

## Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment Policy

This policy covers the following:

### **Integrated and non-integrated End-Point Assessment (EPA)**

End-point assessment (EPA) is the final stage of an apprenticeship. It is an independent test of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that an apprentice has gained during their training. EPA can be fully integrated, where the assessment for the academic award is also the EPA and there is no additional assessment. It can be a final element that is integrated into the assessment for the award or it can be fully independent of this process – ie non-integrated. The assessment plan of the Apprenticeship standard makes clear which of these apply.

### **Appointment of EPAOs for Non-integrated EPAs**

Responsibilities for appointment of End Point Assessment Organisations.

### **Applications to join the Register of End-Point Assessor Organisations (RoEPAO)**

Where the EPA on an apprenticeship is integrated, the University must apply to join the Register of End-Point Assessor Organisations (RoEPAO) as part of the programme approval process. The School, with support from the Apprenticeship Office, is responsible for managing the application.

### **Management of integrated EPAs**

For apprenticeships with integrated EPAs, the University is the EPAO and must make arrangements to manage the process so that it is independent of the delivery of the apprenticeship and is carried out in adherence to established internal and external quality assurance principles and processes. This is the responsibility of the School.

### **Appointment of Independent Assessors for integrated EPAs**

Where the EPA is integrated, the University ensures it has suitable Independent Assessors (IAs). The IAs can be permanent University staff or individuals recruited by the University specifically as an IA. The University is required to ensure IAs keep their occupational expertise up to date, are trained, and have no conflicts of interest. Roles and responsibilities for ensuring compliance with these requirements are shared between Schools

and the Apprenticeship Office and other central professional services.

**EPA Gateway and completion**

Before an apprentice becomes eligible for the EPA, there are a number of readiness checks referred to as the EPA Gateway. The University is required to manage the gateway process for all integrated and non-integrated apprenticeships. Details are spelt out in Apprenticeship Programme Specification and the EPA Assessment Plan.

**EPA Process: Assessment Boards**

Processes for formal confirmation of the gateway process and EPA outcomes are the responsibility of Subject Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners.

**EPA Process: External Assessors**

The role and responsibilities of external examiners for Apprenticeship programmes with integrated EPAs is specified as part of the University's policy and procedures for external examiners. This conforms with the OfS Designated Quality Body requirements for external assessment of EPAOs.

**EPA Process: Annual Evaluation**

Monitoring and review of the effectiveness of EPA processes on the basis of feedback from stakeholders, external assessment reports and Apprentice outcomes should take place annually at programme, School and institutional levels.

**External quality assessment of EPA**

The Head of Academic Quality is responsible for ensuring all requirements for external quality assurance as set out by the Designated Quality Body are met.

## 1. Purpose and context of the policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out the University of Worcester's approach to managing End-Point Assessments (EPAs) for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.
- 1.2 Apprenticeship Standards generally require an independently assessed, synoptic end-point assessment, the details of which are set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard Assessment Plan. Successful completion of the end-point assessment leads to the awarding of the apprenticeship. The exception to this is where the EPA is integrated with the academic award outcomes.
- 1.3 The end point assessment may be:
  - **Non-integrated:** Non-integrated end-point assessments are conducted by a separate, independent Apprentice End Point Assessment Organisation, contracted by the University, and selected by the employer. The end-point assessor cannot be the University
  - **Integrated:** The University conducts the end-point assessment as an integrated aspect of the academic award, ensuring that the assessment process is fully independent of the apprenticeship delivery process
  - **Fully integrated:** This is where there is no requirement over and above completion of all the assessment requirements to achieve the academic award in order to gain the apprenticeship, as for example the Nursing Apprenticeship Standard.
- 1.4 The end-point assessment as set out in the Apprenticeship Standard tests that apprentices can fully demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours specified in the Apprenticeship Standard, and are occupationally competent.
- 1.5 The University must be registered on the Register of EPA Organisations for each Apprenticeship Standard where the EPA is integrated.
- 1.6 For an Apprenticeship with an integrated EPA, the Assessment Plan must be discussed at approval, and any changes to the Plan are treated as a minor course amendment in line with the Course and Module Change policy.
- 1.7 As an EPAO, the University must ensure there are robust procedures in place for checking and managing any actual or potential conflicts of interest in the EPA process. This is set out in the [University Apprenticeship End Point Assessment – Conflict of Interest Policy](#).
- 1.8 Prior to being eligible for the EPA, the apprentice will need to successfully meet the 'gateway' requirement as determined by the Apprenticeship Standard; this includes the employer's confirmation of readiness to progress to the EPA. The School is responsible for managing the gateway processes.
- 1.9 For non-integrated EPA the following apply:
  - an apprentice must have passed the academic award and met all gateway requirements in order to be put forward for the EPA
  - successful completion of the award does not constitute completion of the apprenticeship; the apprenticeship is not achieved until both the academic award and the EPA have been achieved
  - the School is responsible for providing continuing support to the apprentice until the EPA has been successfully completed.

1.10 For integrated EPA, the following apply:

- the School is responsible for ensuring the apprentice has met the gateway requirements and for supporting the apprentice to complete both the award and the EPA
- successful completion of the EPA is part of the requirements for passing the academic award – eg via a project module
- the University as the EPAO must ensure the independence and integrity of the EPA as required in the Apprenticeship Standard – this will require the School to appoint or designate and train independent assessors.

1.11 For all Apprenticeships, the alignment of the programme assessment strategy with the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan is essential. The programme assessment strategy should include formative and summative assessments which support both achievement of the programme/module learning outcomes and development of professional competence to perform the job role, and ensure apprentices are prepared for the EPA.

1.12 Where an Apprenticeship is delivered by a partner organisation and the EPA is integrated, the University acts as the both the academic awarding body and the EPAO. The partner organisation is the main provider.

## **2 Appointment of EPAOs for Non-integrated EPAs**

2.1 The University, as the training provider, informs employers about the possible EPA Organisations that are on the Register, and can advise on the quality of their EPA delivery where appropriate.

2.2 The apprentices' employers decide which EPA Organisation they wish to use.

2.3 The process for appointment of a third party EPAO is set out in the Guidance and process for the selection and appointment of EPAOs.

## **3 Applications to join the Register of EPA Organisations for Integrated EPA**

3.1 For fully integrated and integrated EPA, under ESFA rules, the School delivering the programme must make an application for the University to join the Register of End-Point Assessor Organisations (RoEPAO); this should be clearly indicated on the APPG course proposal.

3.2 The School is responsible for completing the application with the support of the Apprenticeship Office and AQU, and this should normally be completed in parallel with the approval process.

## **4 Management of Integrated EPAs**

In the delivery of integrated EPA (as distinct from fully integrated EPA) the University will apply the following principles and processes:

- 4.1 As the EPAO, the School will ensure a specified module fulfils the requirements of the EPA for the Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan in compliance with the University's normal quality standards and any PSRB requirements.
- 4.2 A clear specification and protocols setting out how the EPA will be delivered, including employer involvement, arrangements for retrieval of failure, standardisation and moderation, should be developed by the Course team and confirmed through the programme approval process. A summary must be provided in the Apprenticeship Programme Specification.
- 4.3 Changes to the Apprenticeship EPA Assessment Plan are treated as a minor course amendment in line with the Course and Module Change procedures.
- 4.4 The independent nature of the EPA must be assured in both the delivery of the EPA, and confirmation of assessment decisions; this is normally through the appointment of one or more Independent Assessors and an independent External Assessor (who is normally the external examiner).
- 4.5 The University's normal provisions for inclusive assessment and reasonable adjustments apply to EPA, as do the University principles and processes of verification, standardisation and moderation; this includes the maintenance of records of meetings and discussions. University policy in relation to data retention also applies.
- 4.6 EPA assessment delivery arrangements are managed and administered by Schools.
- 4.7 Reassessments for EPA will normally be undertaken in line with University regulations except where the Assessment Plan sets out any specific arrangements or procedures. There may be a need to liaise with the employer to secure agreement for a reassessment.
- 4.8 Schools must ensure the quality, validity, and reliability of integrated EPA in the following ways:
  - recruitment, preparation and on-going training of appropriate Independent Assessors
  - consulting with industry/technical experts, employers and External Assessor/ Examiner when developing relevant EPA assessment tasks to ensure there is comparability and consistency in terms of breadth and depth of assessment for the standard and to ensure the assessment is reliable, valid and fair to all learners
  - internal and external verification of the EPA assessment materials, including assessment and grading criteria
  - holding regular standardisation meetings to ensure consistency of assessment and applying University policy on moderation to ensure the validity and reliability of marking practice
  - recording of any practical components of assessment for moderation and quality assurance processes
  - monitoring provisional assessment outcomes and agreed outcomes from Board of Examiners

- using Independent Assessor feedback and External Assessor/Examiner Reports for development purposes feeding into the annual evaluation process
- seeking feedback from apprentices on the assessment process, including the EPA process
- ensuring currency and compliance with Apprenticeship standards and assessment plans.

## 5 Appointment of Independent Assessors for Integrated EPAs

5.1 The responsibilities of an Independent Assessor (IA) include:

- Carrying out the EPA in accordance with the EPA plan and protocols for the programme
- Ensuring national comparability of academic standards, that the assessment processes are reliable, fair and transparent, and operate in line with University regulations, policies and procedures
- Participating in annual assessment training and assessment standardisation events
- Annually submitting evidence of CPD records within the agreed timescales
- Annually reviewing their conflicts of interest declaration within the agreed timescale
- Attending the Apprenticeship Examination Board and completing reports within University timescales.

5.2 The University appoints as IAs those who have appropriate qualifications and experience at the required level of the award, meet any PSRB requirements together with currency in practice as evidenced by CPD. In addition, they must meet criteria for independence and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

5.3 IAs may be existing staff members of the University (full-time, fractional or hourly paid ALs) **provided they have not been involved in any aspect of delivery or assessment of the Apprenticeship programme** (excepting the EPA). Alternatively, IAs can be appointed and employed specifically to carry out the EPA role. Regardless of their existing employment status with the University, the principles and processes to be followed for appointment will be the same.

5.4 The School is responsible for nominating the IAs for EPA at least 9 months in advance of the first students reaching the EPA gateway, using a standard nomination form. Normally there should be a pool of IAs to draw upon at any one time. Nominations using a standard nomination form must be accompanied by a CV and declaration of conflict of interest form. Where there is a large team of IAs, consideration should be given to the appointment of a Lead IA. Nominations are approved by the Head of School and Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement.

5.5 The School is responsible for maintaining a register of Independent EPA Assessors for each Apprenticeship, and for recording and checking ongoing eligibility for the role.

5.6 The School is responsible for administration and communication with the IAs regarding the schedule of assessment activity and meetings for verification,

standardisation and moderation, and the Assessment Board dates.

- 5.7 Assessment training for IAs is the responsibility of the relevant School.
- 5.8 Schools must ensure that there is evidence that IAs remain eligible and fulfill all responsibilities related to the EPA in a timely manner and to the required expectations. This includes:
- participation in required training
  - updating records of CPD and conflicts of interest annually
  - carrying out EPAs in line with expectations
  - providing written reports by the required deadline.

5.9 Where it is necessary to make an external appointment as an IA, the School should discuss how this will be managed with HR, the Apprenticeship Office and AQU.

## **6 EPA gateway and completion**

- 6.1 All Apprenticeship Programmes (whether with integrated or non-integrated EPAs) should identify a gateway module to ensure effective learner preparation and implement formal checks on readiness; this may be a zero credit rated module.
- 6.2 Checks on apprentice readiness must demonstrate all EPA assessment gateway requirements as detailed in the EPA assessment plan.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the School to liaise with the employer to determine whether the apprentice has met requirements and the employer believes they are ready to complete the EPA, as well as to maintain records of completion against all requirements in the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan, as set out in the requirements for the gateway module.
- 6.4 The record of completion, as the outcome of the gateway module, must clearly set out all requirements for presentation to the Subject Assessment Board for formal confirmation of the gateway status of each apprentice (see section 7 below).
- 6.5 Schools must retain EPA assessment evidence, including apprentice assessments in accordance with the University's Data Retention Schedule. Normally such evidence is electronic and stored on the VLE. Evidence must be readily available for scrutiny externally.
- 6.6 For non-integrated EPA, the School is responsible for liaising with the EPAO to confirm completion of the gateway process for individual apprentices. The EPAO is responsible for informing the apprentice of the outcome and for claiming the Apprenticeship Certificate from ESFA and forwarding it to the apprentice. The School is responsible for communicating EPA outcomes to employers.
- 6.7 For integrated EPA, the School is responsible for communicating outcomes of the EPA to the apprentice and the employer. Registry Services is responsible for claiming the Apprenticeship Certificate from ESFA and forwarding it to the apprentice.

## **7 EPA process: Assessment Boards**

- 7.1 Subject Assessment Boards and Board of Examiners have responsibility for oversight of EPA delivery arrangements and processes and for confirmation of all decisions related to integrated EPA outcomes for individual apprentices. For non-integrated EPA, the Board is responsible for confirming the decisions regarding completion of the EPA gateway only.
- 7.2 Boards of Examiners may delegate specific responsibility for the Apprenticeship EPA to sub-groups of the Subject Assessment Board and Board of Examiners. In all cases, however, such sub-groups must be properly constituted to include independent assessors and external examiners, with a Registry Services Officer to maintain a record of the meeting.
- 7.3 The additional terms of reference for Subject Assessment Boards and Boards of Examiners related to Apprenticeships are:

### Subject Assessment Boards

- To confirm individual apprentices have met the gateway requirements to progress to the EPA
- To identify students who require additional support to achieve the gateway requirements and determine appropriate action

### Board of Examiners (for Integrated EPA)

- To review and confirm the EPA outcomes for each apprentice, including any grades
- To confirm individual apprentices have successfully completed the EPA and/or to confirm arrangements for reassessment or retaking of the EPA
- To ensure all decisions are consistent with University regulations and procedures for assessment and with the EPA Assessment Plan
- To consider the effectiveness of the EPA process and make recommendations for improvement.

- 7.4 Normally it will be the Subject Assessment Board that confirms individual apprentices have met gateway requirements, and the Board of Examiners that confirms EPA outcomes.
- 7.5 A standing agenda for Subject Assessment Boards (Apprenticeship) and for Boards of Examiners (Apprenticeships) is available.

## **8 EPA process: External Assessors**

- 8.1 The University's normal external examining arrangements apply for the academic award associated with an apprenticeship, and where an apprenticeship programme has an integrated EPA, the External Examiner will also act as the External Assessor for the EPA. This should be made clear as part of the appointment process.



- 8.2 When seeking to appoint an external examiner for a course that has an apprenticeship with an integrated EPA, academic, relevant practice-based experience and CPD should be considered, together with experience of apprenticeship programmes and assessment.
- 8.3 All external examiners who also act as external assessors for the EPA (and mentors if applicable) will be provided with the Designated Quality Body EQA External Assessors Guidance as part of the External Examiner induction and training process.
- 8.4 The responsibilities of the External Examiner in relation to EPA include:
- external verification of the EPA Assessment plan, tasks and associated materials, including quality assurance documentation
  - external moderation of a sample of completed EPA assessments (including practical and/or live assessments)
  - review of internal standardisation and moderation records
  - attendance at the Subject and Progression and Award Boards (or relevant sub-groups)
  - meet with independent assessors and staff delivering and managing the apprenticeship
  - review of feedback from apprentices and employers and/or direct meetings with apprentices and employers
  - review of gateway and EPA outcomes
  - submission of a report on the EPA process and outcomes.
- 8.5 The Apprenticeship Programme Lead in association with the relevant Head of Department must agree with the External Assessor a schedule of activity for the academic year. This should be completed by the end of September annually, and provided to the Head of Academic Quality or nominee for forwarding to the DQB.
- 8.6 The External Examiner with responsibility for oversight of the EPA will be asked to comment on the following as an addendum to their report:
- the EPA assessment plan and related assessment tasks and materials, and its relationship to external benchmarks, including the Assessment Plan for the apprenticeship standard
  - delivery of the EPA in practice
  - the processes for verification, standardisation and moderation, including confirmation that assessment evidence is valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable
  - management of the gateway
  - effectiveness of the IAs in applying consistent standards and feedback to learners
  - inclusion and accessibility of the EPA and management of reasonable adjustments
  - feedback from apprentices, employers and IAs
  - reliability and comparability of the EPA outcomes and the fairness of the processes for managing the EPA process

- quality of off the job and on the job learning, support and assessment, and relationship to apprenticeship standards and requirements.

## 9 EPA Process: Annual Evaluation

- 9.1 The Apprenticeship Office collects feedback from employers on the EPA process and shares with Schools for the purposes of evaluation and continuous improvement.
- 9.2 Schools should use feedback and reports from all stakeholders, including apprentices, employers, internal assessors and external assessors to inform the development of integrated EPA processes and assessments. This should feed into the AER.
- 9.3 The Apprenticeship Office should maintain oversight of all EPA outcomes, together with feedback from stakeholders and External Assessor and External EPAO reports to identify any common themes or matters for improvement and enhancement. This should feed into the Annual Apprenticeship AER.

## 10 External Quality Assessment of EPA

- 10.1 The Head of Academic Quality (or nominee) is responsible for all correspondence with the DQB. This includes:
- notifying the DQB of any External Assessors appointed using the DQB Notification Form
  - submitting readiness checks (completed in association with the relevant School)
  - providing the schedule of activity for each External Assessor to the DQB, normally by the end of October
  - providing a copy of the External Assessor's report to the DQB.
- 10.2 AQU is also responsible for the co-ordination of all DQB monitoring activity.

### Related Documentation

Guidance and process for the selection and appointment of EPAOs  
[University Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment: Conflict of Interest Policy](#) (includes Conflict of Interest form)

Independent EPA Assessor nomination form

Standing agenda for Subject Boards and Boards of Examiners (Apprenticeships)

External Assessor (Apprenticeship EPA) Report Form Template

### Approval/Review Table

Item	Notes
Version Number	v1.0
Date of Approval	January 2023
Approved by	Academic Board
Effective from	January 2023
Policy Officer	Head of Academic Quality

Department	Academic Quality Unit
Review date	September 2025
Last reviewed	N/A
Policy/procedure/guidance superseded by this version	N/A
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	January 2023
Accessibility Checked	January 2023