

# **Integrated Degree Apprenticeships End-Point Assessment**

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## Policy and Procedure

Reference:

Version: 2.00

Status: Final

Date: 02/10/2025

# Integrated Degree Apprenticeships End-Point Assessment

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## 1. Introduction

This document outlines the policies and procedures in place for managing the quality of integrated degree apprenticeships end-point assessments (EPA). It should be read alongside the Quality Assuring Apprenticeship Provision Policy which outlines how University of the Built Environment ensures the quality of other aspects of apprenticeship delivery from programme design and approval through to apprenticeship programme monitoring and review.

This policy ensures that the University complies with Department for Education (DfE) rules.

## 2. Definitions

**Apprenticeship** – an apprenticeship is a job with training. Through an apprenticeship, an apprentice will gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills and behaviours that they need to be competent in their current occupation. The apprentice will gain this through formal off-the-job training (which is the responsibility of University of the Built Environment) and an opportunity to apply these new skills in a real work environment, in a productive job.

The learning phase of the apprenticeship is known as the Practical Period and includes on and off-the-job learning. Some apprentices will also need to study maths and English to meet the requirements to access funding. At the end of the Practical Period, apprentices will pass through a Gateway meeting which is effectively confirmation that they are consistently meeting the requirements of their apprenticeship standard. Following this, they will undertake End-Point Assessment (EPA) which is the final step to completing the apprenticeship.

All the apprenticeships delivered by the University are English apprenticeships. University of the Built Environment delivers apprenticeships with both integrated and non-integrated apprenticeships. This document sets out how the University assures the quality of integrated apprenticeships.

**Integrated degree apprenticeships** include the EPA within the programme with the EPA carrying credit towards the final degree programme. The EPA therefore marks the end of the programme and for students to be awarded the degree they must pass both the modules on the programme and the EPA.

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## 3. The role of the integrated EPA independent assessor and industry expert

The roles of the independent assessor and industry expert for integrated EPAs are to assess the apprentice's competence and knowledge against specific industry standards. This role is critical to the integrity and credibility of the apprenticeship programme. The exact nature of the role will be dependent on the particular apprenticeship standard and the assessment plan<sup>1</sup> but broadly the role entails:

- Assess the performance of the apprentice in accordance with assessment and marking criteria, ensuring that overall standards are maintained.
- Follow assessment protocols and operate in line with:
  - [Academic and Programme Regulations \(opens new window\)](#)
  - Office for Students Degree Apprenticeships: a guide for higher education providers
  - QAA Characteristic Statement for Apprenticeships
  - Department for Education rules
  - Relevant Apprenticeship standard and End-point Assessment Plan.
- Ensure all EPA reports and assessment evidence are high quality and recorded accurately.
- Completing assessment activities and reports by agreed deadlines.
- Attending relevant Board of Examiners meetings.
- Raise any conflicts of interest (in line with [section 4](#) below).
- Annually submit evidence of training and CPD activities (see [section 5](#) below).

When appointing independent assessors, the following skills and experience will be sought:

- A subject academic with a high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study and a good understanding of the UK higher education sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Available on the Institute of Apprenticeship website  
<https://www.instituteofapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

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- Knowledge and understanding of the apprenticeship standard, assessment plan and assessment methods used.
- Experience of leading meetings/structured interviews/discussions.
- Evidence of commitment to maintaining CPD, in line with new apprenticeship requirements and the EPA specialism.
- Excellent written, verbal, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Impartial in judgement and independent of programme delivery and assessment.

Independent assessors may be appointed internally or externally but must not be involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship training.

When appointing an Industry Expect the following skills and experience will be sought:

- Current relevant occupational competence within the workplace for at least 2 years or in line with the requirements set out in the apprenticeship standard assessment plan.
- A high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study and a good understanding of the UK higher education sector.
- Knowledge and understanding of the apprenticeship standard, assessment plan and assessment methods used.
- Experience of leading meetings/structured interviews/discussions.
- Evidence of commitment to maintaining CPD, in line with new apprenticeship requirements and the EPA specialism.
- Excellent written, verbal, and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Must be sourced from a different organisation to which the apprentice has been employed and have no previous experience related to the training/appraisal of the apprentice.

The Academic Operations team, working with the Programme Leader, is responsible for contracting independent assessors and industry experts either through individual contracts or through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) if the University is working with a professional body to provide these roles.

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## **4. Conflicts of interest and independent assessors**

The University's Conflicts of Interest Policy applies to independent EPA assessors and EPA Industry Experts. Like all other University employees, they are required to recognise situations in which there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest and they should contact the University's Academic Operations team in the first instance to discuss and then refer to the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team. Conflicts of interest are likely to include where the independent assessor or industry expert are connected to the development and/or delivery of the programme or have connections with an apprentice or apprentice employer.

All independent EPA assessors are required to declare any conflicts of interest at the time of their appointment, and prior to the EPA. Independent EPA assessors will be provided with a list of apprentices and their employers for them to assess and declare any new real or perceived conflict before each EPA assessment round.

The University must maintain the independence of EPA assessors and industry experts and can only allow them to undertake their duties where there is no conflict of interest. In order to ensure this the University will not appoint independent assessors in the following categories or circumstances:

- Anyone with a close personal relationship with a member of staff involved with the programme in question.
- Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with an apprentice or apprentice employer on the programme in question.
- Anyone with a prior link to the apprentice or an extended link to the apprentice's employer (such as via friends or relatives).
- Anyone that stands to derive personal or business gain from the outcome of the assessment.
- Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as apprentices to the apprentice degree programme.

## **5. Training and ensuring CPD of independent assessors and industry experts**

To ensure an in-depth knowledge of the Apprenticeship Standards and EPA all independent assessors and industry experts are required to:

- Undertake a University induction and any ongoing training requirements.
- Take part in regular training and standardisation activities, associated with the role.
- Maintain and provide evidence of ongoing, relevant CPD.

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The Academic Operations team ensures that CPD and training records for independent assessors and industry experts where they have been appointed under a University of the Built Environment worker contract are updated annually and are retained for six years.

In the event they have been appointed through an SLA with a professional body the professional body will be responsible for monitoring CPD and training.

## 6. EPA gateway

Before any apprentice can progress through the gateway to undertake the EPA, both the University and the employer must check that all Gateway requirements as set out in the Apprenticeship Standard Assessment Plan have been met. Academic Registry, following the Module Board, will confirm that the apprentice has passed the required amount of academic credit on the programme to progress to Gateway.

The employer and the University will also sign a statement to confirm that all Gateway requirements have been met, and the apprentice has developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard and is ready to take the EPA.

## 7. Quality assurance and governance

The University will ensure the quality and consistency of the EPA by:

- Ensuring that apprentices and employers are provided with guidance on the EPA and will be given clear guidance on the assessment and marking criteria.
- Recruiting appropriately qualified independent and industry assessors and ensuring that all conflicts of interest are considered and handled (in line with [section 4](#) above).
- Ensuring that independent and industry assessors undertake regular relevant continuing professional development.
- Ensuring that there are clear protocols for assessment and moderation and that assessors will meet at least annually for standardisation activities.
- Appointing an External Quality Assurance External Assessor (in line with [section 9](#) below).
- Maintaining a self-assessment report for the EPA and an associated quality improvement plan which will be monitored by the Quality Standards and Enhancement Committee (QSEC).
- Monitoring the outcomes of the Board of Examiners meetings.

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- Gathering feedback from apprentices and employers.
- Seeking feedback from EQA External Assessor, independent assessors, and industry experts.

The performance and quality of the EPA will be reported to and overseen by QSEC. Reports will also go to the Apprenticeship Quality Monitoring Committee.

## 8. Conducting EPA

The University will conduct EPAs in line with the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan. Further information on the conduct of the EPA will be provided to apprentices and their employers in the EPAO Apprentice and Employer Handbook.

When introducing and conducting EPAs the University will follow its Standard Operating Procedures which set out gateway processes, security of assessment materials, assessment organisation and accessibility (including examinations, logbooks and panel interviews), data processing, retention and protection and processes for issuing results and certificates and staff training.

A minimum of two independent assessors must be appointed to ensure that there is independence between assessment and moderation. Moderation and standardisation is undertaken in line with the University's Moderation Guide.

Apprentices can apply for reasonable adjustments to help reduce the effect of a disability, learning difficulty, or physical or mental health condition, which may place the apprentice at a disadvantage compared to others. Reasonable adjustments to the EPA are made on a case-by-case basis in line with the [IfATE reasonable adjustment matrix \(opens new window\)](#). Requests for reasonable adjustments must be made to the Disability and Welfare Team within the deadline specified in the EPAO Apprentice and Employer Handbook.

Apprentices can notify the University of any mitigating circumstances impacting their EPA module by following the University's Mitigating Circumstances Policy.

Apprentices may have the option to resit or retake the EPA. Resit is where the apprentice takes the assessment again without the need for new learning. A retake is where an employer determines that new learning is needed first. The decision to offer either a resit or a retake will be made by the University in consultation with the apprentice's employer. Apprentices who pass their EPA may not resit to achieve a higher grade. Information on the opportunity for resits and retakes is available to apprentices within the EPAO Apprentice and Employer Handbook.

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On successful completion of the programme apprentices will be issued with a transcript of their performance. University of the Built Environment as the EPAO is responsible for claiming the apprenticeship certificate on behalf of the apprentice.

The University will maintain a record assessments in their original format for the student's maximum period of registration plus 5 years. This means 11 years for Postgraduate modules and 14 years for Undergraduate modules.

## **9. External Quality Assurance (EQA) External Assessor**

University of the Built Environment appoints an EQA External Assessor to oversee the quality and standards of the EPA. All EQA External Assessor appointments are approved by QSEC and subject to final approval by the Designated Quality Body as part of the readiness check process. All appointments will normally run for a period of four years subject to annual review and reappointment. The EQA External Assessor can be the same individual as the programme External Examiner as long as they meet the skills and experience required for the role.

The main responsibilities of the EQA External Assessor is to observe/assess:

- The EPA and how this is delivered in practice.
- The management of Gateway and mandatory qualification requirements and involvement of the employer in deciding the apprentice is ready for the EPA.
- The assessment instruments/methods.
- The EPA assessor's knowledge.
- The accessibility of the EPA and the management of reasonable adjustments.
- A sample of assessments, including live assessments.
- Assessor standardisation or moderation meetings.
- Interviews with assessors and other University staff.
- Feedback from apprentices and employers.
- The reliability and comparability of EPA.

The EQA External Assessor must be entirely independent of the EPA delivery and external to the University. They must also:

- Have appropriate and up-to-date occupational and assessment skills related to the programme appointed to.

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- Have a high degree of competence and experience in the fields covered by the EPA and have a good understanding of degree apprenticeships.
- Be experienced in apprenticeship delivery, assessment design and in quality assurance.
- Be prepared to undertake relevant training and continuing professional development.

The External Examiner will attend the University at least once per cohort of apprentices completing the EPA and report findings to the University and the Designated Quality Body. The report should:

- Detail the work the EQA External Assessor has completed, including observation, meetings, and sampling activities.
- Provide commentary and feedback on EPA delivery as specified in the report template.
- Identify areas of good practice and provide developmental advice.
- Identify any issues or activities within the context of the delivery of EPA that do not meet with the requirements of the Standard or pose a risk to effective EPA delivery and/or achievement of occupational competence.
- Comment on progress with any items for improvement previously raised with the University.

The Academic Quality Unit will be responsible for responding to the report and working with relevant teams to put in place any enhancements required. A copy of the EQA Assessor Report and the University's responses will be reviewed by QSEC.

## 10. Appeals and complaints

Apprentices who are on an integrated apprenticeship who wish to appeal their EPA grade should follow the [Student Appeals Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

If an apprentice wants to make a complaint about any aspect of the EPA they can do so by following the [Student Complaints Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

If an employer wishes to make a complaint about any element of the EPA they should use the [Complaints for Employers of Apprentices \(opens new window\)](#).

## 11. Equality and diversity

To ensure that apprentices with protected characteristics or learning support needs are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in their EPAs the University will monitor data on EPA completion rates.