticeships up to and including Level 7.

Ofsted inspects and reports on the quality of apprenticeship provision, which includes assessing the effectiveness of the training in preparing apprentices for the workplace, and the suitability of the training provider's facilities, resources, staff, governance and safeguarding processes. Ofsted's oversight is intended to provide assurance to the government, employers and the public that a provider's apprenticeship provision is of good quality and meets the expected national standards.

The Office for Students (OfS) is the statutory regulator of higher education in England and is responsible for the external quality assurance (EQA) of the EPA for integrated higher and degree apprenticeships.

The Designated Quality Body for Higher Education. As part of OfS's regulatory responsibilities, they appoint a Designated Quality Body (DQB) to undertake a variety of tasks, one of which is External Quality Assurance (EQA) of apprenticeships, which includes an EQA Readiness Check and ongoing monitoring. At the time of publication of this Handbook, a DQB has not been appointed past 31st March 2023 and the OfS will directly undertake EQA on an interim basis

2 Integrated Apprenticeship principles and standards

As an End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) the University has an agreed set of principles and standards that are followed for all integrated apprenticeships. These principles are set out below, with many expanded on later in this Handbook.

Basic principles:

The University is committed to delivering a high-quality training experience for apprentices, and for integrated apprenticeships, to effectively manage the delivery of the End-point Assessment (EPA) in its role as the End-point Assessment Organisation, and that these responsibilities are undertaken consistently and fairly.

All apprenticeships have an associated EPA, which measures whether an apprentice has met the requirement of the apprenticeship standard, and are able to demonstrate the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) required and therefore are occupationally competent.

Apprentices may only progress to their EPA if they meet the gateway requirements as set out in the relevant apprenticeship standard Assessment Plan, and providing that they have the agreement of their employer¹.

For award bearing integrated apprenticeships the EPA is a component of the final academic award. At Cranfield the EPA usually replaces a traditional Masters level Individual Research Project (IRP), and makes up a significant part of the final academic award (usually $\geq 30\%$). For Level 6 award-bearing apprenticeships this will be dependent on the standard but the Professional Project is often replaced by the EPA.

Integrated apprenticeships should be designed using the Apprenticeship standard as the starting point, and the design should reflect the KSBs required by the standard. Module ILOs should be mapped to the Apprenticeship standard KSBs.

External Requirements:

In order to deliver integrated apprenticeships:

- The University is required to maintain its status on the apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR) for both delivery of training and End Point assessments.
- The University must supply all required information to ESFA to ensure compliance with the EPA process and outcomes.
- The University will meet all reporting requirements to external bodies, including OfS, Ofsted, ESFA and the DQB.

Delivery and Assessment:

For integrated apprenticeships, the University will provide both the on programme learning, training and assessment and the EPA.

For assessments on the taught components of an integrated apprenticeship (i.e. the non-EPA assessments), the University's standard Assessment Rules should be followed.

For the EPA, any regulations concerning assessment or resits which are contained in the Apprenticeship standard and/or associated Assessment Plan must be followed, and take precedent over any conflicting University regulation or policy.

EPAs usually consist of at least two forms of assessment, as set out in the Assessment Plan.

The EPA will be designed by the course team prior to the course being validated.

¹ L6 Digital and Technology Solution v1.0 does not have a formal gateway requirement, however, the principle still applies.

The University must comply with all requirements of the EPA, which will vary from apprenticeship standard to apprenticeship standard and will be identified in the Assessment Plan. These will include the Gateway requirements for both learner and employers, the required qualifications, or exceptional circumstances where these do not apply and details of the EPA development and delivery specifications.

EPA's must be independently assessed, with the assessor independent of the course delivery team, apprentice and employer. A University employee from outside the course delivery team may act as an independent assessor.

The Independent Assessor will have the necessary skills, experience, occupational competence and qualifications required to facilitate the assessment. This may include academic subject expertise, workplace experience and occupational competence.

Independent Assessors must be appropriately trained, and receive annual refresher training.

The University's conflicts of interest policy will be used to manage any potential conflicts with regard to the appointment of independent assessors.

The EPA projects will be agreed between the University, apprentice and employer, and must be comparable in academic terms to other projects (e.g. IRP projects on other courses) and meet the requirements of the EPA for the Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan.

EPA Completion:

Upon completion of an integrated apprenticeship the University in its role as the EPAO will be responsible for claiming the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate from the Apprenticeship Assessment Service.

The outcome of an Integrated apprenticeship may result in an overall classification grade for the apprenticeship. Any academic awards associated with an integrated apprenticeship will be classified separately in accordance with the relevant undergraduate or postgraduate criteria.

For the final academic award, the EPA grade will be given a numerical mark to inform academic element of the award.

The final academic award will be awarded in line with the University's standard policies and processes.

Internal Quality Assurance:

The University will ensure consistency and quality in the EPA through:

- providing guidance on the EPA to learners and employers (practical and technical advice, marking guidance for EPA activity);
- ensuring consistency and comparability across work-based EPA projects;
- recruitment, preparation and on-going training of appropriate Independent Assessors.
- The University's standard complaints and appeals processes should be followed for all apprentices studying on integrated apprenticeships. A separate employer complaints policy exists for concerns employers may have over either the EPA or the integrated apprenticeship as a whole.

3 Registering as an EPAO

The University is registered on the Apprentice Provider and Assessment register (APAR).

As a registered provider Cranfield will be automatically added to the register as an EPAO for an apprenticeship standard when learners are reported to ESFA through the monthly ILR.

In order to maintain the registration, the University is required to remain compliant in our provision through the Apprentice Accountability Framework, which is managed through monthly ILR uploads., and continue to adhere to the APAR conditions of registration as set out [here](#).

4 External Quality Assurance of EPA

4.1 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

The Office for Students (OfS) is responsible for the external quality assurance (EQA) of the EPA for integrated apprenticeships. At the time of publication of this Handbook (November 2023), The OfS has not appointed a Designated Quality Body (DQB) to support this EQA, and will carry out all EQA itself.

EQA elements:

Readiness check – ensures that appropriate and high-quality assessment materials are in place that are reliable and robust, and meet the requirements set out in the published EPA plan, along with systems, processes and appropriate personnel. An EPAO may not deliver an EPA until the readiness check has been completed and are given the go ahead.

EQA monitoring – EPAOs are expected to continue focusing on arrangements for the EPA after the readiness check stage is completed and conduct their own internal monitoring and continuous improvement. In addition, a schedule of EQA monitoring activities will be produced by the OfS for each apprenticeship standard delivered by the EPAO and will include the following elements:

- Ongoing monitoring
- External assessor monitoring (typically the provider's external examiner) to assess delivery of the EPA
- Monitoring checks

4.2 EPA Readiness Checks

(information correct as of August 2024)

In order to deliver EPAs, providers must register as an EPAO with the Department for Education (DfE) apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR).

Once registered as an EPAO, providers will need to complete a readiness check process before they can deliver EPAs. An EPAO may not deliver an EPA until the readiness check requirement has been confirmed as satisfied. EPAOs which have already delivered successful EPAs for other apprenticeship standards may not need to undergo a full readiness check assessment; this will be confirmed to the EPAO on a case by case basis by the OfS.

Where readiness checks are required in full they are intended to confirm that the EPAO is ready and able to ensure timely delivery of assessments for apprentices who have completed their training programme.

Where undertaken, the readiness check is a desk-based assessment conducted by an OfS assessment team to ensure that:

- appropriate and high-quality assessment materials are in place that are reliable and robust
- assessment materials meet the requirements set out in the published EPA assessment plan
- appropriate systems and processes are in place, including the appropriate personnel.

Timelines

Normally readiness checks must be completed at least 8 weeks before the date of the first EPA which is an IfATE requirement.

The readiness check, when required by the OfS, requires completion and submission of a readiness check document, provided with accompanying evidence to the OfS 3-4 weeks after notification by the OfS. The OfS will then assess the University's capacity and readiness to deliver EPA in line with the assessment plan for each standard.

The OfS will review and assess the submission considering each of the below functional areas and the lines of enquiry as set out in the [IfATE EQA Framework](#).

Readiness Check Submission documentation

Where a readiness check is required, EPAOs must prepare and submit a self-assessment and supporting evidence to the OfS. A template setting out the requirements for the EPAO's submission will be provided and discussed at the initial online meeting between the EPAO and the readiness check assessment team.

The self-assessment should cover plans for the successful delivery of the EPA, and should align to IfATE's EQA framework principles. It should also cover how the EPAO intends to collect and evaluate feedback from apprentices, assessors and employers, and how it will ensure effective delivery of the EPA.

The supporting evidence required will include (but is not limited to):

- the EPAO's academic regulations
- the EPA assessment plan and support materials
- EPA delivery plans
- materials relevant to the assessor recruitment and training
- policies and procedures, including internal quality assurance arrangements.

The self-assessment and supporting documents will be used by the assessment team to determine the EPAO's readiness to deliver the apprenticeship standard. The assessment team may request further information after reviewing the EPAO's initial submission.

In addition, EPAOs are required to submit details of the EPA External Examiner with their readiness check documentation (see section 4.4).

Areas of assessment for OfS readiness checks

Areas of focus	Key questions
Assessment materials	<p>Are the assessment materials appropriate to the occupational standard and level of apprenticeship? Are they specific to the role and reflect recognised and current practice within the industry?</p> <p>Do assessment materials allow for consistent, valid and fair assessment of occupational competence?</p> <p>Do they allow appropriate grading judgements to be made?</p> <p>Are they managed securely and has assessment software been tested?</p> <p>Are assessment materials appropriately developed and used efficiently?</p> <p>Are assessment materials accessible to all apprentices, including when reasonable adjustments need to be made?</p> <p>Do assessment materials take into account industry feedback?</p>
Support materials	<p>Are support materials appropriate to the occupational standard and level of the apprenticeship? Do they reflect current/standard industry practices, and is there evidence that these will be regularly reviewed and updated?</p> <p>Do they accurately describe and/or represent the assessment that an apprentice will undertake?</p> <p>Are they accessible and clear?</p> <p>Are support materials tested and feedback is sought?</p>
EPA delivery plans	<p>Will EPA delivery plans deliver effective assessment? Are they appropriate to delivering the assessment specified in the EPA plan?</p> <p>Will they deliver reliable assessments over time and are they suitable for all apprentices?</p> <p>Are they realistic and appropriate for the volume?</p> <p>Do training providers and employers understand what is required and support the process?</p>

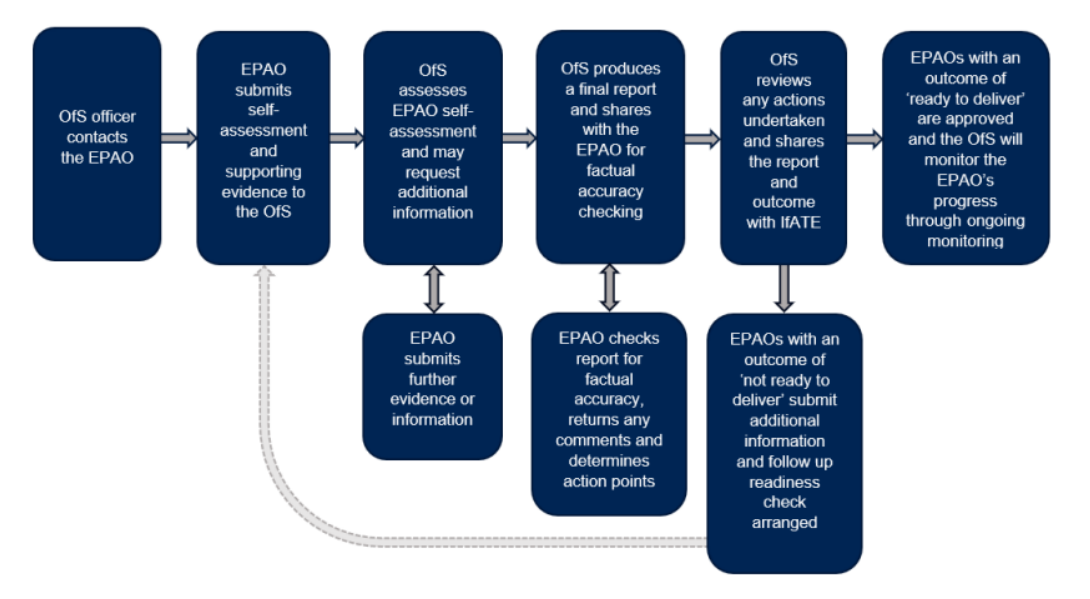
	Have the EPA delivery plans been tested, with specific diversity checks built in and has feedback been sought?
Assessor recruitment and training	Do assessors recruited have the appropriate and up-to-date occupational and assessment skills to undertake effective assessment, and meet the specific requirements as set out in the assessment plan? How does the EPAO ensure that assessors are independent from apprentices, employers and training providers, for example through effective conflict of interest policies? Are there a sufficient number of assessors to undertake the EPA? Are the assessors credible and processes in place to promote and monitor assessor continuous professional development? Is there assessor training in place for industry experts?
Policies and procedures – internal quality assurance	Will the internal policies and procedures result in continued effective assessment and are they fit for purpose? Are the internal quality assurance arrangements appropriate? Do the EPAO's data management processes meet the needs of the apprenticeship standards? Is the EPAO engaging with employers and providers to ensure that apprentices are prepared for EPA?

Readiness check report

The readiness check assessment team will set out its findings in a written report which will include the outcome of the assessment and whether the EPAO is ready to deliver the specified apprenticeship EPA, including identifying any recommendations for improvement and actions that should be taken.

The EPAO will be sent a copy of the draft readiness check report and will be invited to comment on the report, including whether there is anything it considers to be factually inaccurate, and will have up to 10 working days to respond to the draft readiness check report and the recommendations identified. Any recommendations will then form part of the ongoing monitoring of the EPAO. The readiness report will be shared with IfATE.

Illustrative overview of the readiness check process



Readiness check outcomes

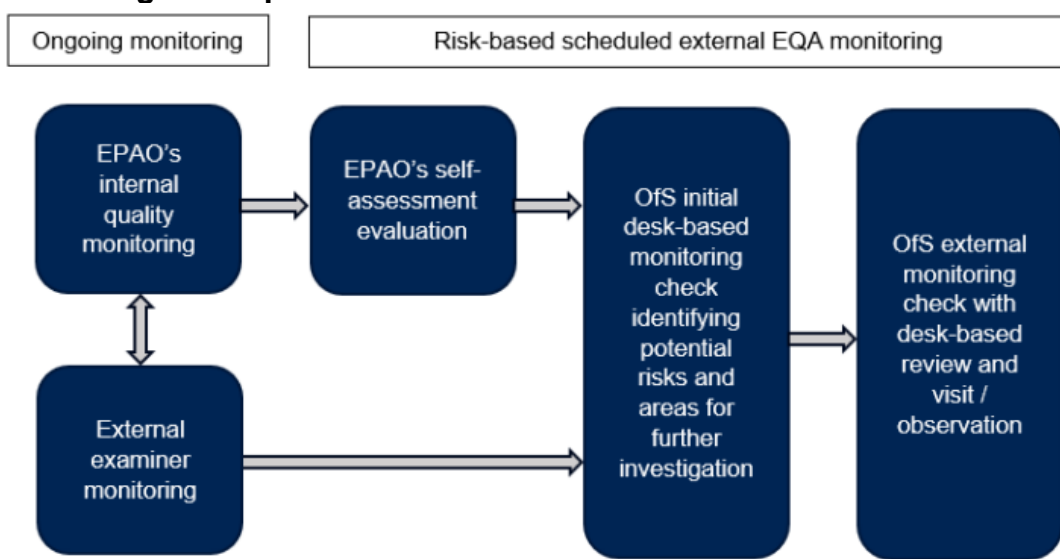
Category	Description	Outcome
Exceeds expectations	The EPAO meets all requirements of readiness to deliver EPA for the apprenticeship standard without further action.	Ready to deliver No actions recommended and progress monitored by the OfS as required
Ready to deliver	The EPAO is ready to deliver EPA for the apprenticeship standard, subject to minor issues to be addressed and monitored on an ongoing basis.	Ready to deliver Actions developed by the EPAO agreed and monitored by the OfS through delivery
Ready to deliver – improvement needed	The EPAO is ready to deliver EPA for the apprenticeship standard, subject to major issues being addressed within the recommendations agreed before the first EPA is delivered.	Ready to deliver Actions developed by the EPAO agreed and monitored by the OfS through delivery
Not ready to deliver	The EPAO is not ready to deliver EPA; major recommendations require consideration to achieve readiness.	Not ready to deliver Actions developed by the EPAO agreed and new readiness review date set by the OfS Or If ATE is contacted to discuss the next steps, which may include referring the EPAO back to DfE

4.3 Ongoing Monitoring

(information correct as of August 2024)

EPAOs are expected to continue focusing on arrangements for the EPA after the readiness check stage is completed and conduct their own internal monitoring and continuous improvement, as well as monitoring the EPAs through their External Examiner arrangements.

Monitoring check processes



4.3.1 Internal monitoring processes

EPAOs are expected to conduct their own ongoing internal monitoring of EPA delivery to ensure that it remains effective, valid, reliable and in line with the published assessment plan.

Internal monitoring may include:

- moderation meetings;
- periodic review of the EPA process and outcomes;
- responses to external examiner/external assessor reports.

This internal quality monitoring should form the basis of the self-evaluation of EPA delivery required by the scheduled OfS EQA monitoring checks. Where the internal monitoring uncovers exceptional operational issues that could impact on the quality of delivery of the EPA, these should be notified to the OfS, along with their implications and proposed solutions. The OfS will work with the EPAO and IfATE to ensure that issues are addressed to protect the interests of apprentices, employers and the apprenticeship system.

4.3.2 External Examiner monitoring

The EPA will be monitored by the appointed EPA External Examiner (see section 4.4), who has oversight of the EPA. This person may also be appointed to act as the External Examiner for the academic qualification which is integrated in the relevant apprenticeship.

In relation to the EPA, the External Examiner will monitor that:

- the EPA is delivered in line with the published EPA plan
- the management of gateway and mandatory qualification requirements and involvement of the employer in deciding the apprentice is ready for the EPA
- individual assessment instruments/methods are fit for purpose
- the EPA assessors' knowledge is up to date
- the accessibility of EPA and the management of reasonable adjustments is appropriate
- through a sample of assessments (including live assessments) the EPA is conducted appropriately
- assessment is reliable and comparable across different EPAOs, employers, places, and assessors.

The External Examiner is expected to conduct a visit to the EPAO for each cohort of apprentices completing EPA (which may be in person or online), as arranged by the EPAO. The purpose of the External Examiner's visit is to assess the performance of the EPAO in delivering the EPA as above, and they will present their findings through the production of a report.

The External Examiner's report should inform the EPAO's internal quality monitoring (as above) and forms important supporting evidence for the scheduled EQA monitoring check conducted by the OfS.

4.3.3 OfS EQA monitoring check

The OfS monitoring check is normally undertaken after the apprenticeship has completed at least one full EPA cycle. It 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 at the EPAO or online.

The monitoring check will be managed by an OfS officer who will act as liaison between the monitoring assessment team and the EPAO. The OfS officer will organise an initial meeting with the EPAO in advance of the OfS EQA monitoring check to confirm the monitoring assessment process and arrangements, including the planned duration and timings for the monitoring assessment.

The OfS monitoring check will ensure that the EPAO is compliant with IfATE's EQA framework. EPAOs will receive a report from the monitoring check which sets out any compliance risks.

The monitoring check will be completed by an assessment team, the composition of which will be determined by an analysis of the potential risk to effective EPA delivery from an initial review of an EPAO's self-evaluation and recent external examiners' reports, which will be conducted by OfS officers. The monitoring assessment team will normally comprise an external expert apprenticeship assessor and an OfS officer. An employer representative may also be appointed from the IfATE's directory of professional and employer-led bodies. EPAOs will be given the opportunity to raise any potential conflict of interests in any of the assessment team in advance of the monitoring check.

The OfS officer will organise an online meeting with the EPAO prior to the OfS monitoring check and will go through the process for the submission of the self-evaluation and supporting evidence. The assessment team will apply a risk-based approach to the assessment and ensure a fair, valid and reliable outcome.

Areas of Assessment

IfATE principles	Key questions
Relevant	<p>Are individual assessment instruments/methods fit for purpose?</p> <p>Is the assessment delivered in line with the published EPA plan?</p> <p>Does the EPA team include expertise in quality assurance, assessment and occupational competence?</p> <p>Is assessors' knowledge up-to date?</p>
Reliable	<p>Is assessment carried out independently in practice in line with the requirements of the apprenticeship?</p> <p>Are assessments operating effectively and achieving the desired outcomes?</p> <p>Is grading applied accurately and consistently?</p> <p>Is assessment reliable and comparable across different EPAOs, employers, places, times and assessors?</p>
Efficient	<p>Are sufficient assessors available?</p> <p>Are accurate records kept and data held securely with appropriate protocols in place?</p> <p>Are retakes, resits, appeals and complaints handling operated effectively?</p> <p>Are assessment windows timely?</p> <p>Is the booking and management of assessment effective?</p> <p>Is marking/remote assessment effective?</p> <p>Are the resources for assessment appropriate?</p> <p>Is evidence gathering and record keeping accurate and secure?</p> <p>Is confidentiality maintained?</p> <p>Is the certification application process effective?</p>
Positive	<p>Is access to assessment fair, and are decisions on reasonable adjustments made fairly and consistently?</p> <p>Is the issuing of results and feedback well managed?</p> <p>Is information provided and fees charged clear and transparent?</p> <p>Are all requirements of the apprenticeship in terms of achievement of gateways and mandatory qualifications and requirements achieved prior to sign-off and does the employer make the final decision on the readiness of the apprentice for EPA?</p>
Learning	<p>Are there arrangements to collect and action feedback from apprentices, employers and assessors?</p> <p>Are internal quality assurance processes effective and rigorous?</p>

Self-evaluation

EPAOs are required to submit a self-evaluation for the apprenticeship standard, along with supporting evidence, based on their internal quality monitoring prior to the OfS undertaking the EQA monitoring.

EPAOs are expected to evaluate and evidence their performance for delivering EPAs in line with the relevant assessment plan and IfATE's EQA framework and drawing upon the outcome of the internal monitoring and External Examiner's report. The EPAO will be provided with a template for this and will be expected to submit supporting evidence with the self-evaluation.

Relevant supporting evidence may include:

- assessment and review policy documents, including internal quality assurance methods
- assessment materials, including evidence of approval of any major changes
- details of planning for EPA delivery
- data on EPA including registrations, pass rates, retakes, resits and distribution of grades
- CVs, qualifications and continuous professional development records for assessors
- feedback from stakeholders, including apprentices, training providers and employers on the relevance and reliability of assessments delivered
- records of internal quality assessment activities, including standardisation and moderation
- records of any reasonable adjustments or special considerations granted and evidence behind these decisions
- conflicts of interest records
- the External Examiner's report.

The External Examiner's report should form an important part of the self-evaluation document. The OfS assessment team will draw upon the report of the external examiner to:

- develop their understanding of the quality of delivery of the EPA
- confirm that the EPA is suitably assessing occupational competence
- identify any emerging issues to be addressed by the EPAO
- improve their understanding of any risk posed by the EPAO.

The assessment team may also consider other information in relation to the delivery of apprenticeships, for example Ofsted reports and other notifications to the OfS. The assessment team will review the self-evaluation and supporting evidence submitted by the EPAO and may request additional evidence if required. The assessment team will assess the risk to effective delivery of the EPA by the EPAO and identify the most appropriate lines of enquiry for the online/onsite monitoring check.

Monitoring visits and observations

Once the desk-based assessment has been completed the OfS will undertake an online or onsite visit, which may include observation of EPAs being delivered.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of activities that the assessment team may wish to undertake in its online/onsite visit:

- observations of a sample of assessments, including live assessments where possible, to verify that the content and context of the assessments are occupationally relevant and in line with the apprenticeship standard's assessment plan

- review of physical or digital versions of documents, including marked assessment materials from apprentices
- interviews with assessors and other EPAO staff
- gathering feedback from apprentices and employers to check how well the EPA is meeting their needs, including how well it relates to current business practice
- checks on the accessibility of assessment, including any language bias and reasonable adjustments
- checks on assessments to verify that these cover requirements of the EPA plan and occupational competence
- requests for updates on previous actions and recommendations from previous reports
- review of training materials (used for training of personnel involved in EPA, in the independent EPA assessors)
- checks on IT systems, security and record storage.

Prior to the visit, the assessment team will request information and provide a schedule of meetings it considers appropriate in order to conduct its assessment. An EPAO may suggest meetings that it considers would be helpful and the assessment team will decide whether it is appropriate to have those meetings.

Where possible, as part of the in-person monitoring assessment, the assessment team will take the opportunity to observe EPAs during delivery and engage with EPAOs as they are undertaking assessment activities. Visits and assessment observations will be confirmed in advance.

Monitoring check outcomes

The assessment team will set out its findings in a written monitoring check report. The report will summarise its findings, identifying areas of strength and recommendations for improvement, and a conclusion on whether the delivery of the EPA is fit-for-purpose in accordance with the EPA plan criteria, with an outcome of either:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate (likely to require a follow-up visit).

The EPAO will be sent a copy of the draft monitoring check report, including its recommendations, and will be invited to comment, including whether there is anything it considers to be factually inaccurate. The EPAO will have up to 10 working days to respond to the draft monitoring check report and the recommendations identified. The assessment team will consider any comments made by the EPAO about the monitoring report, including an explanation of how the EPAO intends to respond to the recommendations.

The assessment team will consider the outcomes of the report in line with IfATE's EQA framework and may make a judgement of compliance with OfS condition of registration B4. The final report and recommendations will be shared with IfATE, including any follow-up actions and regulatory interventions required following the monitoring check.

The OfS officer will confirm future monitoring arrangements with the EPAO, including arrangements for the next monitoring cycle.

EQA Reports

EQA readiness checks and monitoring check reports will be made available to the EPAO and IfATE. In line with the IfATE's EQA framework, the OfS will provide a report to IfATE on the EPAO's delivery of EPA for the apprenticeship standards sampled. The reports will be used by IfATE to inform the planning of future activities and the sharing of good practice, highlight to EPAOs the areas for development, and encourage continuous improvement across the EPAOs and their EPAs.

EPAOs may not publish their reports or any aspects of them, as stated within the EQA framework.

Unscheduled additional monitoring

In addition to scheduled EQA processes, the OfS may undertake monitoring of an EPAO in response to any evidence which may indicate:

- increased risk to quality of delivery, such as self-reporting of issues by the EPAO
- feedback (including complaints) from apprentices, employers, training providers and employees of the EPAO
- concerns about other areas of regulatory activity, including OfS conditions of registration.

The OfS will work with the EPAO and IfATE to ensure that the responses to issues are proportionate, timely, and focused on actions to protect the interests of apprentices, employers and the apprenticeship system. Should the OfS identify an incident that may require regulatory action, they will alert IfATE and due process will be followed in line with the IfATE EQA framework and the OfS regulatory framework as appropriate.

4.4 External Examiners for EPAs²

All taught courses will have external examiner arrangements in place to review and enhance the quality of the academic award. External Examiners play a key role in the monitoring and review of provision (see section 4.3.2). EPAOs are required to engage an external examiner to undertake a similar role specifically for 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 integrated apprenticeship's existing external examiner to review the EPA.

The External Examiner for the EPA is only required to oversee the EPA aspect of the apprenticeship not the whole degree qualification nor the training aspect of the apprenticeship, and they are expected to provide a report specifically on the EPA, in addition to any responsibilities the External Examiner has as an External Examiner for the academic course.

Prior to delivery, EPAOs are required to provide details of any external examiner arrangements and confirm that an external examiner appointed will be able to undertake the role and produce the information required for the EQA monitoring process. If there are areas of the EPA that cannot be covered by the External Examiner, the EPAO should provide details of alternative exceptional arrangements.

2

EPAOs may choose to have more than one external examiner for the EPA. This may be the case when more than one external examiner is required to ensure that the requirement for up-to-date industry experience is met.

EPAOs will be asked in the readiness check submission 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. EPAOs will need to make sure, and be able to evidence that, external examiners have access to regular updates to ensure their practice is current and consistent with expectations in the sector.

5 Recruitment of Independent Assessors

Each EPA must be assessed by appointed independent assessors.

Independent assessors are selected by the EPAO, with the EPAO responsible for ensuring that the independent assessors are suitably qualified in the relevant occupational area, and are then suitably trained for their role.

A separate Independent End-point Assessors Handbook is provided for Independent Assessors.

5.1 Independence of Assessors

The EPAO is responsible for selecting the independent assessors for each apprenticeship. An independent assessor must not have been involved in the day-to-day training on an apprenticeship, but engaged specifically to conduct the EPA.

An independent assessor must have relevant subject expertise/experience, but may be:

- an internal appointment from University staff outside of the apprenticeship delivery team; or
- appointed from another University or training provider; or
- appointed from within the industry relevant to the apprenticeship standard, providing they are not employed in any capacity by an apprentice's employer.

5.2 Assessor induction and training

All independent assessors must receive a full induction, as managed by the EPAO office. The induction process should cover:

- the proposed EPA assessment methods
- the proposed EPA schedule
- details of the resit policy for the standard
- safeguarding, ethics and quality assurance processes
- expectations of the assessor in terms of marking deadlines, feedback and availability
- Payment details for assessors.
- Details of any relevant University Regulations or policies.

In addition, all independent assessors must receive formal training covering the role of the independent assessor in the EPA and the standards they are looking for in apprentices.

All independent assessors should receive annual refresher training.

Training may be provided by the University or through an external provider.

5.3 Recognised Teacher Status

Internal Assessors are required to take up Recognised Teacher Status (RTS) in order to assess an apprentice's performance at their EPA, in line with University regulations on the assessment of students.

Full details of the RTS application process are provided in the Senate Handbook on Managing Postgraduate Taught Courses.

6 Academic course and Gateway

6.1 Overall course design

Each integrated apprenticeship comprises of taught modules and the EPA. An integrated apprenticeship should be designed with the apprenticeship standard as a starting point. The requirements and expected KSBs for the apprenticeship standard should lead the development of the taught aspects of the integrated award.

For taught modules which assess the taught elements of the apprenticeship, Module-level Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) should be mapped to the Apprenticeship standard KSBs.

6.2 Taught modules

All taught modules that apprentices undertake as part of their apprenticeship are subject to the rules set out in the University's [Assessment Rules for Postgraduate Taught Courses](#) or the [Undergraduate Awards Handbook](#).

These assessment rules set out the University's standard assessment rules, including definition of assessment types, pass criteria for individual assessments, the policy on the resit of taught assessments and implications on overall award outcome of failure of course components. The Handbook also details the University's policies on assessment conventions and standards, examination and assignment procedures, students' responsibilities in assessment, the 'fit to sit' policy and consideration of exceptional circumstances/deferral of modules or assessments.

The details set out in the Assessment Rules Handbook in relation to theses or other major Independent Research Projects (IRPs) do not apply in full to apprentices studying on an integrated apprenticeship, where the rules set out in the Apprenticeship Standard Assessment Plan take precedence.

6.3 End-point Assessment in context of an academic award

In an integrated apprenticeship the EPA replaces the independent research project normally undertaken as part of an award. The EPA is considered to be a large project in which apprentices apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they have developed across their taught programme.

6.4 Gateway

Gateway is the period of time between an apprentice completing their training and commencing their EPA.

The purpose of Gateway is to ensure that the apprentice, employer and training provider are all confident that the apprentice:

- has completed their on-programme learning
- is working at the level of the apprenticeship standard, and
- is ready to undertake their EPA.

There will be a Gateway meeting, which may take place either in person or remotely by video call. The meeting will be attended by the apprentice, a representative from the apprentice's employer (often their line manager) and a representative from the training provider (usually a tutor or coach).

To enter Gateway, the apprentice must have completed and achieved the minimum requirements necessary to undertake the EPA in order to show that they have acquired the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours necessary for their job role.

The apprentice, employer and training provider must all be in agreement that the apprentice is ready to enter Gateway.

The requirements for Gateway vary, and are set out in each apprenticeship standard's assessment plan. Typically apprentices are required to:

- display occupational competency
- have evidence of or pass functional skill levels in English and maths
- have completed any mandatory training
- have taken any qualifications set out in the standard
- meet the minimum duration for their apprenticeship training
- submit a signed Gateway declaration form
- complete a portfolio of evidence

7 EPA Assessment Design

Each Apprenticeship Standard will contain an Assessment Plan, which will set out the requirements of the EPA. Assessment Plans are specific to individual apprenticeship standards, and are tailored to the relevant industry and area of study.

7.1 EPA Design Process

The EPA design must be submitted to ESFA as part of the University's application to become an EPAO, and is usually completed at the course development stage. The EPA design is then formally agreed by the Course Validation Panel responsible for new courses, or Course Review Panel where changes are being made to existing provision to convert a course into an integrated apprenticeship.

7.2 EPA Design

The Assessment Plan for each apprenticeship standard will contain details of the expected contents, assessment and assessment methods for the EPA. These will vary from standard to standard and course teams will need to analyse the Assessment Plan in order to devise an appropriate EPA.

Each EPA usually will have at least two types of assessment. Possible methods of assessment for EPAs are set by the IfATE standard, and include, but are not limited to:

On-the-job assessment/Observation Involves an independent assessor observing an apprentice undertaking a task or series of tasks in the workplace as part of their normal duties ('on-the-job'/naturally occurring). This must be complemented by questioning from the independent assessor during or/and after the observation. Observational assessment is deemed the most appropriate assessment method for practical skills; by watching the apprentice complete a task, they can demonstrate their occupational competence.

Professional discussion Is a two-way discussion between an independent assessor and an apprentice to assess the apprentice's in-depth understanding of their work. In this respect, it differs from an interview, which tends to consist of an independent assessor asking questions and the apprentice answering them, with less scope for interaction and discussion. Professional discussions should not be led by the independent assessor as it involves both the independent assessor and the apprentice actively listening and participating in a formal conversation, giving the apprentice the opportunity to make detailed and proactive contributions to confirm their competency across the KSBs mapped to this method. When determining whether a professional discussion or interview should be selected as an assessment method, consider how the KSBs are best assessed.

Practical demonstration Involves an independent assessor observing an apprentice undertaking a set task or a series of set tasks in a simulated environment for example at a training provider or specialist center. It allows the apprentice to demonstrate their procedural knowledge and skills of 'how to do something'. This can be complemented by questioning from the independent assessor during or after the test.

Project Using a project as an assessment method involves the apprentice completing a significant and defined piece of work after the gateway. This could involve a written essay, or in practical occupations, producing an item (an 'apprentice piece/artefact') which an independent assessor can review and assess. The project should be designed to ensure that the apprentice's work meets the needs of the business, is relevant to their role and allows the relevant KSBs to be demonstrated for the EPA. Therefore, the project's subject and scope will be agreed between the employer and the EPAO. The employer will ensure it has a real business application and value and that the EPAO will ensure it meets the requirements of the EPA (including suitable coverage of the KSBs assigned to this assessment method).

It is important to note that the most appropriate methods of assessment for the EPA will depend on the specific skills, knowledge and behaviours being assessed and the occupation of the apprenticeship program.

Where a course has both an integrated apprenticeship route and a non-apprenticeship route the EPA (integrated apprenticeship route) and IRP/Professional Project (non-apprenticeship route) do not need to be identical, but must still cover the same expected ILOs for the course (which will usually be based on the KSBs given in the apprenticeship standard).

7.3 Moderation of EPAs

For integrated apprenticeships the EPA usually replaces the Masters level IRP usually undertaken as part of a course, and is a significant part (usually $\geq 30\%$) of the final credit value for the academic award. At undergraduate it usually replaces the Professional Project (30 credits) through the size of the EPA in credit terms is often outlined in the standard's assessment plan.

As such, and as per the University's guidance on moderation, all EPAs should have moderation applied to them. Full guidance on moderation of assessments can be found in section 17 of the [Senate Handbook on Managing Postgraduate Taught Courses](#) and section 11.2 of the [Senate Handbook on Managing Undergraduate Taught Courses](#). Typically all substantial assessments (assessments worth 40 credits or more) should be double-marked, however course teams should decide the most appropriate form of moderation for the EPAs, based on the EPA type and requirements of the EPA standard, and set out the intended moderation process in the EPA assessment documentation.

7.4 EPA Grading

Upon completion of the EPA, apprentices will be provided with an overall grade (Fail, Pass or Distinction) towards the apprenticeship. This final grade will be based upon all components of the EPA as detailed in each Apprenticeship Standard and associated Assessment Plan.

In order for the final academic award to be made, the EPA will be given a numerical grade by course teams to allow the final overall grade for the academic award to be calculated.

Course teams should detail the intended method for converting the EPA grade to a final numerical mark in the EPA assessment documentation as part of the course validation or course review process, and provide this information to apprentices in their course documentation. The University's standard [Qualitative Assessment Criteria](#) are a useful starting point for this.

7.5 EPA Reassessment

All assessments undertaken as part of the taught modules of an integrated apprenticeship are subject to the University's standard reassessment policy as set out in the Assessment Rules for Postgraduate Taught Courses and the Undergraduate Awards Handbook.

The EPA, however, is not subject to the University's standard policies for IRPs/Professional Projects. All apprenticeship standards set out the specific reassessment policy for the EPA for that standard, and the permissible number of reassessments and method of reassessment varies across each standard.

The reassessment policy for each standard is set by IfATE and takes precedent over the University's standard policy for non-integrated apprenticeship courses.

The reassessment policy set out in the standard should be considered and taken into account when devising the EPA for each integrated apprenticeship, and apprentices must be advised of the reassessment arrangements for their apprenticeship in their course documentation.

If ATE defines two types of reassessment for EPAs:

- i a retake, which requires a period of further learning before the learner can attempt the EPA again;
- ii a resit, which does not require further learning before attempting reassessment of the EPA or the failed component of the EPA.

7.6 Supporting Apprentices with the EPA

Apprentices will need to devise a proposal for their EPA, where the EPA assessment requires a major written contribution or other practical project.

EPA Proposals should normally be submitted to the apprentice's Supervisor and company mentor within 10 days of the end of their final taught module in order to allow sufficient time for the proposal to be reviewed and approved, unless otherwise specified in the apprenticeship standard/EPA plan. Where the supervisor and company mentor feel the proposal is lacking they will work with the apprentice to improve impact on the company.

Depending on each apprenticeship standard, Supervisors and company mentors may be able to support apprentices with their EPA assessments in a supervisory capacity, however apprentices must ensure that all work contained in the EPA assessment is their own.

7.7 EPA reasonable adjustments and exceptional circumstances

Reasonable adjustments

The University has provision for the accommodation of reasonable adjustments for all students, including apprentices. Learning Support Officers in the Student Wellbeing and Disability Support team alongside the Apprenticeships Office support requests for reasonable adjustments, which may be applied to all assessment including the EPA, although the relevant apprenticeship standard assessment plan should be consulted to ensure any proposed adjustments are permissible in the assessment plan.

Exceptional circumstances

The University has an exceptional circumstances policy as set out in the Senate Handbooks on Assessment Rules for Postgraduate Taught Courses and Undergraduate Awards. These Handbooks should be consulted for full details of the policy and how to make an exceptional circumstances request.

8 EPA practical arrangements for pre- and post-assessment

The current distribution of responsibilities for the practical arrangements involved in the EPA are set out in Appendix A of this Handbook. The End-point Assessment Organisation Office will be responsible for a large number of these functions, including:

- Allocation and communication of EPA dates to apprentices, employers and stakeholders
- Ensuring gateway completion and keeping accurate records of this
- Where necessary, ensuring processes for reasonable adjustments for apprentices are followed
- Collation and retention of information on EPAs undertaken and payments received
- Communication of EPA outcomes to apprentices, employers and key stakeholders
- Requesting Apprenticeship Certificates from ESFA, including proof of apprentice consent
- Employer liaison
- Management of post-EPA queries
- Assisting with EPA and apprenticeship-related complaints and appeals (through existing Casework process)

Practical arrangements for the academic aspects of the integrated awards are managed through the standard existing processes in School SAS teams and Registry. This includes communication of apprentices' final academic award outcome and provision of the award certificate.

9 Academic Misconduct, Complaints and Appeals

9.1 General information

All apprentices, by registering as students, agree to abide by the University's Regulations, policies, Handbooks and other guidance, and are subject to the University's [Student Disciplinary Procedures Handbook](#). They also agree to uphold the expected standards of academic integrity and abide by the University's Academic Misconduct policies:

[Academic Misconduct Student Disciplinary Procedures Handbook](#)

Should an apprentice have a concern or complaint about any aspect of their apprenticeship, including their EPA, they should follow the processes set out in the Senate Handbook on [Student Complaints](#).

Should an apprentice wish to make an academic appeal on any aspect of their integrated apprenticeship aside from their EPA, they should follow the processes set out for all students in the Senate Handbook on [Academic Appeals](#).

A specific process exists for appeals about the outcome of an EPA, which are set out in section 10 of this Handbook.

9.2 Employer complaints process

The University has a specific employer complaints procedure for employers who are unsatisfied with any element of an apprenticeship, including the End-point Assessment. This procedure can be found on the University website [here](#).

10 EPA outcome appeals procedure

10.1 Introduction

The University, in its role as an End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) uses robust and rigorous mechanisms in its End-point Assessment (EPA) processes, and ensure that all apprentices are awarded a final grade comensurate with their performance in their EPA.

The University recognises that apprentices who fail their EPA may feel dissatisfied with the outcome of their assessment, grade or the conduct of the EPA assessors in coming to their decision about their EPA outcome and believe that this is through no fault of their own.

The informal and formal procedures outlined in this procedure are approved by the University for students to appeal against such decisions and to request a re-consideration of their EPA performance.

This procedure applies only to EPAs conducted by Cranfield University as the EPAO. Where an apprentice has completed an EPA with another EPAO they must follow the appeals process for that EPAO, which may differ from this procedure. EPAOs may charge a fee for submission and/or consideration of outcome appeals. Cranfield, in its roles as an EPAO does not currently charge a fee to apprentices who wish to appeal their EPA outcome.

The processes for EPA appeal outcomes are similar to the processes for academic appeals, which are cross-referenced in the below procedure.

10.2 General principles

What's the difference between an appeal and a complaint?

Apprentices are advised that if they believe their dissatisfaction with their EPA outcome is not a result of their own actions or inactions, there are generally two avenues open to them:

- a) they may wish to make an **EPA outcome appeal** – because they believe that something has gone wrong with the assessment process. (There are specific and limited grounds for appeal as set out in Section 10.5);
- b) they may wish to make a **complaint** – because they believe their failure is a result of actions (or lack of actions) on the part of the University in their preparation of the apprentice for their EPA, or in its role as the EPAO. Such matters cannot be addressed through the outcome appeal process, but should be raised as a student complaint (see the Senate Handbook on Student Complaints for more details).

Who can make an EPA outcome appeal?

Only apprentices who have completed an EPA with Cranfield University as the EPAO may appeal their EPA outcome through these procedures. Apprentices whose EPA was undertaken by another EPAO should use the appeals process of that EPAO.

In addition to submissions from apprentices, the EPAO Office may accept appeals submitted on behalf of an apprentice by their employer.

10.3 Broad outline of the stages of an investigation

EPA outcome appeals are managed in the following way:

- STAGE 1** *informal investigation*
- apprentices submit an EPA outcome appeal to the EPAO office, who engage with the assessors to review the case
 - apprentices are required to demonstrate how their appeal meets the published grounds for appeal
 - this Stage is intended to highlight and resolve quickly any genuine oversight or corrections that may have occurred

Apprentices have the right to appeal any decision made at Stage 1 under certain circumstances – see Stage 2.

- STAGE 2** *formal investigation*
- detailed enquiries and a full and documented investigation is undertaken by an assessor not involved in the initial EPA assessment
 - apprentices will normally be expected to provide commentary on the investigatory report from Stage 1
 - outcomes may be dismissal of the appeal, or to fully or partially uphold the appeal, with recommendations to the relevant assessors on how to take corrective action

Apprentices have the right to request a review of any decision made at Stage 2 under certain circumstances – see Stage 3.

- STAGE 3** *review*
- apprentices may request a review of the outcome of Stage 2 under certain circumstances
 - the EPAO office can either dismiss the request (if it does not fall within the permitted grounds) or will appoint one or more independent investigators to review how the original investigation(s) was conducted
 - the review will either be dismissed by the investigators, or the matter referred back to the assessors with a requirement to come to a new decision on the EPA outcome.

10.4 Conduct of investigations

Both apprentices and investigators are entitled to specific rights; these apply to all internal stages of an investigation (i.e. Stages 1, 2 and 3). Apprentices should pay close attention to these, as failure to adhere to them may result in their appeal being dismissed. Staff should ensure that students' rights are upheld, otherwise students may have grounds for a review. Full details of the conduct of investigations can be found in section 4 of the Senate Handbook on [Academic Appeals](#).

10.5 Grounds for appeal

EPA outcome appeals relate to the decisions of the EPA Assessors when considering an apprentice's EPA, and the processes by which they have come to those decisions. Failure to pass their EPA does not grant an apprentice an automatic right of appeal.

Apprentices must provide a written statement (emailed to the EPAO Office) outlining the reasons why they believe the assessment process has not been appropriate, and clearly stating which of the following grounds (or categories) their appeal relates to:

- A. that there were administrative errors in one or more parts of the assessment process, to the extent where the assessment outcome would have been different;

- B. that the assessment of the EPA was not carried out in accordance with the relevant apprenticeship standard or other published material;
- C. that the assessment of the apprentice was incomplete, resulting in an absence of marks;
- D. that there was prejudice or bias against the apprentice by one or more of their Assessors.

No other grounds will be accepted, including:

- the academic judgement of the Assessors; an apprentice cannot appeal because they believe that the Assessors views were incorrect, or that the Assessors did not understand the apprentice's work or their answers;
- requests for late consideration of "exceptional circumstances" (see section 7.7), including taking into consideration personal, medical or other circumstances that the student believes affected their academic performance at the time;
- a failure on the apprentice's part to submit any required work or documentation on time or to attend the EPA without good cause (exceptional circumstances);

Apprentices must clarify which grounds they are appealing on in order for their EPA outcome appeal to be accepted, and it should be supported by any relevant evidence.

Apprentices must submit any appeal (or intention to appeal) within twenty working days of the EPAO issuing notification of the result. The appeal should be made in writing, emailing it to the EPAO office.

An EPA outcome appeal (at any stage) may not be considered if:

- (a) it is not based on one of the permitted grounds of appeal; or
- (b) the apprentice has not provided sufficient evidence to merit an investigation; or
- (c) it was submitted out of time.

Apprentices are expected to provide details of the outcome of their EPA, any feedback received from the Assessors and a commentary on the information submitted.

The grounds for appeal are the same for each stage of the EPA outcome appeal process.

If an EPA outcome appeal is upheld alternative outcomes or remedies may include:

- the apprentice reundertaking the EPA as though it was a first (or subsequent) attempt (with the same or different assessors)
- a revised grade being issued for the EPA.

10.6 Stage 1 – Informal investigation

The focus of the Stage 1 appeal is an informal one and is intended to resolve quickly any genuine mistakes, omissions or oversights.

The following process will be followed for informal Stage 1 appeals:

- Apprentice submits an EPA outcome appeal.
- EPAO office reviews the appeal to determine if it can be accepted.
- If accepted, within ten working days of receipt the EPAO office forward the appeal to the apprentice's EPA Assessor(s).
- The EPA Assessor(s) will consider the appeal within twenty working days and provide a statement to the EPAO office showing that all aspects of the appeal have been addressed, and recommending either that the appeal is dismissed, or that it is upheld (in full or in part) with or without a revised outcome to the EPA.
- The EPAO office will inform the apprentice of the outcome of the appeal.

10.7 Stage 2 – Formal investigation

If an apprentice believes that the result of the informal investigation (Stage 1) has been unfair or inappropriate, then they may make a formal appeal, with the investigation now carried out by people who were not involved in the original EPA assessment decision. The grounds for appeal are the same as those outlined in Section 10.5.

Any Stage 2 appeal must be submitted by the apprentice within twenty working days of the notification of the outcome of a Stage 1 appeal.

In addition to the requirements for a Stage 1 appeal, apprentices must submit:

- a) a re-statement of the grounds under which they are appealing;
- b) a commentary or statement on the Stage 1 report/statement, including any inaccuracies they believe are in it.

Apprentices may also include additional evidence, but any additional evidence must be accompanied by a statement to explain why this was not presented at Stage 1.

The following process will be followed for formal Stage 2 appeals:

- Apprentice submits an EPA outcome appeal.
- EPAO office reviews the appeal to determine if it can be accepted
- If accepted, within ten working days of receipt the EPAO office forward the appeal to an Independent Assessor for investigation.
- The investigator will:
 - Write to the apprentice within ten working days to introduce themselves;
 - consider the Stage 1 investigation, and any additional evidence submitted;
 - meet with the apprentice if required to discuss the appeal;
 - produce a formal report setting out their investigation, evidence considered and findings;
 - then, within twenty working days, provide a statement to the EPAO office showing that all aspects of the appeal have been addressed, and recommending either that the appeal is dismissed, or that it is upheld (in full or in part) with or without a revised outcome to the EPA;
 - keep the apprentice informed of the progress of the investigation at all times.
- The EPAO office will inform the apprentice of the outcome of the appeal.

10.8 Stage 3 – Review

If an apprentice believes that the result of the formal investigation (Stage 2) has been inappropriate based on the published grounds, they may request a review of the decision in writing to the EPAO Office. A request for a review will only be accepted if it is made within twenty working days of the apprentice's receipt of the Stage 2 report.

Apprentices have the right to request a review of the Stage 2 outcome under the following circumstances only:

- A. that the evidence provided to the Stage 2 investigators was incomplete or inaccurate, to the extent where it is reasonable to conclude that the outcome may have been substantially different;
- B. that the Stage 2 investigators had summarily dismissed significant pieces of evidence in coming to their decision;
- C. that the Stage 2 investigators had not made clear recommendations on each element of the EPA outcome appeal;
- D. that the Stage 2 investigators were prejudiced or biased against the student, including any undisclosed conflicts of interest;

- E. that the recommendations from the Stage 2 investigation were not considered appropriately by the Assessors.

Apprentices may not request a review because they do not like the outcome of their appeal, or because they believe that the recommended redress is unfair or inadequate.

Any review request must:

- (a) be submitted in writing to the EPAO Office within twenty working days of the notification of the outcome of a Stage 2 appeal;
- (b) state clearly which of the grounds A, B, C, D and/or E above are relevant to the request;
- (c) provide a clear statement of the foundation for the request, including a commentary on the Stage 2 report, and evidence to support this statement (b) above; and
- (d) outline a preferred outcome or solution for any investigator to consider.

Stage 3 reviews do not reconsider the appeal but look at the process of the previous investigations, in line with the stated grounds for requesting a review.

The following process will be followed for Stage 3 reviews:

- Apprentice submits a request for a review of their appeal outcome.
- EPAO office reviews the request to determine if it can be accepted.
- If accepted, within ten working days of receipt the EPAO office forward the appeal to two Independent Assessors not previously involved in the case for investigation.
- The investigators will jointly:
 - Write to the apprentice within ten working days to introduce themselves;
 - review the Stage 1 and 2 investigations, and any additional evidence submitted;
 - consider if the previous investigations have been conducted fairly, in line with the set process and with reference to the stated grounds of appeal;
 - produce a formal report setting out their investigation, evidence considered and findings;
 - agree an outcome for the review;
 - then, within twenty working days, provide a statement to the EPAO office showing that all aspects of the appeal have been addressed, and recommending either that the review is dismissed, or that it is upheld (in full or in part) with the Assessors recommended to consider a revised outcome;
 - keep the apprentice informed of the progress of the investigation at all times.
- The EPAO office will inform the apprentice of the outcome of the review.

At the completion of Stage 3, any decision made will be considered to be final and complete, with no further right of appeal. This is equally true if any appeal or request for a review is rejected, or if an apprentice has no grounds for appeal.

11 Ongoing Quality Assurance processes

The University carries out ongoing quality assurance of apprenticeships through its standard mechanisms for periodic review of courses. In addition, integrated apprenticeships are monitored by external examiners through the University's standard external examiner processes as set out in the Managing Taught Courses Handbook for Postgraduate apprenticeships and Managing Undergraduates Handbook for undergraduate apprenticeships.

In addition, employers and apprentices are involved in the review and evaluation of all aspects of the apprenticeship provision through completion of surveys and involvement in course development. These processes are managed by the course delivery team.

12 EPA conflict of interest policy

12.1 Introduction

In its role as an End-point Assessment Organisation Cranfield University is required to deliver an independent and objective assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard, to ensure the integrity of both the apprenticeship programme and any associated academic award.

The independence of assessment includes ensuring that there is a clear separation between delivery of the apprenticeship programme and the conduct of the End-point Assessment (EPA). The University is committed to ensuring the independence of the EPA assessment and that any conflict (or perceived conflict) of interest of anyone involved in the EPA process does not affect their judgement or influence their objectivity when making decisions.

12.2 Definition

A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which the University, or an individual employed or engaged by the University to participate in the EPA process (including the Independent Assessors) has competing interests or loyalties; a vested interest in the outcome of the assessment; or previous involvement in the training of the apprentice in question. Consideration should also be given as to whether a conflict of interest may be perceived by others, and any conflicts (or concerns that may be perceived as conflicts) should be declared in advance of the EPA.

12.3 Examples of potential conflicts of interest

Examples of actual or perceived conflicts of interest related to EPAs include (but are not limited to) where a person:

- has a current or previous involvement in the delivery of the academic aspect of the apprenticeship course;
- is employed by or has any formal professional link with the organisation employing the apprentice undergoing the EPA (unless the apprentice is an employee of the University, in which case any individual involved in the EPA process will have no line management responsibility for the apprentice);
- has a prior link or relationship (professional or personal) with the apprentice;
- has friends, relatives or colleagues taking the apprenticeship programme to which the EPA is aligned;
- is working for an organisation that is in direct competition with the University; where the University believe this to be the case the assessor will be required to complete and sign a non-disclosure agreement relevant to aspects of their activity.
- may in some way derive a personal or business gain from the outcome of the assessment;
- has any other interest(s) that may compromise their assessment decisions.

12.4 The University's responsibilities

As an End-point Assessment Organisation, the University will:

- ensure that there is a clear separation between apprenticeship programme delivery and the conduct of the EPA. This includes ensuring anyone involved in an EPA has not also had involvement in, nor has any responsibility for any on-programme delivery, line-management or on-programme assessment of the same apprentices;
- ensure that any involvement in the training or support of apprentices or the apprenticeship programmes provided by the University does not conflict with the independence of the EPA process;
- ensure that anyone involved in the EPA process is free from any conflicts of interest that could adversely affect their independence or objective judgement in undertaking the EPA robustly (in line with the relevant assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard);
- ensure that individuals involved in the EPA are aware of their obligation to declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest;
- ensure the independency of the assessors involved in the EPA.

12.5 Disclosure of conflicts of interest (actual or perceived)

All individuals involved in the EPA of apprentices must, on appointment, (and then whenever a conflict becomes apparent), disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the End-point Assessment Office. Any identified potential or actual conflict of interest will be considered by the End-point Assessment Office with the course team, who will attempt to resolve the conflict. If this is not possible, or further guidance is required the matter will be escalated to the Academic Registrar.

Any action taken should be recorded by the End-point Assessment Office, and if the conflicted individual remains part of the EPA process, the conflict should be reported to the EPA Assessors. Following disclosure of a conflict of interest, wherever possible and practicable, the University will remove the individual concerned from involvement in that apprentice's EPA. Where, for whatever reason, it is not possible for that individual's involvement in an apprentice's EPA to be restricted, the University will:

- ensure the individual is aware of and understands the importance of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in the EPA, and that the individual provides a written undertaking to uphold these principles at all times in light of their conflict or perceived conflict; and
- provide additional scrutiny of that individual's role in the EPA, and of the overall EPA process through the appointment of an additional unconflicted person to support the EPA.

The University's End-point Assessment Office will maintain a register of all declared conflicts of interest as part of its commitment to ensuring independence when selecting individuals for the development, administration, delivery and marking of EPAs.

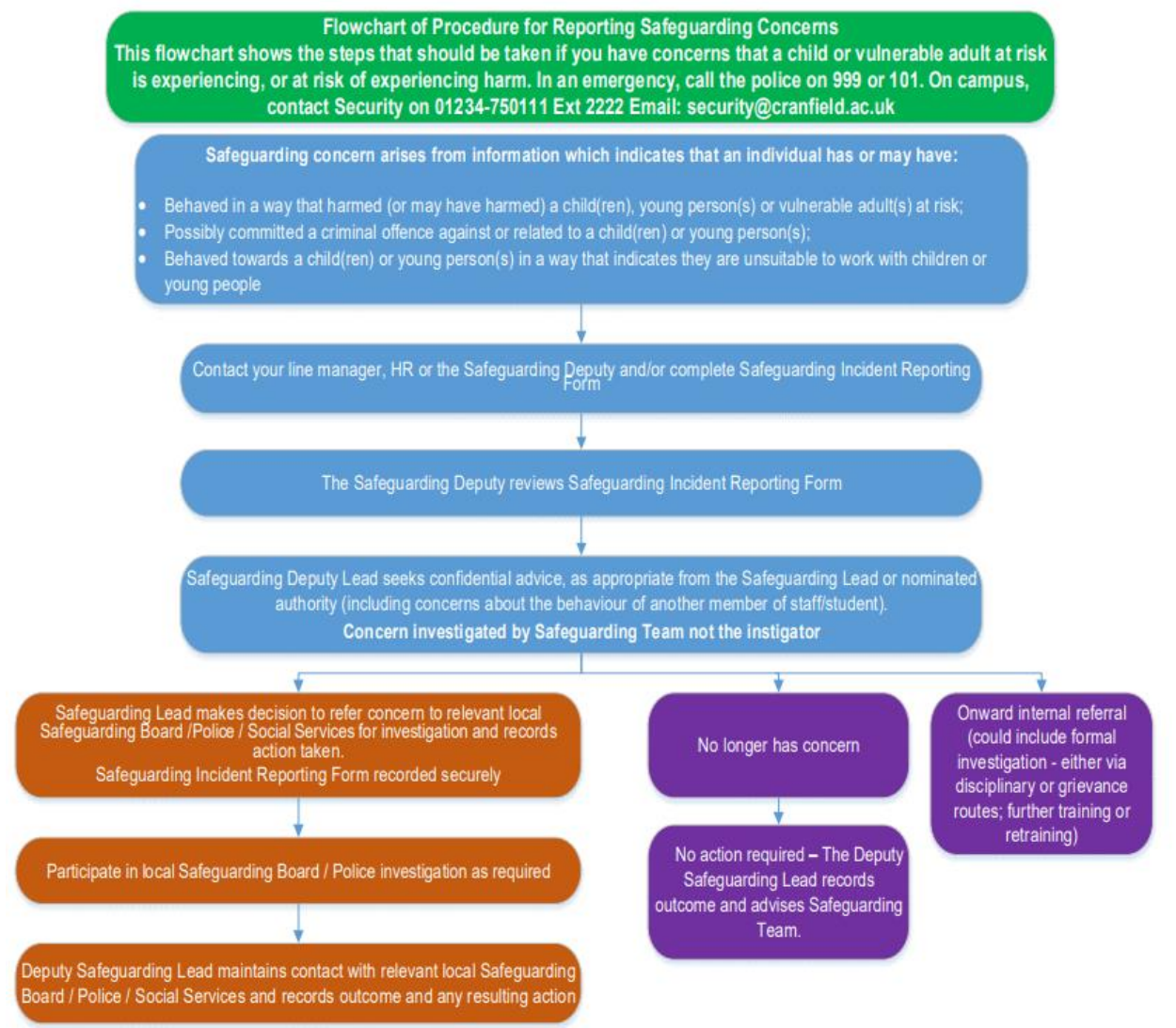
13 Safeguarding

All persons involved in the delivery of integrated apprenticeships and the EPA must be aware of and abide by the University's [Safeguarding Policy](#).

The University is committed to protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and safeguard those vulnerable to being drawn into extremism, in line with its legal obligations. These obligations extend to all who access our services, grounds or facilities and participate in our activities, to include staff, Recognised Teachers, students, contractors and volunteers/visitors, as well as individuals who engage with the University through research and innovation activities. This is regardless of whether they take part in-situ or virtually through online communication systems.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all individuals play a role in preventing, reporting and responding to allegations of exploitation, abuse or harm, in particular those staff who teach, support, guide or in any way interact with students. It is incumbent on all staff to be aware of their responsibilities and act accordingly at all times.

The University has a formal [Safeguarding Policy](#) which underpins its approach to safeguarding. The below flowchart sets out the procedure to be followed should anyone have any concerns regarding the wellbeing of any member of the University.



In addition, the University has a duty to prevent radicalisation and people being drawn into terrorism. Details of the University's approach to its obligations under the UK Prevent Duty can be found on the [University website](#) and in the Senate Handbook on Student Welfare.

14 Data Protection and Privacy

The University will share information about engagement, progress and achievement of students on apprenticeship programmes with employers and other bodies at regular intervals, as set out in the University's [Student Privacy Notice](#).

Appendix A Roles and responsibilities in relation to integrated apprenticeships

Currently a wide range of staff from across the University are involved in the administration and delivery of integrated apprenticeships. A number of the tasks undertaken by these staff are set out below.

1 EPAO Registration

Completion and submission of Application	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Collection of information on Assessors	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Collection of information on professional standards	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Collection of information on end-point assessment delivery model	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Collection of end-point assessment competence information	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Collection of online information	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Notification to ESFA if not ready to deliver EPA when indicated in Stage 2 Application	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Annual confirmation of details in Stage 2 application	Course Team with EPAO Office support
ESFA readiness check	EPAO Office
Assessment, Occupational Capacity and Capabilities reconfirmation	Course Team with EPAO Office support
Ensure that there is agreed set of charges and document service to be delivered	Finance Team with Course Team and EPAO Office support
Contract with Employers to provide EPA	University legal team
Contribute to Trailblazer Standard/EPA development	Course Team (if invited by IfATE)
Support development of Costing model, share practice, and advise Schools	Finance Team with Course Team, School and EPAO Office support

2 EPA Assessment and Assessor Support

Full understanding of all EPA elements and associated requirements prior to starting (i.e., projects, proposals, reports, etc).	Course Team, EPAO Office
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Organising and advising on EPA arrangements, travel & accommodation for assessors, support on day (e.g. record assessment) - between apprentice, employer, assessor (to include re-sits and re-takes)	EPAO Office
Scheduling and booking of EPA elements within programme schedule.	EPAO Office
Ensuring the creation and development of EPA assessment materials in collaboration with academic team to include marking rubrics	Course Team, EPAO Office
Management of submissions by apprentices (set up, distribution) - which platform, Turnitin, Canvas, etc, Communications and reminders	EPAO Office. SAS
Monitoring of assessments (marking distribution, moderation, recording of marks)	EPAO Office
Recruitment and Training of Assessors	EPAO Office
POs and payments for external examiners, plus raising contracts/ensuring adequate coverage to meet EPA pipeline	EPAO Office
Develop, review and revise standard assessment/outcome/moderation and feedback paperwork	EPAO Office
Collect, collate and record assessment outcomes (chase as necessary to keep in line with deadlines as set out in the delivery plans).	EPAO Office, SAS, Registry

3 End-point Assessment Processes

Development of EPA support materials	EPAO Office, Course Team
Allocate and communicate EPA dates to apprentices, employers and stakeholders	EPAO Office
Follow the process in place for checking an apprentice has passed Gateway Review with employer approval and maintain records of such information	EPAO Office
EPAO process for reasonable adjustments	EPAO Office
Retain information on EPAs undertaken, payments received, coordinate resit invoicing, etc.	EPAO Office, Finance and Registry
Communicate EPA outcomes to apprentices, employers and key stakeholders	EPAO Office
Request Apprenticeship Certificate from ESFA, including proof of apprentice consent	EPAO Office
Employer liaison	Apprenticeships Office

Preparation for EPA, including milestone sessions to deliver guidance and information to apprentices and employers on EPA requirements.	EPAO Office
Management of post-EPA queries	EPAO Office
Assisting with EPA and apprenticeship-related complaints and appeals (through existing Casework process)	EPAO Office

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Department	Education Services
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