

EPA Process Document

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EPA Process Document

Purpose of the document

This process document sets out the University of Nottingham's approach to delivering and managing the quality of the End Point Assessment (EPA) for Degree Apprenticeship Programmes.

EPAs are a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship. The purpose of the EPA is to make sure the apprentice is occupationally competent and meets the standard set as relevant to the specific apprenticeship standard.

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

This document is informed by guidance produced by the Education and Skills Funding agency (ESFA) and the Institute for Apprentices and Technical Education (IfATE). It outlines roles and responsibilities in relation to EPAs for University Staff, apprentices, employers and Assessors and Examiners.

Appointing EPAO for non-integrated programmes

At least 18 months before the first student reaches their gateway, the Programme Director and FAOM should decide which EPAO will be instructed to deliver the EPA. A search for relevant EPAOs can be conducted [here](#).

Formal contracts between EPAOs and the university are required.

PWBL will consult with Legal Services and the EPAO to establish these contracts.

The Programme Director and FAOM should report which EPAO has been secured to the [Education Excellence Apprenticeship Administrator](#) who will advise if any further information is required.

Each EPAO will have its own registration process and procedure. It is the responsibility of the Programme Director and FAOM to consult with Employers to ensure all apprentices are registered with their chosen EPAO at least one year before they reach their Gateway.

The Programme Director and FAOM should report when apprentices are registered to the [Education Excellence Apprenticeship Administrator](#).

External Quality Assessment (EQA)

Readiness Checks

Once the University has successfully applied to become an EPAO for an integrated apprenticeship programme, we are bound by the [conditions for being on the register of end point assessment organisations](#).

As part of these conditions an EPA readiness check should be completed by the Programme Director/FAOM within the programme area.

The readiness check should take place twelve months before Gateway. The process should be completed at least eight weeks before the date of the first EPA.

The preparation for and submission of the EPA readiness check documentation will be co-ordinated by the Educational Excellence team.

Programme Directors/FAOMs and other related departments will be expected to complete the template forms as provided by Educational Excellence Support. Draft submissions will undergo an internal scrutiny process and be reviewed by the Head of Professional and Work based Learning, Associate Director of Educational Excellence Support, and the Academic Director for Degree Apprenticeships (ADDA). The Educational Excellence team will liaise with contributors to incorporate all feedback into a definitive version of the report.

Information on the process required to complete the readiness check are contained with [IfATE EQA Manual](#).

Once a final draft is agreed this is submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) for assessment by the Educational Excellence Support Team.

Should the OfS require additional information/clarification the Educational Excellence Support team will co-ordinate the institutions response.

The final decision of the OfS once received will be communicated to the Programme team/FAOM by the Educational Excellence Support Team.

Programme Directors/FAOMs will be required to produce action plans for any recommendations that are received as an outcome of this process. These action plans should be submitted to the Faculty Apprenticeship Education Committee who will monitor progress of these plan and report issues and progress to the Apprenticeship Committee.

It should be noted that all EPA support materials must be in place within nine months of registration and final assessments instruments and tools must be ready and available three months in advance of the first EPA taking place.

Ongoing Monitoring and Review Activity

As part of the outcome of the readiness check the OfS will liaise with the Educational Excellence Support team to establish the requirements for the EQA annual monitoring and review of the EPA.

The Educational Excellence Support team will liaise with the Programme Directors/FAOMs with regards to requirements, timeframes etc and will be responsible for the co-ordination and timely submission of information required to the OfS which will be on an annual basis.

Programmes Directors/FOAOMs and other relevant teams are responsible for ensuring that the information requested by the Educational Excellence Support Team is provided within the timeframes required.

Recruiting Assessors/Examiners

To ensure externality and independence the EPA assessment team will need to be appointed in accordance with the requirements of the EPA plan and [Quality Manual \(QM\) requirements](#). As a minimum it is expected that each EPA has personnel appointed to the following roles

1. [External Examiner \(programme level\)](#)
2. [External Assessor](#)
3. [Independent Assessor/Industry Expert \(in numbers appropriate to the size of the cohort and as outlined with the EPA plan\)](#)

It should be noted that the same person can conduct the roles of External Examiner and External Assessor, on the understanding that the person meets all the relevant criteria for both roles. In such a case, the nomination to both roles can be made via the same form, as set out below.

The School¹ is responsible for sourcing nominations for the roles and must ensure that all nominations meet the recruitment criteria stated within the QM and any additional requirements as outlined in the EPA plan. This includes assessment against conflict-of-interest policy, level of academic subject expertise and appropriateness and validity of CPD activity.

Nomination of Assessors/Examiners:

The sourcing of applicants and nomination to these roles is conducted by Programme Director/FAOM on behalf of the School. It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that all required checks are made, and they have satisfied themselves that the nominee meets or exceeds the University role criteria for appointment as well as any additional requirements within the EPA plan. Head of School or designated nominee must sign all nomination forms. Nominations once appropriately approved should be submitted to Registry and Academic Affairs (RAA), Quality and Student Management Systems Team (QSMS) who will issue official university appointment documentation.

In addition to the above, FAOMs are required to obtain evidence of the nominee's right to work (RTW) in the UK. Guidance on RTW checks can be obtained from [QSMS team](#).

Nomination forms can be obtained from RAA web pages.

- External Examiners [Form DA1](#) completed forms to be submitted to BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk
- External Assessor [Form DA1](#) completed forms to be submitted to BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk
- IA/Industry Expert [Form DA3](#) completed form to be submitted to BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

A current CV, which includes relevant CPD must always accompany a completed nomination form. The nomination form should also be accompanied by details of the fee being proposed, as this information will be included in the letter of appointment.

Once submitted, QSMS team will check the document for completeness and the nominee's details will be cross-checked to ensure that there are no obvious restrictions to their appointment (based on the regulations within the Quality Manual around conflicts of interest and /or any reciprocal nature of an appointment).

If the QSMS team identify potential concerns around a nomination, such as conflict of interest, these will be raised with the Programme Director/FAOM for resolution.

Schools³ may be asked to [complete a case](#) for the Quality & Standards Committee (QSC) sub-panel to consider where one of the University's own policies, such as conflict of interest,

¹ In practical terms this action will be led by the Programme director/FAOM

might be challenged by an appointment. In such cases, QSC's decision will be final. The case should provide a rationale for why the School would support a nomination of this kind.

It should be noted that QSC does not have the authority to authorise an appointment where the nominee does not have, or cannot evidence, the required skills, knowledge, or experience for the role as outlined in the EPA plan.

Appointment:

Once a nomination form has been checked for completeness and any queries regarding eligibility have been resolved QSMS will send a letter of appointment to the nominee, who must return a signed copy to show their acceptance of the terms therein.

Programme Directors/FAOMs are copied into this correspondence.

Following confirmation from QSMS of appointment acceptance FAOMs should ensure Assessors are provided with access to the appropriate University systems and provided with links to, or copies of, all documents/support materials that assessors will require to execute their role effectively.

On appointment of an External Examiner (new appointment, replacement or extension of duties) QSMS is responsible for providing a copy of the examiners CV to the [Educational Excellence team](#) who will liaise with the OfS to ensure that their records accurately reflect the details of those undertaking work in this area.

Reappointment

All externally appointed Assessor/Examiner appointments are time limited for 1 year and annual reappointment for eligible candidates is required.

The Programme Director/FAOM is responsible for ensuring that all nominations for re-appointment are accompanied by an up-to-date CV that demonstrates recent, ongoing relevant CPD activity. Schools should not recommend re-appointment if any of the following apply:

- there are any concerns regarding the delivery or quality of the work undertaken.
- there is no evidence of recent and ongoing appropriate CPD activity.
- the appointment criteria for the standard has changed and the nominee no longer meets the minimum criteria for that degree standard.
- appointment would exceed the maximum tenure for the role.

Please note: External Examiner tenure is for a maximum period of four years. This maximum period *may* be extended under exceptional circumstances, for which the School³ are required to submit [a case to QSC](#)

FAOMs will be contacted annually in July/August by QSMS and asked to confirm that they are happy for their Assessors/Examiners to continue their tenure (where this is appropriate). At the same time, details of those External Examiners coming to the end of their tenure will be provided, which should trigger the Programme Director/FAOM to start the process of seeking a replacement, if they have not already done so.

External Assessor re-appointment is based on the Programme Director/FAOM completing [Form DA2](#) and submitting this to QSMS via BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk Whilst there is no maximum period, if the nominee is required to perform the dual role of EA and EE then the maximum tenure for EE of four years will apply.

IA/Industry Expert re-appointment is based on the Programme Director/FAOM completing [Form DA4](#) and submitting this to QSMS via BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

All nominees for re-appointment should be able to evidence, amongst other criteria, their continued professional development (CPD) on this form, as this is a requirement of their continuation in the role of Independent Assessor. Please note that an updated CV must accompany all requests for re-appointment and should be readily available and supplied to the DQB or equivalent as and when required.

Ending appointments during tenure

Resignation

Should an appointed Assessor/ Examiner wish to end their tenure early; they must contact the university in writing (via BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk) and give their reasons. The University will normally expect Assessor/Examiner to meet their contractual obligations and continue to serve until the end of the appointed period.

If it is considered that the circumstances of the Examiner/Assessor are such that this is not possible, it is the School's duty to ensure that any work the outgoing Assessor/ Examiner was responsible for is reallocated to another Assessor/Examiner, who may be a current incumbent, or a new appointee (following the normal nomination process). Such changes to Assessor/ Examiner should be referred to Quality & Student Management Systems so that a formal decision can be made on behalf of QSC and recorded.

Termination

Where a School considers that an Assessor/Examiner has failed to fulfil their obligations satisfactorily this must be reported to the Head of School. The Head of School will take appropriate steps to contact the Assessor/Examiner and resolve the matter.

Should a Head of School decide that they no longer wish to continue with the engagement of an Assessor/Examiner, perhaps due to a failure to uphold part of their contractual agreement, or a wish to move in another direction with a different appointee, they should first have a conversation with the post holder to discuss the reasons and try to establish if there is a means of maintaining the appointment until the end of the current cycle. Where that is not possible, the School³ should contact QSMS and set out their request for the appointment to be terminated, including evidence to support their rationale and to show the steps taken prior to this decision.

Where a conflict of interest arises during the term of employment and where the conflict cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the Assessor/Examiner will be required to resign. Failure to resign will result in termination of the appointment under the terms of the appointment letter.

Conflicts of interest

The [university's conflict of interest policy](#) applies.

All Assessors/Examiners are required to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest at the time of their nomination by emailing [QSMS team](#).

Prior to the EPA, the Assessor/Examiner will be given a list of the names of the apprentices and their employers that they are due to assess. The Assessor/Examiner must declare, either directly to the School³ or to [QSMS team](#), any real or potential conflict of interest at this point. If conflicts are declared the School is responsible for mitigating against these conflicts or if that is not possible the Assessor/Examiner will not be eligible to act, and alternative assessors will need to be found.

Induction and Training

To ensure consistency of approach and in-depth understandings of the apprenticeship standards and EPA all Assessors/Examiners are required to undertake training to support them in their assessor/examiner role.

All Assessors/Examiners should be informed about relevant institutional procedures, practices and regulations, the expectations of their role and the apprenticeship to which they are appointed.²

External Examiners will be invited to a “Central Induction” that is run by QSMS team, which offers oversight of more general information about the university, such as our regulations and processes. A local induction should then be conducted, in which the External Examiners should be given information specific to them and the apprenticeship standard they will be assessing.

The FAOMS are responsible for ensuring that External Assessors, Independent Assessors, and Industry Experts are provided with the necessary information, training, and guidance to execute their particular roles and will devise a training plan that will address requirements for the individual.

For Independent Assessors and Industry Experts detailed guidance regarding the marking and moderation of student work which will be provided prior to the delivery of the EPA.

Programme Directors/FAOMS are responsible for creating, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of training plans for Assessors They are also responsible for ensuring that all training plans are readily available should they be required by the OfS as part of the ongoing monitoring process,

Schools³ are expected to communicate with Assessors/Examiners throughout the EPA preparation and delivery period, and to provide updates as appropriate.

EPA Gateway

The Gateway refers to the requirements that need to be met 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 employers believe an apprentice is occupationally competent at the point they enter the Gateway.

Apprentices who have not met all Gateway requirements or where the rule for minimum duration has not been met must not be assessed.

The Programme Director and FAOM verifies that the apprentice has completed any prerequisites to End Point Assessment including any mandatory qualifications and consults with the employer to determine where the apprentice has met the gateway requirements.

The Programme Director/FAOM is responsible for arranging a Gateway review meeting between the apprentice, employer and the School to agree and document that the gateway criteria has been met. The details of the meeting are recorded in APTEM and signed off by all parties.

For non-integrated apprentice programmes, the Programme Director/FAOM will gather EPA Gateway evidence to submit to the EPAO.

² See appendix 1 for further details of training requirements.

The Programme Director/FAOM will monitor all outcomes from the Gateway and advise the Professional Work Based Learning (PWBL) team of the outcomes.

On confirmation of the outcome from Gateway PWBL will ensure that the apprentices Individual Learner Record (ILR) is updated as appropriate.

Conducting EPA

The Programme Director/FAOM is responsible for ensuring that the EPA is delivered in accordance with the agreed EPA plan and as such should ensure that all logistical details have been considered when planning for the delivery of these assessments and for providing Assessors and Examiners with the information that they require to execute their role.

The FAOM will provide submitted work to the Assessors within agreed timescales and in the agreed format ensuring that Assessors are aware of deadlines and processes for the marking of that work.

The FAOM should ensure that appropriate verification and moderation is undertaken in line with University's assessment regulations and the EPA plan.

The FAOM is responsible for ensuring that all marks are passed to the appropriate Registry and Academic Affairs Assessment team for processing in accordance with the standard university requirements.

Apprentice achievement must be reviewed during the Schools Examination Board where progression and/or award details are confirmed.

Assessors Reports

Once an Assessor/Examiner has performed their duties, they are required to submit an annual report. The appropriate report type (according to role) will be made available to them by QSMS team and should be submitted by the Assessor/Examiner via MS Forms directly to that team within the time limit specified. On receipt, QSMS will log that the report has been provided, and pass to the Programme Director/FAOM for their scrutiny and response, which should be provided within two weeks.

Programme Directors/FAOMS must ensure that all IA summary reports are made available to the EA as part of the evidence pack for their work and the IA and EA reports must be made available to the EE as part of the evidence base for their overall report on the quality of the programmes including the EPA.

Programme Directors/FAOMs are also responsible for providing all assessment reports and responses to the Faculty Apprenticeship Education Committee.

Payment of fees and expenses

Fees

Assessors/Examiners will also submit a "Payment Details form" to QSMS team with personal details to facilitate the payment of their fee for the work undertaken. This form is provided to Assessors/Examiner by QSMS.

Once the report and payment details are received QSMS will arrange for the fee to be paid in accordance with pre agreed amount (provided at the nomination stage). It is the annual/Summary report that is the trigger for the payment of fees and fee amounts will not be released to Assessors/Examiners until the completed report is received. Payment of the

appropriate fee is a process managed in full by the QSMS team using established procedures.

Expenses:

Should an Assessor/Examiner wish to submit a claim for any expenses, they may do so by emailing a completed [expenses form](#) to BR-Indi-assessors@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk. It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that these claims are verified and passed for payment using their own internal processes. Information regarding allowable expenses can be found in the [Expenses Manual](#).

Post EPA

Applying for completion certification

Apprentices are issued with Diploma Supplement, transcripts, and certificates of their Degree performance in line with Standard University procedures.

For integrated programmes

The FAOM is responsible for informing PWBL of outcome of assessment within five working days of the External Examiner ratification at Exam board.

PWBL will request certificates of completion for the apprenticeship element of the programme via the Apprenticeship Assessment Service within ten working days of being notified of the results.

The Apprenticeship Assessment Service will post certificates within ten working dates of the request being received from PWBL.

Once received by PWBL, unless alternative arrangements have been pre-agreed with PWBL, the certificates will be despatched by PWBL to the apprentice employers who will arrange for the certificates to be issued to the apprentices.

For non-integrated programmes

Certificates of completion of the apprenticeship element of the programme will be generated in accordance with the chosen EPAO own processes and procedures.

EPAO will inform FAOM of the outcome for each apprentice in writing.

The FAOM will be responsible for advising PWBL of the outcome and PWBL will process the individual achievement in the ILR.

Student record management post-graduation (Non-Integrated only)

Immediately following the Examination Board FAOMs are responsible for providing details of graduating apprentices that are still to complete their EPA to the RAA Programmes Team who will ensure that student records are completed on campus and a new stack created, assigned to a new 'No Qual' award to ensure access to systems is maintained.

On receipt of confirmation of successful completion of the EPA, FAOM are responsible for informing the RAA Programmes Team who will formally close the campus record and remove access to systems as appropriate.

Monitoring and Review Activity

Once each cycle of EPA is complete the programmes Faculty Apprenticeship Operations Manager is responsibility for arranging a Post-EPA Review Meeting using the standard agenda (Appendix 2). Reports from External Examiners (EE), External Assessors (EA) and

Internal Assessors (IA) and the Programmes Directors will part of the evidence pack for consideration.

Associated action plans are monitored by the Faculty Apprentice Committee and reported to the University Apprenticeship Committee. The details also inform the Degree Apprentice Institutional Annual monitoring report, Self Assessment Report and Quality improvement plan which is compiled by the Academic Director for Degree apprentices and presented to the University's Quality and Standards Committee.

It is a condition of EPAO registration that the University re-confirms assessment and occupational capacity and capability information every three years. This process will be co-ordinated by the Educational Excellence Support team.

It should be noted that in addition to any EPA specific monitoring the Programmes as a whole will be subject to the university standard Annual monitoring processes.

Indicative Training Topics

Training Topic
Module Handbooks
System Access
Marking & Moderation process
Briefing on EPA Plan & logistics of EPA
EPA / Gateway end-to-end process
Marking Schemes
Timelines
PSRB Requirements
Apprenticeship Standards
Arrangements for speaking to students
Safeguarding & PREVENT training
Introduction to key School contacts
Expectations at Exam Board
School's mechanism for gaining feedback
Marks Moderation
Introduction to Extenuating Circumstances (EC) process
Context of the role
Introduction to External Examiner Hub
Conflict of Interest policy
Individual Student Adjustments ("accommodations")
Degree Apprenticeship guidance document
Quality & Standards
Introduction to the Quality Manual
Reporting & Feedback process
Ofsted, ESFA & Ifate requirements

Post-EPA Review Meeting Standard Agenda

Item		Lead
	Welcome & Introductions	
1.	Review outcomes	Chair
2.	Assessment quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment rigor • Quality of delivery • Preparation and process • Moderation, Independent Assessor (IA) and External Examiner (EE) reports 	All
3.	Apprentice career aspirations / career development post apprenticeship	Apprentice representatives / Employers
4.	General Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Independent Assessors • Feedback from External Assessor for EPA • Feedback from External Examiner • Feedback from employer representatives • Feedback from apprentices 	All
5.	Action Plan	All

