



LIVERPOOL
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Higher and Degree Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment (EPA) Policy and Procedure

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Summary of what this policy covers

End-Point Assessment (EPA) responsibilities	This policy sets out the University's approach to delivering and managing the quality of End-Point Assessments (EPAs) for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HDAs/DAs). It ensures compliance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfATE). It clarifies roles and responsibilities in relation to EPAs.
End-Point Assessor Organisations (EPAO)	Where the EPA on a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship (HDA) is integrated, the University, will be the designated EPAO. The Apprenticeship Hub will follow regulatory guidance to be registered as an EPAO.
Choosing an Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation for University staff who are apprentices	Where our staff are studying a Higher/Degree Apprenticeship and the EPA is not integrated, the training provider is required to choose an independent third-party End-Point Assessment Organisation to deliver EPA. The policy explains how we approach this. See section 3.
Selecting an End-Point Assessor organisation	Where the EPA is not integrated the training provider chooses the EPA Organisation. See section 4.
Recruiting and maintaining records of Independent Assessors	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. As part of the HAD/DA approval by the University, the Apprenticeship Hub states which of these two approaches it intends to follow. The policy explains the process for recruiting staff for an IA role. See section 6.
Training and ensuring the CPD of Independent Assessors	For integrated EPAs, the University is required to ensure IAs keep their occupational expertise up to date. The Apprenticeship Hub is responsible for ensuring their IAs understand the specific requirements of the EPA and that evidence of this is logged with the IA records maintained by the Registrar or nominee. Further information can be found in section 8.
Ensuring potential conflicts of interest are identified and managed	EPAs must be conducted impartially with a clear separation between the teaching on the programme and those carrying out the EPA, unless the plan specifically states otherwise. Section 7 explains how we manage and mitigate any potential or real conflict of interest in the delivery of EPAs.

Conducting EPAs and applying for Completion Certificates	<p>The University carries out EPAs ensuring adherence to internal and external quality assurance requirements. Section 10 addresses the issues that arise due to some EPAs being slightly different to the University's more traditional assessments.</p>
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See also the Glossary on page 12 for information about definitions and abbreviations

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Liverpool Hope University's approach to delivering and managing the quality of End-Point Assessments (EPAs) for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HDAs/DAs). HDAs/DAs are structured training programmes where the main learning is at level 4 or above.

EPAs are a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviors' that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship. The purpose of the EPA is to make sure the apprentice meets the standard set by employers and is fully competent in the occupation.

EPAs can be integrated or non-integrated. An integrated EPA is incorporated into the University qualification. A non-integrated (or independent) EPA is a separate assessment carried out by a third-party organisation after the apprentice has completed the University qualification.

The policy ensures the University's approach to EPAs complies with Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules, the Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfATE) and Office for Students (OfS) External Quality Assurance (EQA). It clarifies roles and responsibilities in relation to EPAs for University staff, apprentices, employers and Independent Assessors (IAs).

2. Scope

This policy covers the following scenarios¹:

- Apprentices who are employed by other organisations' and are on a Liverpool Hope University apprenticeship, with a non-integrated EPA.
- Apprentices who are employed by the University and are on an apprenticeship delivered by the University, with a non-integrated EPA.
- Apprentices who are employed by the University and are on an apprenticeship either delivered by the University or by another provider, with an integrated EPA.
- Apprentices who are employed by other organisations' and are on a Liverpool Hope University apprenticeship, with an integrated EPA.

3. Appointing a third-party End-Point Assessment Organisation (Non-integrated EPAs)

The section applies to apprentices who are employed by other organisations' and are on a Liverpool Hope University apprenticeship, with a non-integrated EPA.

The University's as the main training provider will select which EPA Organisation we wish to use. The University, as training provider, ensures that employers are fully informed about the possible End-Point Assessment Organisations that are on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). In addition, where we have knowledge of providers and the

¹ The policy does not cover the scenario whereby the Apprenticeship Hub wishes to act as a third-party EPA Organisation for other institutions. The University Executive Board (UEB) considers the business case for any proposals for such activity on a case-by-case basis.

quality of their EPA delivery, we may highlight to employers those which we consider particularly suitable.

Where possible, the choice of EPA Organisation is included in the initial contract with employers. In such cases, the University will appoint the EPA Organisation as soon as practicable, so as not to delay the EPA being delivered to apprentices.

The Director of Apprenticeships (DoA) will initiate and manage the contracting process with the EPA organisation.

All contracts with EPA Organisations are recorded by the Apprenticeship Quality and Compliance Officer. Contracts are monitored by the Degree Apprenticeship (DA) Hub team in liaison with other relevant professional services, Faculties and employers. If concerns are raised, the DA Hub Team liaises with the third-party EPA Organisation. If concerns persist, the University may terminate the contract with the EPA Organisation. In such cases, the DA Hub Team, employer and Faculty will develop and implement continuity arrangements to transfer the EPA to another organisation and to support apprentice learners.

The section applies to apprentices who are employed by the University and are on an apprenticeship either delivered by the University or by another provider, with a non-integrated EPA.

It relates to the University's obligations as the employer of the apprentices in relation to the EPA. The process is led and coordinated by the University's People Services department which acts as "the employer". If the HDA/DA is delivered by the University, the Apprenticeship Hub Team will lead on the contract with the EPAO, if applicable. If the HAD /DA is delivered by a third-party organisation the external training provider will lead on the contract with the EPAO, however People Services ensures that the DA Hub Team is informed about proposed contracts with third-party EPA organisations.

If concerns are raised about third-party EPAOs, the DA Hub Team liaises with the third-party EPA Organisation. If concerns persist, the University may terminate the contract with the EPA Organisation. In such cases, the DA Hub Team, People Services (acting as the employer) and the apprenticeship provider will develop and implement continuity arrangements to transfer the EPA to another organisation and to support apprentice learners.

4. End-Point Assessor Organisations (Integrated EPAs)

This section applies to apprentices who are employed by other organisations or by the University, and are on a Liverpool Hope University apprenticeship with an integrated EPA. Where the EPA on a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship (HAD/DA) is integrated, the University will be the designated EPAO. The University will follow regulatory guidance.

The DoA, working with the designated Faculty will plan for EPA concurrently with programme approval documentation. EPA planning and evidence will include:

- Mapping of the apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills and Behaviors' (KSBs) to the

University award and the delivery method, to support the learner through the apprenticeship to the EPA.

- Explanation of how the programme team, with the employers, will confirm that apprentices can enter the Gateway to EPA.
- End-Point Assessment Plan is drafted during the programme approval process and is included in the definitive document set, detailing the EPA including its delivery plan.
- Explanation of how the elements of the EPA will be assessed and graded in line with the EPA for the standard.
- Plans for how each EPA assessment will be moderated.
- Explanation of the methods that will be used by the School to document and store assessments records.
- Evidence that any existing staff who will be designated as Independent Assessors (IAs) have the occupational competence, experience and assessment expertise for the relevant standard.
- Commitment from the Faculty that existing staff designated as IAs will not be involved in the delivery of the programme.
- Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for IAs that will be recruited specifically for the role.
- Information about how IAs will be adequately briefed and trained.
- Confirmation that the School will comply with the external quality assurance arrangements set out in the assessment plan for the standard and in accordance with the external quality assurance option for EPA; this will be (as applicable) QAA, Ofqual, professional body, employer-led or Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE).

In order to ensure oversight across University EPA activity the DA Hub Team maintains records for six years from the end of the course of study (or longer if required by the University's Data Retention Schedule) of End Point Assessment documentation.

5. The role of the Independent Assessor (Integrated EPAs)

The functions of an Independent Assessor (IA) vary depending on the EPA but include:

- Carrying out the EPA as set out in the EPA plan for the programme. This involves 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.
 - Office for Students (OfS) External Quality Requirements
 - IfATE EQA Framework
 - UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
 - Characteristic Statement for Degrees and Apprenticeships.
 - Education and Skills Funding Agency rules.
 - Relevant Apprenticeship Standard and End-Point Assessment Plan.
 - Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements (where applicable).

- Participating in annual assessment training and assessment standardisation events.
- Annually submitting evidence of CPD records to the Quality and Compliance Manager within the agreed timescale.
- Annually reviewing their conflicts of interest declaration within the agreed timescale.
- Completing reports within University timescales.

The University appoints IAs those who demonstrate appropriate evidence of the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of the UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
- Competence and experience in the fields covered by apprenticeship.
- Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience, where appropriate.
- Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
- Sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic and, where appropriate, professional peers.
- Familiarity with the EPA performance expected of apprentices to achieve the award being assessed.
- Fluency in English.
- Meeting applicable criteria set by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, where applicable.
- Awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant assessments.

6. Recruiting and maintaining records of Independent Assessors (Integrated EPAs)

Where the EPA is integrated, the University ensures it has suitable Independent Assessors who meet the requirements described in section 5. IAs can either be permanent University staff or individuals recruited by the School specifically for an IA role.

For every Integrated EPA the total number of IAs must be enough to cover the number of EPAs expected. Case-by-case basis advice is provided by Quality and Compliance Manager. DA Hub Team maintains records for six years (or longer, if required by the University's Data Retention Schedule) of:

- The approved assessments for integrated EPAs on apprenticeships delivered by University.
- Independent Assessors (both permanent University Staff and staff recruited specifically for the role).

Apprenticeships Hub Team, working with the Faculty, appointing existing full-time, fractional or hourly-paid staff to be IAs

- Faculty and DA Hub Team log the details of existing full-time, fractional or hourly-paid staff who will act as IAs.
- The IA must not engage with any aspect of the programme (including teaching, assessment verification, marking, moderation) apart from conducting the EPA.

Recruiting temporary staff specifically for the Independent Assessor role

The DoA coordinates the process for recruiting temporary staff specifically for the IA role, working closely with the School to ensure the IA has appropriate knowledge and skills. Once IAs are recruited, the DA Hub Team is responsible for paying IA fees and expenses.

A checklist is used to ensure that IAs have appropriate academic and, where relevant, other professional expertise, and that potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment. The checklist covers the criteria for appointment set out in section 5.

IA roles will typically last for no more than three months after the date of EPA. Extensions may be granted where apprentice re-sits are required. The School reviews the work of IAs upon completion of each programme EPA.

Termination of appointment of temporary staff recruited as IAs

Where an IA wishes to terminate their contract of appointment early, a minimum of six months' notice is required. The DoA considers the request and reports terminations to People Services. A new IA must be appointed as swiftly as possible.

Where the University wishes to terminate the appointment early, for example where a programme is due to close, a minimum notice period of one month will be given to the IA.

Where a Faculty considers an IA has failed to fulfil their obligations satisfactorily this must be reported to the Dean of Faculty and to the Director of Apprenticeships (DoA). The Dean /DoA will take appropriate steps to contact the IA and resolve the matter. If it is felt necessary to terminate the appointment, then this shall be formally undertaken by the DoA and reported to the Faculty Academic Committee and University Academic Committee.

Examples of an IA failing to fulfil their obligations include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to take part in required training;
- Failure to update their records of CPD and conflicts of interest annually;
- Failure to carry out EPAs in line with expectations;
- Failure to provide the written reports by the required deadline.

Where a conflict of interest arises during the IA's employment, and where the conflict cannot be resolved satisfactorily, normal practice is that the IA resigns. However, as a last resort the University will terminate the IA's contract.

7. Conflicts of interest and Independent Assessors (Integrated EPAs)

The University's [Declarations of Interest Policy](#); and [Anti- Bribery Fraud and Corruption Policy](#) applies to all aspects of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships. The University makes every effort to manage and mitigate any potential or real conflict of interest in the delivery of EPAs.

All IAs are required to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest at the time of their nomination. In addition, prior to the EPA, the IA will be given a list of the names of apprentices (and their employers) that they are due to assess, and the IA must declare any real or potential conflict of interest. If real or potential conflicts of interest are declared and they cannot be resolved, the DoA , with advice from the School, will decide how they should be dealt with. In some situations, it may be appropriate to appoint a different IA. Conflicts of interest declarations are retained by the DA Hub Team.

In order to ensure IAs are impartial in judgement and do not personally benefit from any apprenticeship outcomes, nor have any connection to any apprentice being assessed, the University does not appoint as IAs any individuals in the following categories or circumstances:

- Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with an apprentice on the HDA in question.
- Anyone with a close personal relationship with a member of staff involved with the HDA in question.
- Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as apprentices to the HDA.
- Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to significantly influence the future of apprentices on the HDA in question.
- Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the HDA in question.

8. Training and ensuring the CPD of Independent Assessors

To ensure consistency of approach and in-depth understanding of the Apprenticeship Standards and EPA, all IAs are required to undertake induction training in order to support them in the assessor role.

At induction, the University ensures that all IAs are informed about relevant institutional procedures, practices and regulations, the expectations of the IA role and the apprenticeships to which they are appointed.

Ongoing training is provided by the DA Hub Team, with input from the School/Subject Teams, to ensure that all requirements are met, to ensure that all assessments conducted are valid, fair and reliable and in line with the relevant EPA plan.

All IAs are expected to attend standardisation events. The purpose of these events is to ensure the fair, consistent and reliable grading of all assessments. They also allow the DA Hub Team to update the IAs on any changes to the apprenticeship or standard.

9. EPA gateway (Integrated and Non-integrated EPAs)

This section applies to apprenticeships delivered by the University with integrated end-point assessments.

The University as the End-Point Assessment Organisation verifies that the apprentice has completed any prerequisites to end-point assessment, including any mandatory qualifications. The DA Hub Team liaises with the employer to determine whether the apprentice has met the gateway requirements. The gateway refers to the requirements that need to be met in order for the employer to put forward their apprentice for the EPA. It ensures that all apprentices have completed the mandatory aspects of the occupational standard and that the employer, apprentice and University believe an apprentice is occupationally competent at the point they enter the gateway. The DA Hub Team ensures that apprentices have appropriate learner status with the University during the gateway period and EPA. The DA Hub Team liaises with Faculties to keep the employer informed of attempts and outcomes in respect of each EPA.

For non-integrated apprenticeship programmes, the DA Hub Team in liaison with the Faculty will gather EPA gateway evidence to submit to the End Point Assessment Organisation. The DA Hub Team will submit this to the EPAO as evidence that the EPA can go ahead for each individual.

10. Conducting End Point Assessments and applying for Completion Certificates (Integrated EPAs)

DA Hub Team maintains records for six years (or longer, if required by the Apprenticeship Data Retention Schedule) of the integrated EPA for the apprenticeships that they deliver. Verification and moderation is undertaken in line with University's Assessment and Feedback Policy.

Reassessments and retakes are undertaken in line with the University's Academic Regulations and the Returning and Retaining Work, Giving Feedback and Disclosing Formal Results except where the Apprenticeship Assessment plan sets out specific procedures, in which case the assessment plan takes precedence.

Each apprenticeship End-Point Assessment Plan stipulates the procedure to be followed where an apprentice fails the End-Point Assessment.

Apprentices are issued with a transcript of their performance in line with standard University procedures. Transcripts for apprentices completing the EPA make it clear that the document is not an Apprenticeship Certificate.

The University, via the DA Hub Team, as the End-Point Assessment Organisation is responsible for claiming the apprenticeship certificate from the Apprenticeship Assessment Service.

11. Feedback in relation to EPAs and EPA Organisations

In order to develop the University's understanding of the experience of EPAs from a range of perspectives and use this information to improve provision of services, the DA Hub Team coordinates a confidential post-EPA survey. A version of the survey is tailored to each of the following roles:

- Apprentice learner.
- Employer.
- Independent Assessor.
- Training Provider.

The results of the survey are redacted and shared with the relevant School (i.e. the training provider). If the survey highlights poor quality in EPA provision the University may use this as evidence as to why an EPA Organisation should not be used in future, where they are an external EPAO.

12. Equality and diversity

The University ensures that apprentices with protected characteristics or learning support needs are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in EPAs, in order that all achievements in EPAs are fair. Data in relation to the outcomes of EPAs and apprentices with protected characteristics will be monitored in line with Data Protection Requirements.

13. Appeals and complaints

Apprentices who wish to appeal their EPA grade, where the University is the EPAO, can do so through the University's Appeals procedure.

If an apprentice wants to make a complaint about any element of the EPA they can do so using the University's Student and Apprentice Complaints Policy and Procedure.

If an employer wishes to make a complaint about any element of the EPA, they can do so through the complaints process outlined in their Contract with the University and by referring to the Apprenticeships Employer Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Glossary

Assessment Plan

A detailed document that accompanies each Apprenticeship Standard setting out each element of the Gateway requirements and the methods of synoptic assessment to be used in the End-Point Assessment.

Training Plan

The Plan held by the main provider, the apprentice and their employer. The Training Plan sets out how the apprentice will be supported to successful achievement of the apprenticeship. It must be signed by the apprentice, their employer and the main provider, and all three parties must retain a current signed and dated version.

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

An executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Education, which is accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults. The ESFA administers contracts for funding and the Digital Apprenticeship Service for Levy payments to Apprenticeship Providers.

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)

An executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Education, which ensures high-quality apprenticeship standards and advises government on funding for each standard.

Knowledge, Skills and Behaviors' (KSBs)

The elements of competence that the apprentice will gain during the apprenticeship and needs to be evidenced at the End-Point Assessment in order to complete the apprenticeship.

Main Provider

The organisation that is delivering the training and award to meet the knowledge requirements of the Apprenticeship Standard and the majority of off-the job learning.

Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR)

The register of organisations eligible to receive government funding to train apprentices.