



## Guidance for selecting and appointing an end-point assessment organisation

This document should be read in conjunction with the latest DfE [Apprenticeship funding rules for main providers](#) and the University of Worcester's [Purchasing Policy](#).

### 1 Background to the end-point assessment and the role of the end-point assessment organisation

- 1.1 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 to confirm that the apprentice has met the requirements of the apprenticeship standard.
- 1.2 The EPA can be integrated or non-integrated, depending on the requirements of the apprenticeship standard and the assessment plan. Where the EPA is fully integrated, the assessment for the academic award is also the EPA and there is no additional assessment. The EPA may also be a final element which is integrated into the assessment for the academic award. Where the EPA is non-integrated, the EPA is independent of this process and the apprentice must undertake a separate assessment to determine whether they have met the requirements of the apprenticeship.
- 1.3 An independent end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) is required to carry out the EPA for a non-integrated apprenticeship. The EPAO must be listed on the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) against the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- 1.4 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) states that the EPAO, in line with the apprenticeship assessment plan, will:
  - design and develop the content of the EPA (for example, test questions, project topics or interview scripts)
  - check and verify that the apprentice has completed any prerequisites to EPA, including any mandatory qualifications
  - conduct EPA of apprentices
  - quality assure the EPA they deliver
  - adhere to the external quality assurance (EQA) arrangements
  - ensure EPA is synoptic and independent
  - identify and record when the apprentice has passed the EPA
  - apply and pay for the apprenticeship certificate

## 2 Appointment of the end-point assessment organisation

- 2.1 The EPAO is chosen by the employer although, in practice, the employer may request the University's advice. The University must contract with the EPAO selected by the employer and lead the relationship with them. Where apprentices in one cohort are employed by different employers, the University may need to contract with more than one EPAO.
- 2.2 The University, as the training provider, (in consultation with the employer) is responsible for engaging the EPAO. This can be at any time in the apprenticeship, but to ensure timely delivery of the end-point assessment the dialogue must commence at least 6 months before the planned end date of the apprenticeship. As part of this process all information required for the end-point assessment must be communicated to the employer, including when the gateway is due. The Apprenticeship Office and Procurement Team will liaise with the employer regarding negotiations with their selected EPAO.
- 2.3 The course team will work with the UW Procurement Team and Apprenticeship Office to coordinate a proportionate due diligence exercise and tender process (where required) with reference to the [University's Purchasing Policy](#). The process followed and the results obtained must be available to the DfE and the employer. A (non-exhaustive) checklist of points to consider is included in Appendix A. An EPAO assessed as being unsuitable must not be used, even if the employer decides not to work with the University as a result.
- 2.4 Payment from the employer to the EPAO is routed through the University so the price of the apprenticeship the University agrees with the employer must include the EPA cost that the employer has negotiated with the EPAO. This includes costs relating to external quality assurance of the EPA. The DfE states that the expected cost of EPA will not exceed 20% of the funding band maximum. However, this does not mean that the cost of the EPA must be set at 20%; employers are expected to negotiate with EPAOs to secure value for money.
- 2.5 The University must conduct clear and timely communications with the proposed EPAO to ensure both parties are familiar with the other's policies. Expectations and actions are set out with clear deadlines in order to ensure the EPAO is appointed before the gateway and to ensure timely delivery of the end-point assessment this dialogue must commence at least 6 months before the planned end date of the apprenticeship.
- 2.6 All EPAO appointments must be approved by the Head of School and the Apprenticeship Office via completion of the 'Appointment of End-Point Assessment Organisation: Sign-Off Form'.
- 2.7 As soon as the EPAO and price of the EPA are agreed with the employer, the relevant fields on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) and the training plan (formerly commitment statement) must be completed. These fields must be

completed at least six months before the gateway but must not be completed prior to the EPAO being appointed.

- 2.8 Once appointed, the contract between the University and the EPAO should set out roles and responsibilities and a schedule for the payment(s) to be made to the EPAO. The terms of the contract should make it clear that the EPAO is delivering the EPA on behalf of the employer and the University is acting as the agent of the ESFA in channelling the funding to the EPAO.
- 2.9 The written agreement between the University and the EPAO should include the arrangements for the following: sharing relevant information about the apprentice; change in circumstances which may delay, or result in the cancellation of, the EPA; and resits.
- 2.10 The School retains responsibility for leading the relationship with the EPAO selected by the employer and for the management of EPA within their subject areas. The School will receive feedback from the EPAO to support enhancement of future apprenticeships.

### **3 Outline of checks to be undertaken by the University (see Appendix A)**

- 3.1 In order for the University to satisfy itself of the capability and capacity of the EPAO to deliver high quality EPA, the University will undertake a focused and proportionate due diligence process, referring to the DfE [Apprenticeship funding rules for main providers](#). This process will ensure that:
  - Procurement will take place early on in the delivery of the apprenticeship.
  - The EPAO is listed on the RoEPAO against the relevant standard.
  - The EPAO is independent with no affiliation with the apprentices, the employers, or the programme delivery. Processes are in place to manage conflicts of interest.
  - Appropriate legal and financial due diligence checks are satisfied.
  - The University is satisfied with the EPAO's track record and that it has both the capacity and capability to deliver high quality EPA.
  - The EPAO applies clear and robust internal quality assurance measures to ensure that the delivery of EPA is accurate, effective and consistent.
  - The EPAO will enable the University to conduct effective monitoring and performance review procedures.

#### 4 Timeline and responsibilities for selection and appointment of EPAO

When	Task	Responsibility
On commencement of apprenticeship	Begin dialogue with employers regarding the potential EPAO(s)	Course team
	Co-ordinate a proportionate due diligence exercise in relation to the potential EPAO(s) and follow the UW's tender process where required	Course team, Apprenticeship Office and Procurement Team
	Check capability and capacity of each EPAO selected by the employer(s), appraising potential conflicts of interest and threats to independence and present to the employer	Course team
At least six months before gateway	Co-ordinate completion of the 'Appointment of EPAO: Sign Off' form	Course team
	Approve in principle the appointment of the EPAO(s) by signing the above form	Head of School and Apprenticeship Office
	Forward completed EPAO appointment form to the APSC secretary	Course team
	Acknowledge Head of School's EPAO appointment approval and sign off that the University, Ofsted and ESFA requirements have been satisfied.	APSC
	Sign the contract in accordance with UW financial regulations	Procurement team, Head of School (VC for cost over £10k)
	Update ILR fields with EPA price and EPAO identifier	Data Management Unit (within registry)
	Update training plans (formerly commitment statements) to include the EPAO	School PAS
	Send evidence to EPAO(s) of Level 2 English and Maths (and any other qualifications relating to professional requirements)	School PAS

Once EPAO is appointed	Ensure payment(s) made to the EPAO(s) are in accordance with the contractual terms and that digital evidence of payment is available or held in the employer's ESFA evidence file	Finance
	Work with the chosen EPAO(s) to develop support and guidance for apprentices	Course team
	Monitor the standards and effectiveness of the EPAO(s)	Course team (with oversight from APSC)
At least three months before gateway	Book provisional EPA dates and confirm these with the employer and apprentices	Course team
At least one month before gateway	Confirm the logistics for the EPA with the EPAO and disseminate information to apprentices, e.g., joining instructions for tech platform (where relevant) etc	Course team
At the gateway	Complete a 'Gateway Approval' form and/or portal for each apprentice and submit to the EPAO	Co-ordinated by the course team with signatures required from Head of Department, the employer and apprentice
On completion of the apprenticeship	Upload a copy of the awarded ESFA Apprenticeship Certificate number to the apprentice's ESFA evidence file and update the student record accordingly	School PAS
At the end of the academic year	Report outcomes of EPA through course AER	Course team
	Receive annual review of practice and outcomes from EPA across the University	To be received at APSC
	Receive feedback from EPAO, via the School, to support future enhancement (and report in self-assessment report).	APSC

## 5 Summary of tasks by responsibility

Course team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin dialogue with employers regarding the potential EPAO(s), offering advice where necessary.</li> <li>• Working with the Apprenticeship Office and Procurement Team, co-ordinate a proportionate due diligence exercise in relation to the potential EPAO(s) and follow the tender process where required.</li> <li>• Check capability and capacity of each EPAO selected by the employer(s), appraising potential conflicts of interest and threats to independence and present to the employer for approval.</li> <li>• Co-ordinate completion of the 'Appointment of EPAO: Sign Off' form by the Head of School and the Apprenticeship Office and forward completed form to the APSC Secretary</li> <li>• Work with the chosen EPAO(s) to develop support and guidance for apprentices</li> <li>• Monitor the standards and effectiveness of the EPAO(s)</li> <li>• Book provisional EPA dates and confirm these with the employer and apprentices at least three months before gateway</li> <li>• Confirm the logistics for the EPA with the EPAO and disseminate information to apprentices</li> <li>• Co-ordinate the completion of the 'Gateway Approval' form for each apprentice prior to the gateway</li> <li>• Report outcomes of EPA through course AER</li> </ul>
Head of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve in principle the appointment of the EPAO(s) with the Apprenticeship Office by signing the 'Appointment of EPAO: Sign Off form'</li> <li>• Sign the contract with the EPAO in accordance with the UW's financial regulations</li> </ul>
Head of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign the 'Gateway Approval' form or portal for each apprentice</li> </ul>
Apprenticeship Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the course team and Procurement Team, contribute to a proportionate due diligence exercise in relation to the potential EPAO(s) and follow the tender process where required</li> <li>• Acknowledge Head of School's EPAO appointment approval and sign off that the University, Ofsted and ESFA requirements have been satisfied by signing the 'Appointment of EPAO: Sign Off form'</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report whether an EPAO has been appointed or not through the Apprenticeship Office position statement standing item to ASPC.</li> </ul>
Procurement Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the course team and Apprenticeship Office, contribute to a proportionate due diligence exercise in relation to the potential EPAO(s) and follow the tender process where required</li> <li>• Sign the EPAO contract in accordance with UW financial regulations</li> </ul>
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure payment(s) made to the EPAO(s) are in accordance with the contractual terms and that digital evidence of payment is available or held in the employer's ESFA evidence file</li> </ul>
Data Management Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update ILR fields with EPA price and EPAO identifier</li> </ul>
School PAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update training plans (formerly commitment statements) to include the EPAO</li> <li>• Send evidence to EPAO(s) of Level 2 English and Maths (and any other qualifications relating to professional requirements)</li> <li>• Upload a copy of the awarded ESFA Apprenticeship Certificate number to the apprentice's ESFA evidence file and update the student record accordingly</li> </ul>
AQU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update guidance in response to policy review and ESFA changes in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Office</li> </ul>
APSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee the monitoring of the standards and effectiveness of the EPAO(s) undertaken by the School</li> <li>• Receive feedback from EPAO, via the School, to support future enhancement (and report in self-assessment report).</li> <li>• Receive an annual review of practice and outcomes from EPA across the University, as part of SAR/apprenticeship annual report.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A: Checklist of points to consider when selecting an EPAO

<b>Suitability of the EPAO</b>	Ensure that the EPAO is on the Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) and that the EPAO is listed against the relevant standard.	
	Check that the EPAO is independent and has no affiliation with the apprentices, the employers, or the programme delivery.	
	Review the EPAO's conflict of interest policy.	
<b>Quality of EPAO</b>	Review the EPAO's track record and the number of EPAs it has carried out, both in terms of the number of cohorts it has assessed and the total number of individual apprentices.	
	Review the EPAO's internal quality assurance processes. Ensure the EPAO has the required governance in place to guarantee ongoing quality in their assessment practices and consistency in moderation and standardisation.	
	Review the External Quality Assurance reports for the EPAO and check the grading assigned at the readiness check / annual summary report.	
	Review the qualifications of the staff carrying out the assessments. Consider whether assessors are experts in their field and industry-aligned.	
	Review the EPAO's policy on training and CPD for assessors.	
<b>EPA logistics</b>	Confirm whether the assessment will take place face-to-face or remotely. If undertaken remotely, what platform(s) will be used for this?	
	Appraise the EPAO's readiness to assess. For example, ask to view mock tests, interview questions, assessment instruments and tools, etc.	
	Review materials and resources which will be provided to support the apprentices in their preparation for the EPA. Will apprentices need to use a particular platform to access these?	



	Check that the EPAO has assessors who can reach the assessment location(s) to conduct the EPA in a timely manner. Check that this can be scaled to meet the needs of the employer(s) where necessary.	
	Find out if the same assessor will assess all elements of the EPA.	
	Confirm how additional learning needs will be considered during the EPA and ask for examples of reasonable adjustments which might be made.	
	Find out how far in advance the dates for the EPA can be confirmed.	
<b>Post-EPA arrangements</b>	Confirm the arrangements and charges for resits and the timescale for resits to take place.	
	Confirm how and in what format the apprentice will receive feedback on their performance in the EPA. If a resit is required, how will this be communicated and who else will be notified regarding this outcome?	
	Review the EPAO's complaints / appeals process.	
	Clarify the feedback that the University will receive from the EPAO to support enhancement of future apprenticeships.	
<b>Value for money</b>	Consider the findings of the above in the light of the UW procurement process.	
	Clarify the cost per apprentice and establish whether this cost is volume dependent.	
	Clarify when the EPAO will expect to receive payment and establish whether more than one instalment be required.	

Table 1 Version record of document

Item	Notes
Version Number	2.1
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Policy Officer	Head of Academic Quality
Department	Academic Quality Unit
Review date	September 2026
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Policy/procedure/guidance superseded by this version	V2.0
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	
Accessibility Checked	

Table 2 Revision History of document

**Recent changes**

Committee/Author	Date	Change
APSC	12.2023	Apprenticeship Office to report whether an EPAO has been appointed through position statement standing item to ASPC.
P. Wright	02.2024	To align with updated EPA Policy