

# A guide to Quality Assurance of Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment

This guide provides an overview on the End-Point Assessment (EPA) internal and external quality assurance process at De Montfort University (DMU). It is aimed at both staff and externals involved with EPA.

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# 2022/23

## Introduction

End-point assessment (EPA) is the final stage of an apprenticeship. It aims to impartially assess whether the apprentice has developed the skills, knowledge and behaviours learnt during the course, as outlined in the apprenticeship standard.

This guide provides an overview of EPA quality assurance processes for **integrated** and **fully-integrated programmes** where DMU acts as the end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) and delivers the EPA. The quality assurance of EPA aims to ensure that we are conducting them fairly, consistently and robustly.

Please note that non-integrated apprenticeship programmes are outside of the scope of this guide. In this instance, an external EPAO is appointed to deliver the EPA who is responsible for managing their own quality assurance procedures.

It is **essential** that this guide is read alongside the relevant [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education \(IfATE\) assessment plan](#) given that each EPA will have its own specific activity requiring its own set of detailed procedures and processes. **It is the assessment plan which takes precedence over this guide.**

Our **internal quality assurance (IQA)** processes include:

- ensuring that EPA is undertaken correctly
- assuring funding bodies and employers that EPA is being delivered effectively
- appointing and conducting appropriate training for Independent Assessors
- having effective monitoring processes which enable continual improvement

Our IQA processes are essential to ensuring that we meet the requirements of **external quality assurance (EQA)** bodies who will annually monitor the quality of our EPA provision.

A full glossary of terminology used within this guide can be found at the end of this document.

References:

- [Conditions for being on the register of end-point assessment organisations](#), gov.uk, Nov 2021
- [EQA Framework](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, Feb 2020
- [External Quality Assurance of End-Point Assessment for Integrated Higher and Degree Apprenticeships](#), Designated Quality Body in England, June 2022

# Contents

<b>Section 1: External Quality Assurance</b>	<b>4</b>
Readiness check .....	4
Support materials.....	4
Monitoring Activities.....	5
Monitoring check .....	5
EQA External Assessor monitoring .....	6
Ongoing monitoring by the assigned DQB Officer.....	6
<b>Section 2: Independent Assessors (integrated apprenticeships only)</b>	<b>7</b>
Role and responsibilities.....	7
CPD requirements .....	7
Recording annual training and CPD .....	8
Appointment process .....	8
Potential sources of new Independent Assessors .....	8
Requirements for appointment .....	9
Conflict of interest .....	9
Appointment process.....	9
Induction and training (integrated only).....	10
Tenure.....	12
Payment and expenses .....	12
Termination.....	12
Resignation .....	12
<b>Section 3: EQA External Assessor</b>	<b>12</b>
Role and responsibilities.....	13
Appointment criteria.....	15
<b>Section 4: Preparing for the EPA</b>	<b>15</b>
Preparations for Independent Assessors (integrated only) .....	15
Preparations for EQA External Assessor .....	15
Preparation of assessments (integrated only) .....	16
Reasonable adjustments .....	16
Gateway confirmation .....	16
<b>Section 5: Grading and claiming certificates</b>	<b>17</b>
EPA grading and moderation (integrated only).....	17
Grading .....	17
Moderation .....	17
Progression & Award Board ratification of grades and claiming EPA certificates....	17
Integrated apprenticeships.....	17
Fully-integrated apprenticeships.....	18
Resits and retakes.....	18
Failures .....	18

<b>Section 6: Annual quality monitoring</b>	<b>18</b>
Faculty monitoring .....	18
Feedback.....	19
EQA External Assessor good practice and issues logs.....	19
Risk registers.....	19
Maintaining the EPA annual operating procedure (live document).....	19
Programme Self-Assessment Report (PSAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) .....	19
DAQ monitoring .....	20
Annual EPA delivery and monitoring report.....	20
Governance Committee .....	20
<b>Section 7: Complaints and appeals</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Section 8: Further information</b>	<b>20</b>
Proformas .....	20
Further publications.....	21
Acronyms .....	22
Glossary .....	22

## Section 1: External Quality Assurance

External quality assurance (EQA) processes aim to monitor the delivery of end-point assessments (EPAs) to ensure that they are **fair, consistent and robust** across different [apprenticeship standards](#) and between different end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs).

A Designated Quality Body (DQB) is appointed by the Office for Students (OfS) to assess EPA quality and standards. The DQB's role, in general, is to:

- assess the quality and standards of higher education providers
- provide evidence to help the OfS to establish whether providers satisfy the quality conditions of registration
- provide advice to inform the OfS's decisions on providers' powers to award degrees.

The following section provides guidance on how faculties can prepare for their initial readiness check (pre-EPA).

### Readiness check

**Please note that the Readiness Check process was published by the DQB in 2022/23. Some DMU programmes had already been delivering EPA prior to this roll-out, therefore in these instances the Readiness Check will be retrospective where required.**

This guide assumes that EPAO registration has taken place with the Department for Education (DfE), and that the DfE has completed the first stage of the readiness check process. For further information please contact the Central Apprenticeships Team (CAT) and guidance [here](#).

The second stage of the EPA readiness check is conducted by the DQB. Programme teams must prepare for the DQB readiness check to take place **within nine to 12 months after being added to the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO)**, or sooner where EPA is imminent. Support should be sought from the faculty Apprenticeship Lead, or equivalent. Teams will be required to complete a [Readiness Check Document](#) underpinned by documental evidence. Further guidance around the completion of the Readiness Check Document can be found [here](#), which includes examples of suitable documentary evidence.

The Quality Officer (Assessment) will support the team with the completion of the readiness check document in relation to broader university quality assurance processes. Once finalised the Quality Officer (Assessment) will submit the readiness check document and evidence documents via the EQA organisation's portal.

EPA **must not** be delivered until DQB approval to proceed is confirmed. Depending on the outcome of the DQB's readiness check report, the programme team may be required to address any issues identified through the DQB's action planning process prior to EPA delivery. Recommendations may also be made and must be addressed by the programme team. These should be monitored by the Faculty Academic Committee, and overseen by the Academic Quality Committee.

### Support materials

Support resources should be prepared by the programme team **within nine months of being added to the Register of EPAOs**. A range of material should be provided (e.g. templates or

timelines setting out the apprentice journey) for apprentices, employers and independent assessors to ensure that teams meet EQA requirements.

The below is an excerpt from the Readiness Check document which should be used to inform development of the EPA support materials.

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**Relevant**

- What evidence is there that the support materials are appropriate to the Standard and level of the apprenticeship?
- How do the materials reflect current/standard industry practices?
- How often are they updated?
- Would employers recognise their relevance?

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**Reliable**

- Do materials accurately describe and/or represent the assessment that an apprentice will undertake?

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**Efficient**

- How are materials made available (are materials available digitally and at no extra charge?)

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**Positive**

- How are materials made clear and accessible to all apprentices including those for whom reasonable adjustments will be made?

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**Learning**

- Who have materials been tested with and what has been the impact of this?
  - What feedback processes/loops are built in?
- 

## Monitoring Activities

The following section provides guidance on how faculties can prepare for ongoing monitoring by the DQB (post-readiness check).

### Monitoring check

The assigned DQB Officer will arrange monitoring checks to take place annually and usually after each EPA, though frequency may change dependent on risk based on the Readiness Check outcome. Programme teams will be required to complete a [EPAO self-assessment document](#) for their apprenticeship course, underpinned by documentary evidence (including the EQA External Assessor's reports, action plan from the readiness check and outcomes from previous monitoring checks). It is recommended that teams use the documentation submitted for the readiness check as a starting point for this process. Further guidance around the completion of the EPAO self-assessment document, including examples of suitable documentary evidence, can be found in the [EPA monitoring check guide](#).

The Quality Officer (Assessment) will support the team with the completion of the EPAO self-assessment document in relation to the broader university internal quality assurance processes.

A desk-based analysis of the submitted document will then be undertaken by the DQB Assessment team. The following documentary evidence may be requested with a minimum of five days' notice to submit them; therefore, faculties must ensure that the below documents are maintained and securely stored:

- [EPA Annual Operating Procedure](#) (live document to be completed per academic year which keeps record of key dates and processes)
- assessment materials and sign off of any major changes, including:
  - exam papers
  - grading criteria
  - evidence of mapping of KSBs to the EPA
- support materials for apprentices, employers, Independent Assessors around their EPA tasks, and EQA External Assessors
- details of planning for EPA delivery
- feedback from stakeholders, including: apprentices, training providers and employers on the relevance and reliability of assessments delivered
- records of internal quality assurance activities, including standardisation and moderation
- records of any reasonable adjustments, or special considerations granted, and the evidence behind these decisions
- data on EPA including registrations, pass rates and distribution of grades
- conflicts of interest records
- CVs, qualifications, performance reports and continual professional development (CPD) records for Independent Assessors
- strategy for internal quality assurance
- action plan from the readiness check or previous monitoring check (if applicable)
- EQA External Assessor annual report (role to be implemented in 2023/24)

Once the DQB team have analysed the EPAO self-assessment document and evidence they will schedule a visit either virtually, or in-person or not at all depending on risk. A report will then be issued with a graded outcome for the EPA (outstanding-4, good-3, requires improvement-2, inadequate-1).

In response to the report, the faculty and DAQ must submit an action plan (if required) to the DQB with 10 working days which will be reviewed and approved by the assessment team. The next monitoring cycle arrangement will be made based on risk.

### [EQA External Assessor monitoring](#)

The EQA External Assessor is a 'bolt-on' role in addition to the existing External Examiner role (where they meet the requirements) for both integrated and fully-integrated apprenticeship programmes. EQA External Assessors will be required to comment on procedures **specially relating to the EPA** against the requirements of the specific apprenticeship standard.

**Please note that this role does not need to be implemented during 2022/23.** However, as part of current EQA Readiness Check preparations, programme leaders are required to consider whether their existing External Examiner would be willing and suitable to undertake this additional role (see section 3 for further information about the role and responsibilities).

### [Ongoing monitoring by the assigned DQB Officer](#)

This is an ongoing desk-based process where the latest information on the following will be requested:

- responses to the latest action plan to ensure progress is being made against actions and recommendations
- dates of EQA External Assessor visits
- submission of EQA External Assessor reports
- notification of appointment of EQA External Assessors (integrated only), or of External Examiners (fully-integrated only)

## Section 2: Independent Assessors (integrated apprenticeships only)

**This section is provided for integrated apprenticeship programmes only; it is not applicable to fully-integrated programmes.**

Please note that for fully-integrated programmes the EPA starts with the Progression & Award Board and finishes once DMU as EPAO submit the required documents and/or declaration to the respective Professional Body. No additional assessments are required to be undertaken by apprentices post-gateway. The role of External Examiner and Independent Assessor will be conducted by the same individual. Therefore, the External Examiner will attend the Progression & Award Board to act as the independent party within the EPA process.

### Role and responsibilities

The role of the Independent Assessor for integrated EPA is as follows:

- assess and grade the EPAs of assigned apprentices in accordance with the requirements set out for the EPAO
- input grades and feedback for each assessment component into the relevant management system, i.e. ACE360
- moderate other Independent Assessor's grades
- support re-sits/re-takes
- participate in standardisation sessions (see below for more information) prior to each EPA **at least annually**, or per the frequency set in the [assessment plan](#)
- undertake CPD activities (see CPD requirements section below)
- resubmit EPA Independent Assessor Application Form annually, including review of conflicts of interest declaration
- declare of any conflicts of interest with the assigned apprentices and their employer prior to each EPA
- provide feedback post-EPA

### CPD requirements

Evidence of ongoing Independent Assessor CPD is required in order to evidence that they are maintaining their industry knowledge and are up-to-date with key themes that apprentices will be encountering day-to-day in the roles that they will be assessing them in. A **minimum of two days** sector/occupation specific CPD must be undertaken per year; however, some assessment plans include specific CPD requirements which must be met. Guidance about what constitutes CPD can found in the [Independent Assessor Training and CPD Log](#).



## Recording annual training and CPD

Independent Assessor's must record their attendance at training sessions, and any CPD undertaken each year (including standardisation sessions). This should be recorded using the [Independent Assessor Training and CPD Log](#). These must be submitted bi-annually to the Quality Officer (Assessment) and is required of them being able to undertake further EPA. In addition, a newsletter will be circulated by the Quality Officer (Assessment) to all appointed Independent Assessors bi-annually to:

- promote CPD
- promote training and standardisation events
- request Standardisation and CPD logs
- request submission of the [EPA Independent Assessor Application Form](#), including review of conflicts of interest declaration (approx. six months prior to each EPA)

It is the responsibility of the relevant faculty apprenticeship management board to monitor the Independent Assessor Training and CPD Logs to ensure that they have met the specific requirements of the [assessment plan](#) in relation to standardisation training and CPD.

## Appointment process

A **minimum of two** EPA Independent Assessors are to be appointed to each apprenticeship in order to ensure internal moderation can be carried out. Moderation is undertaken in line with the University's Assessment and Feedback Policy.

Faculties may wish to appoint a larger pool of Independent Assessors dependent on the size of the cohort (i.e. one Independent Assessor per 10 apprentices), volume of EPA assessment, and/or to ensure that there is a pool of assessors in case of last-minute assessor unavailability. However, teams should be mindful that there are ongoing requirements for Independent Assessors to maintain their occupational knowledge, CPD and attend mandatory standardisation sessions as specified in the respective [IfATE assessment plan](#). Therefore, it is recommended that teams weigh up the volume of assessors required vs the resources needed to maintain their knowledge as per the assessment plan requirements (see Requirements section below).

## Potential sources of new Independent Assessors

The programme leader may seek interest for new EPA Independent Assessors via the following means:

- Make arrangements with other organisations (such as **other EPAOs and professional bodies**) to facilitate the recruiting of suitable industry experts and Independent Assessors. In such circumstances, faculties must ensure that any conflicts of interest are managed and it must be clear that whilst performing their assessor role, Independent Assessors are doing this on behalf of DMU as the registered EPAO.
- Contact a previous programme **validation external panel member** who may be able to act as Independent Assessor or recommend a suitable alternative. The faculty should balance the benefits of engaging someone who is familiar with the programme and its rationale with any risk to their ability to provide a fully independent perspective.
- Advertise the role online via **JISC mail** - a national UK academic community mailing service. Please contact the Quality Officer (Assessment).

## Requirements for appointment

The External Examiner and Reviewer Appointments Committee (a sub-committee of the Academic Quality Committee) is responsible for overseeing the appointment process.

The assessment plan sets out specific requirements for Independent Assessors. In addition to these, the assessor **must**:

- be occupationally competent and credible in the opinions of employers and peers
- have, maintain and be able to evidence up-to-date knowledge and expertise of the occupation, undertaking at least two days sector/occupation specific CPD per year
- have no actual or potential conflict of interest which could compromise their role as an Independent Assessor (including: having no involvement with the training or employment of the apprentice, including by way of moderation; nor conflicts of interest with DMU as the EPAO or the apprentice's employer organisation)
- have suitable, sufficient and up-to-date qualifications and experience, as set out in the [assessment plan](#)
- experience and competence in delivering a variety of assessment tasks, including grading, providing feedback and moderating of assessment.
- understand the [occupational standard](#) and the requirements of the EPA, as set out in the [assessment plan](#)
- deliver the end-point assessment in line with the EPA plan
- make valid assessment and grading decisions during the EPA
- comply with internal quality assurance requirements
- comply with EQA requirements for the apprenticeship
- meet the applicable criteria and have the authority to represent the professional body where the EPA is acting as the professional body's assessment process (if necessary and permitted in the EPA plan)
- make the final judgement on an apprentice's occupational competence
- meet the requirements of the Higher Education Provider in terms of the EPA's contribution to the degree element of the apprenticeship
- fluency in English

## Conflict of interest

As part of the EPA Independent Assessor Application Form the Independent Assessor must confirm that they have no actual or potential conflict of interest at organisational level which could compromise their role as an Independent Assessor. This includes conflicts of interest with DMU as the EPAO. This form is to be submitted annually as part of the appointment process detailed below.

In addition, the Independent Assessors must confirm that they have no conflicts of interest relating to individual apprentices that they will be assessing, or their employer organisation. This is to be confirmed prior to each EPA, either at the Progression & Awards Board (for fully-integrated programmes), or once apprentices have been assigned to the Independent Assessor (for integrated programmes).

## Appointment process

**Please note that the below appointment process is temporary and set to change to a central DMU recruitment process.**

Independent Assessors are recruited as temporary staff members via Unitemps for the duration of the EPA and resits/retakes period, for a maximum of one year. Full information and guidance about the Unitemps process can be found [here](#). Faculties are advised to start the initial appointment process **one year prior to EPA**. This is to allow enough time to make the appointment and provide an induction and training session. The following table explains the responsibilities for each part of the appointment process:

**Table 2.1** Independent Assessor Appointment Process Responsibilities

Owner	Action
Programme Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek potential Independent Assessors one year prior to EPA</li> <li>• Ask candidate to complete <a href="#">EPA Independent Assessor Application Form</a> (inc. conflicts of interest declaration) and submit their CV</li> <li>• Forward to the Quality Officer (Assessment)</li> </ul>
Head of School/Department (or nominee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete <a href="#">Unitemps Requisition Form</a> (<i>the form then is automatically submitted to the Faculty/Directorate budget holder for initial approval. If the request is approved, it is then sent to the faculty's Finance and HR reps for their comments before submission to SRG</i>)</li> </ul> <p>Note: Please include the names of the Independent Assessors on the Unitemps Requisition Form if known.</p>
Quality Officer (Assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit the EPA Independent Assessor Application Form and CV to the Appointments Committee for review and approval.</li> <li>• If approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ notify Unitemps colleagues</li> <li>◦ circulate confirmation of appointment to the Independent Assessor, faculty and CAT</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Central Apprenticeships Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange ACE360 registration and allocation of apprentices to Independent Assessors (integrated only)</li> </ul>
Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange necessary Independent Assessor induction and training</li> </ul>

The Associate Professor Advisory Group (APAG) will oversee any outstanding faculty Independent Assessor vacancies.

### Induction and training (integrated only)

Once Independent Assessors are appointed it is the faculty's responsibility to deliver their induction and training. Independent Assessors **must** attend this prior to conducting EPA. Faculties must confirm to the Quality Officer (Assessment) the date that the Independent Assessor undertook their training.

Faculties must invite their EQA External Assessor so that they have the opportunity to observe the session. This is an important part of their role and fulfilling EQA requirements.

It is recommended that training sessions are recorded if conducted virtually (i.e. using MS Teams), with consent of the attendees. This will serve the dual purpose of allowing Independent Assessors to revisit if required, and for the EQA External Assessor to observe if they are unable to attend. Alternatively, the slides and notes around discussions and outcomes must be stored by the faculty, particularly around standardisation decisions\*.

Training sessions must cover:

- Independent Assessors role and responsibilities (with key timelines, EPA schedule)
- conflicts of Interest
- assessment methods and KSBs (taken from [occupational standard and assessment plan](#))
- use of assessment tools (i.e. tests, banks of questions, case study scenarios, controlled observation checklists and professional discussion specifications)
- fair, consistent and robust assessment
- implementation of any reasonable adjustments
- PSRB requirements (where applicable)
- EPA grading criteria
- use of grading/marking/feedback sheets
- standardisation\*
- moderation of EPA grades
- use of ACE360 (integrated only)
- role at Progression & Award Board
- ongoing CPD requirements (see section above)

Stock [training slides](#) may be used to assist teams if helpful. These can be adapted to incorporate any faculty specific information, and training and standardisation requirements from the respective [assessment plan](#).

Where the EPA is a credited module (for example, a research project) the assessor will be required to blind mark the assessment piece. It is therefore important that training is provided around academic marking.

#### \*Standardisation

The purpose of EPA standardisation is to ensure that the specific EPA assessment components are graded fairly, consistently and robustly across all assessors. It is important that these sessions are attended prior to the EPA **at least annually** (see [IfATE assessment plan](#) for frequency) and by **all** Independent Assessors for the respective EPA.

The standardisation session involves each assessor independently marking the same pieces of assessment. Newly developed assessment pieces may be developed for this purpose, or anonymised pieces of prior apprentices' assessed work may be used. It is recommended that Independent Assessors see a variety of examples of work at various grades in order to clearly identify the differences. Assessors should also be asked to grade, provide feedback, and any suitable lines of questioning (where applicable). This will ensure that assessors are:

- asking the right questions
- making accurate, fair and consistent assessment decisions
- providing suitably detailed, specific and consistent feedback

- fully recording the outcome of the assessment process via the grading/marking/feedback sheet

For further support when designing your standardisation sessions, please contact DMU's [Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence \(CAITE\)](#).

### Tenure

Independent Assessors are recruited as temporary staff members via Unitemps for the duration of the EPA and resits/retakes period, for a maximum of one year. There is not a maximum tenure; therefore, assessors may be re-recruited year-on-year via Unitemps as many times as the programme team wish. It is recommended that faculties reapply (following the appointment process steps detailed in table 2.1) approximately six months prior to each EPA.

### Payment and expenses

Independent Assessors are to be paid based on a Grade G (spine point 35) hourly rate of pay, unless the programme team deem that their experience requires a higher rate of pay and agree this with the budget holder.

Independent Assessors are required to complete timesheets of the EPA work undertaken via the Unitemps system. Timesheets need to be approved by the assigned reviewer (as specified in the original Unitemps Requisition Form) prior to payment. It is important this is completed in a timely manner to ensure that the Independent Assessors are paid promptly.

The faculty (contact details should be provided at induction) is responsible for processing claims for expenses from Independent Assessors. Where assessors need to claim back expenses, they should complete an [e-F15 Expenses Claim Form](#). The Independent Assessor should email the form to the Head of School/Dept, or nominee, (who completed the initial Unitemps Requisition Form) for sign off. They should then send to payroll for processing.

### Termination

The appointment may be terminated by the Appointments Committee if it judges that the requirements of the appointment have not, or cannot, be fulfilled in the manner or to the standard which the university requires. Reasons for termination could include:

- Failure to provide feedback using the standard report proforma, to the expected professional standard and to be submitted within reasonable timescales, normally within a month after the EPA
- Failure to undertake the required annual training and submit an adequate CPD log
- Any change in circumstances which brings about potential conflicts of interest which might jeopardise their independence

### Resignation

Independent Assessors wishing to resign from their position should contact the Programme Leader, board chair and Quality Officer (Assessment) to confirm their resignation in writing (emails are acceptable) and should give a minimum of **three months' notice**.

## Section 3: EQA External Assessor

**Please note that in 2022/23 as part of the DQB Readiness Check process, programme teams are only expected to contact their existing External Examiner to ask whether they would be**

**willing, suitable and able to conduct the EQA External Assessor role (details around the Readiness Check process can be found in section one).**

**This section on EQA External Assessors serves to provide information about the role and responsibilities only. Further information will be issued in due course once the role is formally implemented.**

## Role and responsibilities

The role is a 'bolt-on' role which ideally the existing External Examiner will undertake. For programmes where separate External Examiners are appointed to oversee the degree qualification and the EPA aspects of the programme, then the latter would be best suited to undertake the role of EQA External Assessor.

The role aims to ensure that EPA is effective in assessing occupational competence and that national standards are met, as set out in the IfATE apprenticeship standard. The role oversees **only the EPA aspect of the programme**; not the whole degree qualification or the teaching of the apprenticeship.

The EQA External Assessor will assess the EPAO in the following aspects of the EPA:

### Relevant

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Individual assessment instruments/ methods are fit-for-purpose

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Assessment is delivered in line with the published EPA plan

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Assessors' knowledge is up-to-date

### Reliable

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Assessment is carried out independently in practice

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Assessments are operating effectively and achieving the desired outcomes

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Grading is applied accurately and consistently

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Assessment is reliable and comparable across different EPAOs, employers, places, times and assessors

### Positive

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Access to assessment is fair, and decisions on reasonable adjustments are made fairly and consistently

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All requirements of the Standard in terms of achievement of gateways and mandatory qualifications and requirements are achieved prior to sign-off and the employer makes the final decision on the readiness of the apprentice for EPA

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The EQA External Assessor role must be undertaken for all apprenticeship programmes (both integrated and fully-integrated); however, the role will be light-touch for fully-integrated programmes given that no additional assessments are required to be undertaken by apprentices' post-gateway. The fully-integrated EQA External Assessor role will mostly review the Progression & Awards Board arrangements and internal quality assurance processes; as opposed to assessment components. For fully-integrated programmes, the roles of EQA External Assessor, External Examiner and Independent Assessor will be conducted by the same individual.



For clarity, the below table indicates the differing EQA External Assessors' responsibilities for integrated and fully-integrated programmes.

**Table 3.1** EQA External Assessor Annual Responsibilities

Responsibilities	Integrated programme	Fully-integrated programme
Conduct at least one campus visit per cohort (can be online if appropriate)	✓	✓
Observe live assessments (can be in-person, or online if appropriate)	✓	✗
Externally moderate a sample of assessed EPA work (sample size should be the same as required of an External Examiner (see <a href="#">guide</a> ), unless specifically specified with the assessment plan)	✓	✗
Review assessment instruments/materials documentation (i.e. computer software, exam papers, tests, banks of questions, case study scenarios, controlled observation checklists and professional discussion specifications)	✓	✗
Review documentation relating to the internal quality assurance of EPA	✓	✓
Review documentation relating to gateway approval for individual apprentices	✓	✓
Observe Independent Assessor training sessions (inc. standardisation and moderation meetings)	✓	✗
Meet with Independent Assessors	✓	✗
Meet with apprentices, and their employers where possible	✓	✗
Meet with programme team staff involved in the delivery of the EPA	✓	✓
Attend Progression and Award boards where final EPA decisions are made	✓	✓
Review process for confirming the EPA result with the professional body	✗	✓
Submit an Annual Report	✓	✓
Undertake a minimum of two days sector/occupation specific CPD per year and submit a CPD log	✓	✓
Disclose of any conflicts of interest to confirm independence from: apprentices; employers; Independent Assessors; training providers; and from the delivery or assessment of the EPA	✓	✓

## Appointment criteria

**Currently programme teams are only expected to contact their existing External Examiner to ask whether they would be willing, suitable and able to conduct the role and responsibilities.**

The EQA External Assessor must meet the following requirements in order to be suitable to take on the role:

- have no conflicts of interest, ensuring that they will be independent from apprentices, employers, Independent Assessors and DMU programme staff and governing body (and have complete independence from the delivery or assessment of the EPA)
- are knowledgeable about, and competent in, assessing apprentice achievement in higher education at levels relevant to the subjects and awards to which their appointment relates
- have broad and current knowledge, relevant experience and occupational competence in the area of work related to their appointment
- 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 enhancements to enable informed EPA development
- have experience in acting as an external quality assurer or are supported by the EPAO in undertaking their duties, for example, through training and mentoring
- 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

## Section 4: Preparing for the EPA

### Preparations for Independent Assessors (integrated only)

At least **six months prior to EPA**, the Programme Leader should circulate their EPA schedule to their pool of Independent Assessors in order for them to confirm their availability. The apprenticeships administrative team is responsible for arranging accommodation and booking rooms to conduct the EPA.

Independent Assessors refresher training and standardisation sessions should also be arranged by the faculty prior to each EPA (please check your assessment plan in case a higher frequency is required). See 'Induction, Training & Standardisation' above for further guidance.

### Preparations for EQA External Assessor

**At least three months prior to EPA** the Programme Leader should inform the EQA External Assessor of the scheduled EPA dates and Independent Assessor training (with standardisation) session dates. This will allow them time to prepare a visit (either in person, or online) to observe these, and also inform them of when they will be required to externally moderate the EPAs once they are graded by the Independent Assessors. The



apprenticeships administrative team is responsible for arranging accommodation and booking rooms to conduct the EPA.

For fully integrated provision, the External Examiner (who is also the Independent Assessor) must be notified as soon as possible of the date and time of the upcoming Progression & Awards Board in order to ensure their attendance.

### Preparation of assessments (integrated only)

Programme teams are to prepare their assessment instruments (i.e. software) and tools (i.e. tests, banks of questions, case study scenarios, controlled observation checklists and professional discussion specifications) **within three months of the EPA**. This is a condition of the programme being on the RoEPAO. The assessment tools are to be submitted to the Independent Assessor to review to ensure industry relevance prior to the EPA. Independent Assessor approval must be sought and recorded.

### Reasonable adjustments

**Please note that a more formal process is being developed around reasonable adjustment.**

Reasonable adjustments enable apprentices, irrespective of any permanent or temporary disability, to gain access to the EPA whilst maintaining the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment decisions. Appropriate adjustments are likely to be a continuation of the additional support that the apprentice had received during their apprenticeship. It is recommended that any requests for reasonable adjustment within the EPA are made **as soon as possible in advance of the EPA**. This is in order to allow adequate time for DMU as EPAO to review and implement them, and also for them to be communicated to Independent Assessors prior to each EPA (preferably as part of their training).

The employer, with input from the apprentice, must discuss any reasonable adjustment requests with the programme leader. The programme leader, with support from Disability Team where necessary, will consider and implement any necessary EPA adjustments. Records of all reasonable adjustments requests and the decisions made must be maintained by the Programme Leader for EQA audit purposes. Further information about the process can be found in the [student disability policy](#).

### Gateway confirmation

**At least four weeks prior to EPA** CAT must receive via Maytas a Gateway review form (please contact the CAT for a copy) from the apprenticeships administrative team which has confirmed with the apprentice and employer that the:

- apprentice is consistently meeting the competence required in the standard
- achievement of mandatory qualifications
- that they have met their off-the-job training requirements
- any specific requirements of the assessment plan have been met

This is to be confirmed at the Progression & Awards Board.

For integrated programmes, the apprenticeships administrative team must then upload the apprentices gateway evidence onto ACE360.

Once the requirements of Gateway have been satisfied the EPA must be delivered in line with the timeframes set out in the [assessment plan](#).

## Section 5: Grading and claiming certificates

EPA grading and moderation (integrated only)

### Grading

The Independent Assessor must utilise the grading/marking/feedback sheets in order to evidence their grading decisions for each component of the EPA. They must then upload their grading/marking/feedback sheet onto ACE360 and input their assigned grade for each component. The Independent Assessor will also determine the provisional overall grade in ACE360.

In cases where the EPA has a credited academic component then it is blind marked by both the Academic and Independent Assessor. They will then they meet to discuss the grade given, if they don't agree then an independent third person will make the final grade decision.

### Moderation

Internal moderation of the EPA must be undertaken. This is usually done by a fellow Independent Assessor for the same EPA.

External moderation of EPA must be undertaken by the apprenticeship programme's EQA External Assessor (this should be the same individual who is the External Examiner). The samples of work provided to the External Assessor must be accompanied by the grading/marking/feedback sheet(s) and evidence of internal moderation, in accordance with the requirements set out in the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) and [Guide to External Examining at DMU](#). Sample size should be the same as required of an External Examiner, unless specifically specified otherwise with the assessment plan.

Communication of EPA grades and feedback to apprentices (integrated only)

Apprentices are provided with an agreed indicative EPA mark once moderation has taken place. Feedback must also be provided. The standard institution turnaround time should be followed, as detailed within the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#).

Progression & Award Board ratification of grades and claiming EPA certificates

### Integrated apprenticeships

Ratification of EPA grades must be made by the Progression & Award Board in accordance with the requirements set out in [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) and [Guide to External Examining at DMU](#).

Once the Progression & Award Board has ratified EPA grades, the *<roles and responsibilities currently being finalised>* is responsible for verifying that both the degree awarded and EPA grades are accurately recorded within ACE360 against the ratified Progression & Award Board report (was Assessment Board Report). The Apprenticeship Completion Certificate will then be automatically claimed on behalf of the apprentice. Evidence of the claim is to be uploaded onto Maytas by the CAT, which will enable the apprentice to be completed in the Individual Learner Record (ILR).

Where the apprentice fails to successfully complete the EPA they may still receive the relevant academic award associated with the programme if they have met the relevant requirements.

## Fully-integrated apprenticeships

The EPA starts with the Progression & Award Board and finishes once DMU as EPAO submit the required documents and/or declaration to the respective Professional Body. No additional assessments are required to be undertaken by apprentices' post-gateway.

The role of External Examiner and Independent Assessor will be undertaken by the same individual. They will be required to attend the Progression & Awards Board in order to ratify whether the apprentices have passed or failed the EPA qualification.

The apprenticeships administrative team will input pass or fail results into Maytas and notify the CAT (and DAQ) that this has been done and, that they have uploaded:

- evidence of gateway requirements
- EPA events are complete
- last day of learning
- OTJ training % met
- exit review has been completed

Once notified, then the CAT will claim the apprentices EPA certificate via the Apprenticeship Assessment Service.

Where the apprentice fails to successfully complete the EPA they may still receive the relevant academic award associated with the programme if they have met the relevant requirements.

## Resits and retakes

From [Conditions of being on the RoEPAO](#) "Apprentices may resit or retake elements of their EPA, in line with any requirements set out in the [assessment plan](#). Any resit or retake should be agreed with the employer and training provider and take place within a reasonable timeframe."

For integrated apprenticeship programmes up to two resits/retakes are offered to apprentices free of charge. Upon failure of their EPA a holistic performance review should be undertaken with the apprentice by the academic and employer prior to their resit. Please contact the CAT for further information about this. The Independent Assessor conducting the resit, or retake of elements of their EPA, must not be the same assessor who conducted the previous EPA(s); however, the previous Independent Assessor who moderated the apprentices work could conduct the EPA. This is to ensure objectivity and independence.

For fully integrated apprenticeships, resit and retakes must adhere to DMU regulations.

## Failures

For integrated apprenticeship programmes, where EPA has taken place and the apprentice has 'failed', this must be recorded in the apprenticeship service, and only once the apprentice has 'passed' must their certificate be claimed.

## Section 6: Annual quality monitoring

### Faculty monitoring

Faculties should undertake the following quality monitoring for their EPA provision:

## Feedback

Seeking feedback from is important for the continual improvement and refinement of our processes as an EPAO. The following stakeholders must be contacted approx. two weeks after each EPA:

- Feedback from apprentices and employers, which aims to check how well the EPA met their needs, including how well it related to current business practice
- Feedback from Independent Assessors, with a focus on the relevance and reliability of the assessments delivered

The feedback must be shared with the Quality Officer (Assessment) for continual improvement and refinement purposes.

## EQA External Assessor good practice and issues logs

The Associate Professor (Quality), or Head of Quality, should maintain logs of EPA issues and good practice raised by the EQA External Assessors within their annual EPA reports.

## Risk registers

Each faculty must maintain a risk register in order to report issues throughout the Gateway and EPA process. These must be monitored via the faculty's apprenticeship committee at each meeting. Critical risks must be escalated to the Quality Officer (Assessment) for review at the Academic Quality Committee.

## Maintaining the EPA annual operating procedure (live document)

The EPA operating document is designed to record key annual EPA dates and record any non-standard requirements set out within the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan. The record aims to support the programme team, and also central teams to fulfil external quality assurance and regulatory requirements. It is recommended that the document is kept as a live document in a shared folder, which is updated and reviewed at the relevant faculty apprenticeship management board.

## Programme Self-Assessment Report (PSAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

As part of the existing PSAR, programme leaders will complete the sections within it around EPA provision. The above EQA External Assessor annual EPA reports, feedback and risk registers will help inform the PSAR.

As part of the existing PSAR process, the Associate Professor (Quality), or Head of Quality, writes a faculty PSAR overview report after reviewing each individual programme PSAR. Part of this report will require a summary of the faculties EPA provision.

The Associate Professor (Quality), or Head of Quality, will submit their PSAR overview report to the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC) in the first instance with onward transmission to DAQ for inclusion in the Annual EPA Delivery and Monitoring Report (see below).

The PSAR review will inform the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) which forms part of the PSAR proforma. The QIP captures areas of action for continuous improvement for the programme leader to implement, and also areas of good practice.

## DAQ monitoring

### Annual EPA delivery and monitoring report

The report will be submitted annually to the Academic Quality Committee (or relevant sub-committee) by the Quality Officer (Assessment). The report aims to review the institutions EPA provision to ensure that they are conducted fairly, consistently and robustly, and continually improve EPA delivery and processes.

The report will review the following data:

- resits/retake data
- review of risk register common themes
- EPA specific information from faculty PSAR overview reports
- overview of EQA External Assessor annual reports, including:
  - review of discrepancies between internal and external moderators to help inform Independent Assessor training requirements
  - review of assessment feedback quality
  - review of use of grading/marking/feedback sheets
  - comparability with previous cohorts and across different EPAOs (where possible)

## Governance Committee

The Academic Quality Committee (or relevant sub-committee) will oversee the following in relation to DMU as an EPAO and the quality of its EPA provision by:

- any critical risks relating to EPA academic quality raised from faculty risk registers.
- review of the annual EPA Delivery and Monitoring Report which will detail EPA issues, good practice and recommendations.
- oversee EQA body outcome reports and action plans, as part of readiness check and monitoring activities.
- actively maintain and review the conflict of interest policy, both at organisational and individual level (both potential and real conflicts) for employers, providers, EQA providers, Independent Assessors and EQA External Assessors

## Section 7: Complaints and appeals

Employers and apprentices must be made aware of their right to complain and appeal their EPA using the [student complaints procedure](#) in relation to:

- an assessment or moderation result/decision on the basis that DMU as EPAO did not apply procedures consistently, or procedures were not followed properly and fairly
- a reasonable adjustments application being refused, where it is considered that the apprentice was wrongly refused access to fair assessment (please also see [student disability policy](#) for appeals process)

## Section 8: Further information

### Proformas

Latest version of all proformas associated with this guide can downloaded [here](#):

- Apprentice post-EPA feedback form
- Conflict of interest policy

- e-F15 Expenses Claim Form
- Employer post-EPA feedback form
- EPA Annual Operating Procedure
- EPA Delivery and Monitoring Report
- EPA Independent Assessor Application Form
- EPA Readiness Check Guide
- EQA External Assessor Annual EPA Report and CPD log (for fully-integrated EPA)
- EQA External Assessor Annual EPA Report and CPD log (for integrated EPA)
- EQA External Assessor training slides and mini-guide
- Independent Assessor post-EPA feedback form
- Independent Assessor Training and CPD log
- Independent Assessor Training and standardisation slides
- Monitoring Check Guide
- Reasonable adjustment policy



### Top Tip!

Bookmark the [DAQ webpage](#) and download the latest proforma version each time to ensure you are using the latest version!

## Further publications

Document	Available from
Assessment and Feedback Policy	<a href="#">Department of Academic Quality web pages</a>
A Guide to External Examining at DMU	<a href="#">Department of Academic Quality web pages</a>
A Guide to Apprenticeship Validation	<a href="#">Department of Academic Quality web pages</a>
Conditions for being on the register of end-point assessment organisations	<a href="#">Education and Skills Funding Agency website</a>
External Quality Assurance of End-Point Assessment for Integrated Higher and Degree Apprenticeships	<a href="#">Designated Quality Body in England website</a>
Apprenticeship Standards and Assessment plans	<a href="#">Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education Website</a>
EQA Framework	<a href="#">Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education Website</a>
Centre for Academic Innovation and Teaching Excellence (CAITE)	<a href="#">CAITE web page</a>
Student Complaints Procedure	<a href="#">DMU student complaints procedure webpages</a>
Student Disability Policy	<a href="#">DMU Student regulations and Policies webpages</a>

## Acronyms

<b>APAG</b>	Associate Professor Advisory Group
<b>AQC</b>	Academic Quality Committee
<b>CAT</b>	Central Apprenticeships Team
<b>CPD</b>	Continual Professional Development
<b>DAQ</b>	Department of Academic Quality
<b>DfE</b>	Department for Education
<b>DQB</b>	Designated Quality Body
<b>EPA</b>	End-Point Assessment
<b>EPAO</b>	End-Point Assessment Organisations
<b>EQA</b>	External Quality Assurance
<b>IfATE</b>	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
<b>ILR</b>	Individual Learner Record
<b>Ofqual</b>	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
<b>OfS</b>	Office for Students
<b>PSRB</b>	Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body
<b>QAA</b>	Quality Assurance Agency
<b>RoEPAO</b>	Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations

## Glossary

**End-Point Assessment Organisation** is the organisation who delivers the EPA.

**EQA External Assessor** is a bolt on role for the programme's External Examiner which specifically focuses on the EPA. The additional responsibilities (visit and report) cover EQA requirements. This will be undertaken by one External Examiner who meets the requirements of the role holder, as specified in this guide.

**Fully Integrated (Integrated-Aligned)** is where the EPA conforms to the assessment arrangements required by the professional body. usually EPA is the Progression & Award Board. The EPA starts with the Progression & Award Board and finishes once DMU as EPAO submit the required documents and/or declaration to the respective Professional Body. No additional assessments are required to be undertaken by apprentices' post-gateway as the EPA is fully integrated into the programme.



**Independent Assessors** assess apprentices against industry-specific competences during their EPA. They must meet the criteria for being an Independent Assessor as stated on the programme's IfATE assessment plan.

**Integrated** is where a degree qualification is included in the apprenticeship, and assessment relating to the degree is fully integrated with the EPA. In these circumstances DMU as the provider delivering the degree within the apprenticeship also acts as the EPAO and undertakes the EPA.

**Non-Integrated EPA** is where a degree qualification is included in the apprenticeship but assessment relating to the degree is conducted separately and is not integrated with the EPA. The degree qualification must be achieved prior to the apprentice passing through the EPA gateway. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) is the body responsible for the external quality assurance of non-integrated EPAs at levels 2-7, or IfATE in a small number of cases.