

Apprenticeship Provision - End Point Assessment policy

UPR AS14, Appendix IV - version 17.0

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 16.0 of UPR AS14, Appendix IV, with effect from 1 September 2023.

Summary of significant changes to the previous version

Policy amendments to reflect updated external guidance on quality assurance.

Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Background	2
3	Education and Skills Funding Agency requirements	2
4	End Point Assessment	3
4.1	Integrated EPA.....	3
4.2	Non-integrated EPA.....	5
5	Resits and retakes of EPA.....	8
6	Feedback and monitoring of EPA and EPAOs.....	8
7	Applying for Completion Certificates.....	9
8	Consistency and comparability	9
9	Appeals and complaints	10

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As a provider of Apprenticeships, the University of Hertfordshire is committed to delivering a high-quality training experience and as required to manage the delivery the End Point Assessment (EPA).
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to ensure the University of Hertfordshire has an identified approach for managing and assuring the quality of the EPA for its Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HAD) where the University is the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

1.3 This policy encompasses all apprenticeship programmes that are delivered through a partner organisation via subcontract arrangement.

1.4 The University is committed to ensuring the learner has a positive experience of their end point assessment and that a consistent approach is taken toward EPA.

2 Background

2.1 This policy provides detail on End Point Assessment (EPA) and should be read in conjunction with the University's UPRs AS12¹, AS14² and AS17³ and other guidance and policies linked to the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship. This policy will set out the roles and responsibilities for both integrated and non-integrated EPAs. Existing University policies and regulations still govern any academic award within an apprenticeship, but programmes should be cognizant of the requirements of EPA at the time of approval, including any requirements to adjust how the University would typically deliver its academic awards.

2.2 This policy is congruent with the policy principles of the Education and Skills Funding Agency Apprenticeship (ESFA) funding rules for main providers and is informed by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) External Quality Assurance (EQA) framework.

2.3 All apprenticeship standards will have an accompanying assessment plan which defines the process and expectations of the EPA. This determines if the apprentice has met the requirement of the apprenticeship standard: that is, they are able to demonstrate the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB) and are occupationally competent.

2.4 Prior to being eligible for the EPA the apprentice will need to meet the 'Gateway' requirements as determined by the standard. The Employer's permission is required to proceed to EPA.

2.5 The detail of the EPA is described in the Assessment Plan associated with the standard. The EPA may be integrated or non-integrated and this is pre-determined:

- i Integrated: this is a component of the final academic award. The University will provide all the scheduled on programme learning and the EPA. The University will be acting as the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) for integrated EPAs.
- ii Non-integrated: the final academic award is achieved, and the EPA is then conducted independently of the University by an EPAO the employer's choice.

3 External Quality Assurance of the University as an End Point Assessment Organisation.

3.1 As an EPAO, the University is subjected to External Quality Assurance (EQA) by the Office for Students. This includes:

¹ UPR AS12 'Assessments, Examinations and Conferments (University-Delivered provision)'
² UPR AS14 'Structure and Assessment Regulations - Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes'
³ UPR AS17 'Academic quality'

- i. Readiness checks;
- ii. Ongoing monitoring;
- iii. Monitoring checks;
- iv. External Assessor monitoring.

3.2 Each activity listed above has specific requirements which are detailed in the External Quality Assurance of End Point Assessment for Integrated Higher and Degree apprenticeships handbook for providers.

4 Education and Skills Funding Agency requirements

- 4.1 The University is required to maintain their status on the Register of Approved Training Providers (RoATP).
- 4.2 The University must be registered on the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) for each Apprenticeship Standard that is being delivered where the EPA is integrated.
- 4.3 Applications to the RoEPAO will be managed collectively between the programme team, Apprenticeship Compliance and Support team and other relevant University departments.
- 4.4 Applications will be initially scrutinised by the relevant Head of Department/ Group/ Subject and approved, supported by the relevant University Department, prior to being submitted to the ESFA by the Apprenticeship Compliance and Support team.
- 4.5 Early engagement with this process is advised as the application must be approved as per section 4.4 at least twelve months before the first EPA is scheduled to take place.
- 4.6 The University will supply all required information to the ESFA to ensure compliance with the EPA process and outcomes.

5 End Point Assessment

5.1 Integrated EPA

- 5.1.1 The Assessment Plan will indicate that the EPA is integrated: the University will provide both the on programme learning/training and the EPA. The EPA is part of the academic award and is normally the final project/module. All EPAs consist of at least two forms of assessment. The integrated EPA will have been approved at the time of validation of the programme. When the University is the EPAO, the existing internal quality assurance arrangements will be adhered to and all external quality assurance requirements.
- 5.1.2 The University must comply with all aspects and requirements of the EPA as identified in the Assessment Plan. This includes:
 - i clarification of the Gateway requirements for both learner and employers and identify how this will be assessed, evidenced and verified;

- ii in exceptional circumstances where apprentices do not have level 2 qualification in maths and English, this must be remediated before they can progress through the Gateway. Schools must be able to provide evidence that ESFA maths and English requirements have been met;
- iii protocols demonstrating how the EPA will be delivered should be developed by the programme team for comparability and consistency of practice including specific determination of the employer involvement where applicable and to determine the state of readiness;
- iv determining who the assessment teams will be and how they will engage with employers, PSRB's and University academic staff independent of any aspects of 'on programme' learning as identified in the Assessment Plan;
- v the independent nature of the EPA must be assured, and the assessor must be independent of the apprentice and employer. Each School will take the necessary steps to demonstrate this independence and will have sourced staff who are independent of the on-programme delivery or recruited appropriately qualified assessors externally. The Independent Assessor will have the necessary skills, experience, occupational competence and qualifications required to facilitate the assessment;
- vi if PSRB recognition is conferred on successful completion of the EPA, the associate Assessment Plan may require that the assessment is conducted by Independent Assessor who holds a specified professional status and the School will need to comply with this;
- vii academic subject expertise may not be sufficient to demonstrate that the assessors are equipped to assess the professional competency of the learner. Workplace experience and occupational competence may also be required;
- viii each School will be responsible for training of Independent Assessors, including holding bi-annual standardisation meetings for independent assessors to maintain consistent, valid and fair approaches to assessment;
- ix the assessment must comply with the normal requirements of University's Policy and Regulations AS12 and AS14;
- x monitoring and reviewing outcomes from the different assessments in the EPA;
- xi where a work-based project forms part of the EPA, it may be necessary for the employer to be involved in agreeing the scope of the project as it is important that the project meets the needs of their organisation;
- xii the University, as the EPAO, will need to agree the scope of the work-based project, ensure it is comparable to other projects and that it will fulfil the requirements of the EPA for the Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan;
- xiii the University may produce project specifications to guide employers in determining the requirements of the work-based project;
- xiv there should be evidence of 'sign off' by all parties, University, employer and learner on any agreed work-based project;

- xv all interviews, presentations, professional discussions should be recorded in an appropriate manner and stored for quality assurance purposes on University systems only for the duration specified by the ESFA and stored in accordance with the requirements of UPR IM16⁴;
- xvi individual staff members must not retain any copies of assessed work either electronic or hard copies;
- xvii referrals will be undertaken in line with existing UPR AS14² except where the Assessment Plan sets out specific procedures in which case the assessment plan takes precedence. Programme specific assessment requirements will identify this;
- xviii where the assessment plan references the role of the external examiner (industry relevant experience) consideration of these requirements should occur at the time of appointment;
- xix conflicts of interest on the part of independent assessors will be managed in line with relevant University policy;
- xx Schools will confirm all completed EPAs to Degree Apprenticeship Compliance team who will manage the data returns to ESFA;
- xxi meet other requirements detailed in the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan, which may include:
 - a the production of an annual evaluation report; or
 - b the requirement to collaborate with other EPAOs;
- xxii comply with reporting requests from the External Quality Assurance Provider.

5.2 Non-integrated EPA

- 5.2.1 When the EPA is non-integrated, successful completion and ratification of the final academic award is required before the EPA can be attempted. Significant alignment of the Apprenticeship Standard with the programme and module learning outcomes will exist. The EPA is carried out by a designated End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). The Employer will determine the EPAO to be used and therefore, the University may be working with more than one EPAO for any one cohort of learners.
- 5.2.2 The University must comply with all aspects and requirements of the EPA as identified in the Assessment Plan. This includes:
 - i clarification of the Gateway requirements for both learner and employers and identification of how this will be assessed, evidenced and verified;
 - ii ensuring that the apprentice will have the appropriate learner status within the University during their Gateway and EPA period;
 - iii communicating with employers to inform them of the attempts and outcomes from each EPA.

⁴ UPR IM16 'Data Management Policy'

- 5.2.3 The University will work with employers to ensure they are informed of available EPAOs but cannot be involved in the final selection of the EPAO. The University will:
- i provide the employer with the Gateway declaration and EPAO choice forms and ensure they are returned and stored;
 - ii in exceptional circumstances where apprentices do not have level 2 qualification in maths and English, this must be remediated before they can enter the Gateway. The EPAO will require verification of these qualifications;
 - iii engage with the EPAO(s) of choice and establish the necessary contracts setting out the terms and conditions of the contract;
 - iv ensure contracts for EPA delivery will be signed in a timely manner and in accordance with the University's standard financial practice;
 - v maintain responsibility for paying the EPAO from the fees it receives from delivering the apprenticeship training. The maximum percentage cost that can be spent on the EPA is established by the IfATE;
 - vi the Schools and central degree apprentice teams will work with the EPAO to develop support, guidance and arrangements for EPA;
 - vii where it is identified that the learner is not ready to proceed with EPA, work with the employer and identify appropriate action to support the learner so as the EPA can be taken within the specified timeframe as identified in the Assessment Plan.

5.3 Guidance on End Point Assessments

5.3.1 Guidance for each EPA will be provided to apprentices, employers, Independent Assessors, Internal moderators, External Assessors and other relevant stakeholders.

5.3.2 This guidance document will include:

- i. The assessment tasks
- ii. Delivery plan for EPA tasks
- iii. Process for assessment, moderation and external assessment
- iv. Grade descriptors
- v. Detail of relevant University regulations for the final award and the process for securing Apprenticeship Certificate.

5.3.3 The Independent Assessor and External Assessor may require additional information regarding the marking and moderation processes.

5.4 Scrutiny and Approval of End Point Assessments

5.4.1 All assessment tasks will be scrutinised by the programme team (internal moderation) In the first instance and then by the External Assessor (external moderation).

- 5.4.2 Internal moderation will be undertaken by a team member not involved in the design or any aspect of the delivery of the EPA. Recommendations are to be formally recorded and considered in the final design of the assessment.
- 5.4.3 External moderation will be conducted but the External Assessor and recommendations made will be considered in the final design of the assessment.
- 5.4.4 The assessment tasks for EPA can only be issued to apprentices following appropriate internal and external moderation.
- 5.4.5 Where question banks used for end point assessment have been internally and externally moderated, there is no need for subsequent moderation prior to issuing to apprentices.

5.5 Delivery of End Point Assessments

Practical arrangements for the delivery of the assessment tasks is the responsibility of the programme team. This may include but is not limited to:

- i. schedule of the assessment components
- ii. issuing the assessments to apprentices
- iii. organising appropriate rooms/venues in which to conduct the assessment
- iv. recording and storage of completed end point assessments
- v. co-ordinating assessment panels and the work of the Independent Assessors
- vi. ensuring assessment related documentation is completed
- vii. making timely adjustments of the EPA for apprentices who have declared additional need in accordance with their Study Needs Agreements

5.6 Marking of End Point Assessments

- 5.6.1 Marking of the end point assessment tasks is conducted by the Independent Assessor who has been approved by the University
- 5.6.2 Moderation of the marked work is completed by the programme team member who has not been involved in the design or delivery of the assessment tasks unless there are two Independent Assessors, in which case, they will undertake the marking and the moderation.
- 5.6.3 External moderation is completed by the External Assessor.

5.7 External Assessors

- 5.7.1 The External Assessor is appointed to the EPA element of the apprenticeship programme. This may be additional to the existing External Examiner or where permitted, may be a combined role.
- 5.7.2 Schools are responsible for recruiting External Assessors. The role and responsibilities are outlined in the EQA External Assessor Guidance.⁵
- 5.7.3 Normally there will be an External Assessor appointed for each end point assessment unless there is a cognate apprenticeship standard.

- 5.7.4 External Assessors must be nominated on the AQ11a form and will follow existing approval, appointment and reporting processes.
- 5.7.5 Notification of appointment of External Assessors for EPA to the regulatory body will be on the Notification form and submitted on-line.
- 5.7.6 External Assessors will attend University induction and bespoke EPA induction.
- 5.7.7 External Assessors are expected to conduct one visit (in person or on-line) to the EPAO each academic year.
- 5.7.8 External Assessors will complete an annual report for the University and the regulatory body regarding the EPA. Where the External Assessor is not also the External Examiner, they will only produce a report specifically on the EPA. Where the External Assessor is also the External Examiner, they will produce two reports: a report to the University which will focus on the academic standards, learner performance and the assessment of the degree components and a report on the management of the End Point Assessment.

6 Resits and retakes of EPA

- 6.1 The Assessment Plan details the requirements for resits and retakes. Where there are no specific requirements identified in the assessment plan, UPR AS12¹ will determine the process.
- 6.2 Resits and retakes are defined by the IfATE as:
 - i a retake requires a period of further learning before the learner can attempt the EPA again;
 - ii a resit does not require further learning before attempting reassessment of the EPA or the failed component of the EPA.
- 6.3 The cost of retakes will be detailed in the contract with the EPAO (for non-integrated EPA).

7 Feedback and monitoring of EPA and EPAOs

- 7.1 To develop an understanding of the EPA experience from a range of perspectives, the University's will coordinate an EPA Board. The function of this EPA board is to:
 - i. provide oversight of the EPA outcomes;
 - ii. monitor the quality of the EPA process;
 - iii. identify areas for improvement and enhancements;
 - iv. monitor progress made with EPA action plans following readiness checks, monitoring checks and external assessor recommendations.
- 7.2 Feedback from EPAOs as identified in the contractual arrangements will be requested for non-integrated EPAs. An annual report will be presented to the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Committee.

8 Applying for Completion Certificates

- 8.1 Where the EPA is integrated, the University will retain responsibility for claiming the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate from the Apprenticeship Assessment Service on notification from the relevant School that the EPA has been successfully passed.
- 8.2 The classification of an apprenticeship will be as stated in the Assessment plan.
- 8.3 The awarding of the degree element will be in accordance with the University regulation UPR AS11⁵ and the certificate issued via the standard University process.
- 8.4 Where the EPA is non-integrated, it is the responsibility of the EPAO to apply for the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate on behalf of the learner.
- 8.5 If the learner fails to successfully complete the EPA they may still receive the relevant University award. They will not receive the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate.

9 Consistency and comparability

- 9.1 The University will ensure consistency in EPA in the following ways and as shown above:
- i providing guidance on the EPA to learners and employers in relation to the delivery of the EPA (practical and technical activities, marking guidance for EPA activity);
 - ii consulting with industry/technical experts and External Examiner when developing relevant work-based projects to ensure there is comparability and consistency in terms of breadth and depth of assessment across the provision where the standard is being delivered to ensure the assessment is reliable, valid and fair to all learners;
 - iii through recruitment, preparation and on-going training of appropriate Independent Assessors;
 - iv developing protocols to determine how the assessment process will be carried out;
 - v holding regular standardisation meeting to ensure consistency of assessment and marking practice;
 - vi through recording and retention of any practical components of assessment for moderation and quality assurance processes;
 - vii monitoring outcomes from Board of Examiners;
 - viii using the annual monitoring and evaluation process to review outcomes and enhance practice.

⁵ UPR AS11 'Schedule of Awards'

10 Appeals and complaints

- 10.1 When the EPA has been carried out by the University it is subject to the normal appeals and complaints procedures (UPRs SA16⁶ and GV15⁷). If the issues cannot be resolved it may be escalated to the External Quality Assurance provider and IfATE.
- 10.2 For non-integrated EPAs the apprentice must follow the complaints process of the EPAO⁸.

Sharon Harrison-Barker
Secretary and Registrar
Signed: **1 August 2023**

Alternative format

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at governanceservices@herts.ac.uk or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.

⁶ UPR SA16 'Student and Applicant Complaints'
⁷ UPR GV15 'Complaints Policy (non-staff, non-student)'
⁸ IfATE External Quality Assurance Framework. V1.0 July 2019