



Apprenticeship Framework policy

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Northumbria University Apprenticeship Framework

1. University Position and Strategy

Apprenticeship represents a valuable means through which to apply our existing strengths in research and education to address skills gaps and broader workforce development challenges as an enabler for deeper societal change. The development of our apprenticeship's portfolio draws on the established expertise in academic departments and supports the application of that existing expertise in innovative ways. Each apprenticeship uses this expertise to address a clear strategic need identified with employers and other industry partners and focuses on occupations requiring the higher-level skills and competences that Northumbria is particularly well-placed to deliver.

We recognise the opportunities presented by through Apprenticeships to support the diversification of the workforce and engage students from backgrounds who may not be attracted by more traditional forms of study. We are particularly proud of the work we do in this field to widen participation in Higher Education and to support social mobility in the professions. Our strategic intent is well suited to enable apprentices to benefit from the synergies with our wider undergraduate and postgraduate taught student community. Our policy and support infrastructure underpins this strategic approach and ensures that our developments are accordingly fit for purpose.

Successful completion of an apprenticeship at Northumbria requires programme teams to be cognisant of the fundamental differences in the design, delivery, management, regulation, and funding of apprenticeships compared to our traditional provision. Northumbria is regulated as a single Apprenticeship Training Provider and is required to operate as such with a coherent framework for managing its apprenticeship provision. Where an academic department proposes to deliver an apprenticeship, it recognises and agrees to operate wholly within this framework comprising unified policies, processes, systems, and ways of working, in order to secure our ongoing compliance with our regulatory obligations.

As an evolving Apprenticeship Training Provider, the development of our framework for managing apprenticeships remains iterative so that our academic departments and professional services regularly review and ensure the continued alignment of their practice.

The regulations and policies governing the academic experience of Northumbria students shall apply in full to apprentices as to any other registered student enrolled on a Northumbria programme, except where a specific provision is made, or variation sought to accommodate the specific requirements of apprenticeships.



2. Governance and Policy

The Academic Regulations for Northumbria Awards (ARTA) and its related policies shall apply to apprentices, except where there is a requirement of the apprenticeship external regulation and funding rules. Variations might also include those required by Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSRBs). Such Variation Orders will be approved through the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee of Education Committee as per standard policy.

University Executive is responsible for the overall strategic vision and direction for apprenticeships, managed and monitored through Education Committee and its relevant Sub-Committees. Education Committee provides strategy and policy oversight for teaching excellence and student (apprentice) learning and experience.

Through delegated authority the Apprenticeship Sub-Committee develops and recommends for approval principles, frameworks, policies, regulations and procedures that govern the quality assurance and enhancement of all aspects of apprentice learning and experience, ensuring that these align with relevant external regulatory requirements. The Sub-Committee has oversight of portfolio delivery and review, apprentice performance and sub-contracting arrangements. It also monitors the development of new apprenticeships, ensuring that all apprentice-specific factors are considered.

Faculties/Departments are responsible for the delivery of apprenticeships in line with agreed policies and processes, including review of provision and monitoring apprentice performance.

2. ESFA and Access to Levy Funds

2.1 Register of Training Providers (RoTP)

The University must be registered on the RoTP to run apprenticeship programmes and draw down levy funds. Membership is via a substantial application which includes information on our quality control measures, management, leadership and staffing. From time to time the University will be invited to renew our membership. The RoTP submission is managed by Quality and Teaching Enhancement.

2.2 ESFA Contract

To enable the University to access apprentice levy funds, the institution is contracted with ESFA as an apprentice Provider. ESFA contracts and agreements are published to a secure government portal and are electronically approved/signed off by an authorised signatory on behalf of the training provider. Variations to the contracts and agreements can be made throughout the funding year and require re-signing. ESFA will stop or pause apprenticeship funding where there is not an up to date signed agreement.

2.3 ESFA Funding Returns

Individualised Learning Record (ILR) is the primary apprenticeship data collection process. All training providers must return an ILR return each month so ensure that public money is distributed through the ESFA in line with government targets for quality and value for money.

The ILR return calculates the actual funding earned and monitors training providers delivery against the apprenticeship budget.

Training providers collect information about each of their learners, the learning they are doing, and the learning outcome. The ILR data is stored in the student record system and is submitted to the ESFA each month through a secure ESFA portal – “Submit learner data”

The ILR return goes through strict validation and other checks to ensure the data is in good quality and in the correct format. Valid learner data is run through a funding calculation, checked against contract information and the appropriate payment is then made. Funding will not be received for any learners that have validation errors

3. Types of Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are work-based programmes of study which are designed to meet IfATE (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) Apprenticeship Standards. The University delivers two types of apprenticeships, Degree Apprenticeships (DA) and Higher Apprenticeships (HA).

All types of apprenticeships can be delivered as ‘open’ or ‘closed’ programmes. An open programme is offered to any employer with apprentices in appropriate roles, but a closed programme is delivered to a specific employer. Closed programme content and delivery pattern may differ slightly from the ‘open’ equivalent.

All apprenticeship programmes must operate in accordance with the Government funding and performance management rules for apprenticeships, as published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (hereafter referred to as “the funding rules”). For apprenticeship programmes delivered by the University, the University is responsible for compliance with the funding rules.

All staff involved in the delivery and support of apprenticeship programmes within the University will be kept informed of the requirements of the funding rules (and any associated changes) by the QTE (Quality and Teaching Excellence) Apprenticeships Team. Staff must act in accordance with the funding rules, including retaining appropriate documentation demonstrating compliance as part of an associated evidence pack.

3.1 Degree Apprenticeships

DA IfATE Standards include a University level 6 or level 7 award as part of the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan. The Degree element is governed via standard ARTA regulations (or approved Variations thereof). EPA assesses professional competency and is either integrated into the degree programme or non-integrated. EPA requirements are published in the Apprenticeship Standard Assessment Plan. (See section 7 below for more information on EPA)

3.2 Higher Apprenticeships

HA IfATE Standards do not include an obligatory University award though optional awards may be incorporated into the programmes. Northumbria University principles for the delivery and management of Higher Apprenticeships are as follows:

Like Degree Apprenticeships, HAs (Higher Apprenticeships) combine academic study with work-based learning. Students must be employed in a job which provides opportunity to practice and evidence the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to achieve the apprenticeship as defined by the relevant IfATE Standard. HA awards are made by IfATE after completion of an approved programme of study and successful completion of EPA.

Unlike Degree Apprenticeships, Higher Apprentice Standards do not also include an obligatory University award. Students may successfully complete the programme and be awarded a Higher Apprenticeship by IfATE without receiving a University degree or another award.

Progression to EPA Gateway is not dependent on achievement of a University award.

At Northumbria University, Higher Apprenticeship programmes are made up of modules with notional workload and corresponding credit size. Module learning outcomes should map directly to the HA Standard and allow apprentices to demonstrate acquisition of KSBs and professional competence. All content must contribute to the apprenticeship award.

University awards on HA programmes will be written into the programme design and approved via the normal University approval process. Any University award title should be distinctive from the apprenticeship title to clearly differentiate.

University awards may be made to students on HA programmes in the following circumstances:

- Where an award has been written into the IfATE Standard.
- As recognition of achievement on early exit from the programme.
- As recognition of credits gained on the HA programme after successful completion of EPA.

4. Mapping to Standards

All learning on both DA and HA programmes apprenticeship programme must contribute to the IfATE standard. At programme development stage a mapping exercise is carried out and submitted as part of the Programme approval documentation. The mapping must clearly demonstrate that all module learning outcomes directly contribute to the apprenticeship standard and all standards are covered by learning outcomes.

This mapping demonstrates that levy funds are being used appropriately i.e., to deliver only IfATE Apprenticeship Standards.

5. Programme Approval

Approval of apprenticeship programmes follows University approval processes in all respects other than the following specific requirements:

- Initial approval for developing an apprentice programme must be supported by the Head of Department and GMB and endorsed by Apprenticeship Steering Board.
- Following endorsement by ASB (Apprentice Steering Board) the proposer follows the standard University programme approval process and submits a proposal to Academic Portfolio Group (APG) (via APG Operational Group). At this stage, an apprenticeship APG supplement must be included in the documentation for consideration. The supplement requires the proposer to demonstrate the following:
 - how the minimum requirement for off the job training hours is met on the programme,
 - programme costing which complies with ESFA rules and an indicative delivery schedule including start, end dates and EPA Gateway.
 - A due diligence report is also required at this stage if the proposal includes sub-contracted delivery.
 - And the unique features of an apprenticeship – such as Safeguarding, Prevent and Fundamental British Values (FBV) are clearly articulated

Following APG approval, the proposers must complete the University's specific Apprenticeship Programme Specification.

To aid scrutiny, University Approval Panel (UAPs) members are issued an Apprenticeship-specific check list which ensures key features of an apprenticeship programme are appropriately addressed. The UAP must ensure the programme is structured to deliver the learning aims (KSBs) of the IfATE Apprenticeship Standard and the EPA (where integrated) follows the appropriate Assessment Plan. See Appendix/link for the Apprenticeship UAP checklist.

6. Work-based Learning and OJT

Apprenticeship programmes combine academic study with work-based learning. Every apprentice must be supported to achieve the apprenticeship standards within their job role.

ESFA places obligations on Employers to ensure that apprentices are employed in an appropriate job role and are adequately supported. Each employer provides a mentor to support the apprentice through the programme. The mentor is usually the immediate line manager and attends regular review meetings with the University coach and the apprentice.

Employers must allow a minimum of 20% of standard working hours as 'Off the Job Training' (OJT). Defined by ESFA as:

“Off-the-job training is a statutory requirement for an English apprenticeship. It is training which is received by the apprentice, during the apprentice's normal working hours, for the purpose of achieving the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the approved apprenticeship

referenced in the apprenticeship agreement. By normal working hours we mean paid hours excluding overtime.

The following activities can be included in OJT:

- “The teaching of theory (for example: lectures, role playing, simulation exercises, online learning, or manufacturer training),
- “Practical training: shadowing, mentoring, industry visits and participation in competitions,
- “Learning support and time spent writing assessments / assignments.”

Apprentices record their OJT hours, and the University must collect and report actual hours against planned to ESFA. This is currently done via an NU Connect app.

7. End Point Assessment (EPA)

EPA is the final assessment of apprentice knowledge, skills and behaviour and confirmation of professional competence. Successful completion of EPA is necessary for the award of the Apprenticeship Certificate. In the case of **Integrated** Degree Apprenticeship Standards, the EPA will normally form part of the University award and will be conducted by the University via Independent Assessors appointed for this purpose. For **Non-integrated** Degree Apprenticeship Standards, the EPA will be undertaken by an external End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

For both integrated and non-integrated EPA, the University will confirm that apprentices have satisfied the requirements of Gateway, which is the point they progress to EPA, via an Apprentice Assessment Board, or AAB (see section 15 below)

The nature of the EPA and Gateway requirements differ according to the IfATE Apprenticeship Standard.

The University’s EPA policy is included as Annex C.

8. Employer Agreements and On-Boarding

8.1 Employer Application Form

Business Development Managers in Global Marketing and Business manage the initial Employer Application. At this stage, due diligence, appropriateness of the programme to business and apprentice needs and eligibility of proposed apprentices are confirmed. Approved Employer Application forms are submitted to Applicant Services and Educational Partnerships to begin the apprentice admission and employer contracting processes.

8.2 Employer Contracts

There must be a written contract between the University and the employer which forms the contract for services between the two institutions in relation to the negotiated fees, set against the pricing matrix of the ESFA eligible costs including the cost of EPA.

The contract template has been developed by Legal Services and Educational Partnerships to meet ESFA and University needs and is managed on an operational level on a self-service basis by Educational Partnerships. Legal Services will be consulted if an employer requests a change to the standard terms or when a need to adjust the agreement has arisen from the University or changes to external regulations.

Contracts are issued to employers by Educational Partnerships and all efforts will be made to ensure the contract is in place prior to commencement of the apprenticeship programme.

A contract will normally be for a period of 4 or 5 years. For repeat cohorts with the same employer which fall within the main contract term, an annual schedule is used which details any amendments or updates to the main contract and the names of the new apprentices.

8.3 Other Agreements

In addition to a contract, the following documents must also be in place prior to the start of the programme:

Apprentice Agreement. This is an agreement between the apprentice and the employer. The University will provide information to assist employers to complete this, but the document is owned by the employer.

Commitment Statement. This is an agreement between the University, the apprentice, and the employer. The document sets out how all three parties will support the apprenticeship. The content of the Commitment Statement must align with the requirements of the funding rules, including setting out the planned content and schedule for the training (including module list and EPA); start and end dates for the apprenticeship (including EPA); start and end dates and duration of the practical period (excluding EPA); the number of planned off-the-job training hours for the full apprenticeship; the roles and responsibilities of each party; and written confirmation from the employer that the apprentice will be allowed to undertake the required amount of off-the-job training (and English and Maths training if required) within their normal working hours.

Signed copies of the Apprenticeship Agreement and the Commitment Statement are retained by the Educational Partnerships. The Commitment Statement must be kept up to date with any material changes. A document audit trail of any revisions resulting from changes in circumstance is kept in the evidence pack.

9. Annual Quality Monitoring

The standard University processes for quality review apply to apprenticeship programmes with appropriate adjustment to make provision for due consideration of apprentice-specific elements.

10. Sub-Contracted Provision

Apprenticeship provision may be sub-contracted to other organisations. This activity is closely monitored by ESFA, and the University has a sub-contracting policy in place which outlines the governance and management of such arrangements. The University's management of sub-contracting is subject to an annual ESFA audit. The University's Sub-Contracting Policy is published on our webpages in line with ESFA regulations and can be found at: [Degree Apprenticeship Sub-Contracting Policy \(azureedge.net\)](https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/azureedge/degree-apprenticeship-sub-contracting-policy)

Proposals including potential sub-contracting are subject to scrutiny as early as possible in the planning process. The approval process is:

- Apprenticeship Steering Board will initially consider all new requests to enter a sub-contracting relationship for an Apprenticeship opportunity, regardless of value. This scrutiny takes place prior to tender.
- Following Apprenticeship Steering sign-off, details of any proposed subcontracting arrangement including educational rationale, due diligence report and costings for wider University scrutiny is submitted to APG as an addendum to the programme approval documentation. APG Operations Group is therefore able to halt development of the programme if the appropriate scrutiny of potential sub-contracting has not taken place according to University policy.
- APG recommendations regarding proposals to sub-contract will be submitted to Education Committee for approval
- Employment and Finance Committee receive rationale for sub-contracting and confirm Governor sign-off annually.

ESFA regulations on sub-contracting determine that rationale must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Enhance the opportunities available to young people,
- Fill gaps in niche or expert provision, or provide better access to training facilities,
- Support better geographical access for learners OR
- Offer an entry point for disadvantaged groups

Details of sub-contracting must be published on the University's web pages.

11. Apprentice Application and On-boarding

11.1 Eligibility

In addition to academic entry criteria the following criteria apply to prospective apprenticeship students in accordance with ESFA Funding Rules. For example, they must:

- Be in employment and have a contract of sufficient duration to allow them to complete the programme
- Be resident in
- Be in a job role which provides them with the opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills, and behaviour (KSBs) stipulated in the apprenticeship standard.
- Have acquired, and can provide evidence of, a level 2 qualifications in maths and English or GCSE grade C equivalent.

See [ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules for Main Providers](#) for full rules on eligibility.

11.2 Application

The apprentice application process sits outside the standard University application systems and processes. Apprentices are initially nominated by their employer as part of the employer contracting process and it is then the University's responsibility to check nominated candidates against University and ESFA eligibility criteria. The Application process is managed by the University's Applicant Services team.

11.3 Initial Skills Assessment

When eligibility is confirmed an Initial Skills Assessment (ISA) must be carried out for each prospective apprentice. Prior experience is mapped against the standard's KSBs to determine a starting point against which to benchmark progress and identify any RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) required. ESFA funding must not be claimed for learning previously acquired and the University must demonstrate that the apprenticeship programme provides new learning for each learner. ISA is carried out by Apprentice Coaches assigned to support the relevant programme.

Where RPL is due, the University can either exempt a student from studying the module or, if deemed appropriate, allow the student to complete the module but remove the cost of delivery from the funding claim.

12. The Apprentice File/Evidence Pack

The University must hold evidence to assure ESFA that funding is being used appropriately. Most evidence will occur naturally from normal business process. In the event of ESFA audit, if evidence is not available, funding may be at risk.

See 'Evidence Pack' P355 – P387 of ESFA funding rules for full details of evidence pack requirements.

QTE Apprenticeships team will ensure that an up-to-date central index is held to detail where evidence can be found and that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities.

For full evidence pack requirements see [ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules for Main Providers](#) P355 - 387

13. Coaching and Progress Review

13.1 The Apprentice Coach

Each apprentice is allocated an apprentice coach. The coach forms a tri-partite group along with the apprentice and the employer mentor. This group meets 3 or 4 times per year to monitor, review progress and support the apprentice in developing and applying work-based skills as defined by the Apprenticeship Standards Skills, Knowledge and Behaviours (KSBs).

The role of the Coach includes:

Conducting initial assessment of each apprentice's existing knowledge, skills and behaviours against the apprenticeship standard prior to the start of the programme. This assessment informs RPL and forms a foundation to monitor development during the programme.

Leading Tri-Partite Reviews with the employer mentor, apprentice. The coach will complete a standard monitoring review form which is developed and managed by Educational Partnerships for each review meeting. Actions are identified and actively followed up and overall progress is RAG rated, which identifies cases for intervention and escalation.

Supporting portfolio development. The coach will provide advice and guidance to apprentices and employer mentors on the completion of the apprentices' work-based portfolio.

Preparation for End Point Assessment. EPA is the final assessment of the work-based KSBs against the Apprenticeship Standard. The EPA takes different forms depending on the Standard but will often include a professional presentation a piece of reflective work.

14. Departmental Apprentice Journey Meetings

14.1 Purpose and Remit

Departmental Apprentice Journey Meetings (DAJMs) will undertake regular progress reviews to ensure work-based learning and OJT are on track and an adequate level of employer support is in place.

The content and structure of discussion, at each DAJM, will differ depending on apprenticeship nuances but **core** consistent focus for review will be as follows.

- To consider a summary of Apprentice Progress Review Reports (with RAG ratings), academic records of apprentices, OJT and attendance records (where available).
- To discuss, on an exceptional basis, (Red and Amber rated) apprentices and apprenticeships with unsatisfactory progress or engagement.
- To identify actions and interventions where progress is not satisfactory and maintain a centrally held log of discussions, decisions and follow up actions.
- To refer safeguarding concerns to the dedicated safeguarding officers.
- To refer concerns relating to ongoing lack of engagement to the Educational Partnerships (EP) team for investigation.
- Once established by EP, to endorse decisions to suspend apprentices due to lack of engagement in line with ESFA funding rules and report to the AAB.

Additional items of focus will differ but may include the following.

- To consider Business Development updates.
- To update on Admissions.
- To receive updates from Registry teams if relevant.
- To receive an update from Coaches.
- To receive an update from each apprenticeship programme.
- Any Other Business.

14.2 Operation

RAG rated data extracted from the [Coach Apprentice Review forms](#) will form the basis of discussion at each DAJM. Each Coach will share key information reported and actions taken from their apprentice review meetings within a defined period (normally the month leading up to the DAJM) raising any areas and apprentices for concern. The DAJM will agree and record any necessary actions which need to take place, or have to date been put in place, to support any apprentice identified. Progress on actions will be discussed and recorded at the following DAJM to assess completion and impact. See DAJM Terms of Reference at Annex B.

15. Apprentice Assessment Boards

15.1 General Purpose and Remit

The remit of the AAB incorporates the standard University PAB (Programme Assessment Board) Terms of Reference amended to accommodate the distinct types of apprenticeship and additional monitoring and compliance responsibilities:

- To confirm linked University awards on Degree Apprenticeship programmes and optional University awards on Higher Apprenticeship programmes.
- To confirm the academic progression status for individual apprentices based on their profile of confirmed marks with reference to the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, any specific regulations formally agreed to apply to a programme (e.g., Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) considerations) and the Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours (KSBs) relating to the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- In the case of Higher Apprenticeship programmes and at the final AAB for Degree Apprentices, to confirm progression to Gateway for End Point Assessment (EPA).
- To monitor apprentices' engagement and compliance by:
- At programme and cohort level, to receive any apprentice specific interventions which have taken place following ongoing review and progress activities at Departmental Review Meetings. Covering, but not exclusive to; Off the Job Training (OTJ), Employer Engagement and trajectory to meet required apprenticeship KSBs.
- Ratifying any eligibility or contractual breach decisions taken for individual apprentices which result in either withdrawal or suspension of the Apprentice.

See AAB Terms of Reference at Annex B.

15.2 AAB Remit - Degree Apprenticeships (integrated)

Final Year - The role of the AAB is to confirm competency against the Standard's KSBs, as demonstrated by assessment results and eligibility for aligned University awards. For integrated standards. Pre-EPA the AAB will confirm that apprentices have met Gateway requirements to progress to EPA. Post-EPA the AAB will confirm achievement University Award and the apprenticeship. The ABB also confirms resit requirements, including resits of the EPA

To do this, the AAB receives:

- Module results as evidence of KSB achievement
- Employer sign-off as evidence of workplace competency
- Acquisition of level 2 functional skills
- OJT hours
- Other Gateway requirements as may be specified by the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

Progressing – The AAB confirms apprentice competency to be appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of Tri-partite Progress reports. It ratifies interventions in cases of non-engagement and non-compliance referred by the Departmental Apprentice Journey meetings.

AAB Remit - Degree Apprenticeships (non-integrated)

Final Year - The role of the AAB is to confirm progression to Gateway and eligibility for any University awards. It receives and considers:

Student performance, as demonstrated by module results,
Overview of Coach reports
Flags raised by DAJMs reports
Other Gateway criteria (OJT, functional skills acquisition where needed)
Employer's recommendation

The AAB confirms progression to Gateway and makes a recommendation to the EPAO regarding the level of competency against the Standard's KSBs

Progressing – The AAB confirms apprentice competency to be appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of Tri-partite progress reports. It ratifies interventions in cases of non-engagement and non-compliance referred by the Departmental Apprentice Journey meetings.



15.3 AAB Remit - Higher Apprenticeships

Final year - The role of the AAB is to consider apprentice performance as demonstrated by assessment results and an overview of Tri-partite progress reports. The AAB makes a recommendation to the employer and the EPAO regarding the level of competency against the Standard's KSBs.

Progressing – The AAB decides on whether apprentice competency is appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of Tri-partite progress reports. It ratifies interventions in cases of non-engagement and non-compliance referred by the Departmental Apprentice Journey meetings.

15.3 Powers of intervention

The AAB has the power to withdraw or suspend an apprentice for the following reasons in line with ESFA eligibility criteria:

- Does not possess a level 2 maths and English qualifications and will not do so before Gateway.
- Non-attendance for more than 30 days.
- Apprenticeship is not developing new knowledge related to their job role.
- Lack of progress against KSB
- Studying on another DFE (Department for Education) programme

Annex A - Commitment Statement Template

This commitment statement sets out the agreement being made between the (named) apprentice, the (named) employer and the (named) main provider. Please return this document to rg.da.academic.support@northumbria.ac.uk.

SECTION 1: Core Information

This Core Information section provides details of the parties responsible for ensuring the successful completion of the Apprenticeship and outlines key information about the Apprenticeship review processes and details about support and guidance. The full roles, responsibilities and commitment of each of the key parties can be found in **Appendix 1**.

1.1 Student, Employer and Provider details

	Apprentice	Employer	University
Name			
Job Role			
Organisation			
Email			

1.2 Other partners involved in the delivery of this apprenticeship

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE UNIVERSITY: This will include details of the agreed End-point Assessment Organisation when known and any subcontractors, e.g. English/maths provider, where appropriate.

	End-point Assessment Organisation	Delivery Subcontractor 1	Delivery Subcontractor 2
Organisation	Northumbria University (Integrated Apprenticeship) or EPAO if known (Non-integrated Apprenticeship)	QA, level 2 English/maths	
Key Contact	tbc	tbc	
Email	tbc	tbc	

SECTION 2: Plan of Training

The details of the Apprenticeship set out here must match those detailed in the Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) account and on the Apprenticeship Agreement.

2.1 Apprenticeship Programme

Apprenticeship Standard, Reference Number and Version	
Apprenticeship Level	
Apprenticeship Entry Stage/Year <i>(For direct entrants not starting the programme at stage/year 1, i.e. where Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been claimed to allow advanced entry)</i>	
Apprenticeship Start Date (also the Practical Period Start Date) <i>(The date that the apprentice begins training towards an apprenticeship standard. NB: this does not include induction unless there are elements of training which contribute to the apprenticeship standard)</i>	
Practical Period Start Date <i>(likely to be the same as date above. NB: the practical period does not include End-point Assessment)</i>	
Practical Period Planned End Date <i>(This is the final planned day of the training period and the point when the apprentice is assessed as being ready to progress to End-point Assessment)</i>	
Apprenticeship Planned End Date <i>(This is when the End-point Assessment is complete)</i>	

2.2 Off-the-Job (OJT) Training Hours Calculation

To comply with Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules “at least 20% of the apprentice’s normal working hours, over the planned duration of the apprenticeship practical period, must be spent on off-the-job training.”

Annex B - DAJM and AAB Terms of Reference

Departmental Apprentice Journey Meeting (DAJM)

Terms of Reference

Departmental Apprentice Journey Meeting (DAJM) are sub-committees/boards of the Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB). DAJMs provide the opportunity for apprentice progress to be reviewed regularly and have the following specific remit.

1. Monitoring and Review

- 1.1 Using outputs from the Coach Apprentice Review activity and forms, to regularly review apprentice progress.
- 1.2 To specifically consider apprentice progress using a RAG rated approach to highlight those at risk, in terms of, but not inclusive to, the below:
 - 1.2.1 Skills Assessment – against required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs)
 - 1.2.2 Attendance
 - 1.2.3 Off the Job Training
 - 1.2.4 Academic Progress
 - 1.2.5 End Point Assessment (EPA) Progress
- 1.3 To identify actions and interventions where progress is not satisfactory and to hold a central, shared log of risks and follow up actions.
- 1.4 To refer any safeguarding concerns to the dedicated safeguarding officers.
- 1.5 To refer concerns relating to ongoing lack of engagement to the Educational Partnerships (EP) team for investigation which may result in the DARM being asked to endorse the suspension of apprentices due to lack of engagement with the ESFA funding rules.
- 1.6 To report to the AAB, via Apprentice Programme Leaders, any interventions which have been taken as an output of the DAJM and to highlight any students who have been suspended on the apprenticeship due to lack of progress and/or compliance.
- 1.7 To consider any further, relevant apprentice journey items nuanced by department.

2 Notes to inform conduct of the DAJM:

- 2.1 All DAJM documents will be electronic, in keeping with the University's Environmental Sustainability aims.
- 2.2 A summary data report which RAG rates apprentices' overall progress will be prepared and stored online on a central Teams site
- 2.3 At the meeting, apprentices flagged as Amber or Red will be discussed actions noted directly into the online spreadsheet.



Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB) Terms of Reference

Apprentice Assessment Boards (AAB) are sub-committees/boards of the University Education Committee. AABs replace Programme Assessment Boards (PABs) for apprenticeship programmes and have the following specific remit:

1. Monitoring and Review

- 1.1 To confirm linked University awards on Degree Apprenticeship programmes and optional University awards on Higher Apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.2 To confirm apprentice competency to be appropriate to the stage of study by consideration of module results and an overview of apprentice progress reports.
- 1.3 To confirm resit requirements, including resits of the EPA.
- 1.4 To confirm the academic progression status for individual apprentices based on their profile of confirmed marks and with reference to the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards, approved variations thereof, or any specific regulations formally agreed to apply to a programme (e.g. Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) considerations) and the KSBs relating to the relevant apprenticeship standard.
- 1.5 To confirm progression to Gateway for End Point Assessment (EPA) by due consideration of Gateway requirements according to the relevant Apprenticeship Standard/s.
- 1.6 To confirm that scrutiny of module marks has taken place with reference to:
 - 1.6.1 Satisfactory internal moderation
 - 1.6.2 Satisfactory external moderation
 - 1.6.3 Anonymous marking where applicable
 - 1.6.4 Release of marks by each Department, noting any issues arising including missing marks, ratification of marks changes from Heads of Department (HoDs), Technical Extenuating Circumstances (TEC) decisions and Academic Misconduct cases.
- 1.7 To receive confirmation from the External Examiner(s) aligned to the provision.
- 1.8 To monitor apprentice engagement and compliances by:
 - 1.8.1 Noting interventions which have taken place following ongoing review and progress activities at Departmental Review Meetings including those to address concerns in the following areas: Off the Job Training (OTJ), Employer Engagement, Attendance, Engagement and trajectory to meet required apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs).
 - 1.8.2 Ratify any decisions to suspend or withdraw an apprentice due to eligibility or contractual breach.
- 1.9 To receive and review programme cohort level statistics, including progression, retention Coach RAG rating, and achievement rates alongside action planning from the Programme Leader.

2. Notes to inform conduct of the AAB

- 2.1 All AAB documents will be electronic, in keeping with the University's Environmental Sustainability aims.
- 2.2 Ordinarily, the AAB will only discuss exceptional student profiles defined as follows:
 - 2.2.1 Module failure
 - 2.2.2 Decisions relating to apprentices with approved Personal Extenuating Circumstances
 - 2.2.3 Cases of substantiated academic misconduct

- 2.2.4 Lack of progress against apprenticeship standards and/or frameworks
- 2.2.5 Established breach of contract and/or eligibility
- 2.2.6 Failure to progress to EPA

2.3 Where discretion is applied this will be noted and reported to the University Education Committee.

2.4 All AAB documents will be electronic, in keeping with the University's Environmental Sustainability aims.

2.5 Ordinarily, the AAB will only discuss exceptional student profiles defined as follows:

- 2.5.1 Module failure
- 2.5.2 Decisions relating to apprentices with approved Personal Extenuating Circumstances
- 2.5.3 Cases of substantiated academic misconduct
- 2.5.4 Lack of progress against apprenticeship standards and/or frameworks
- 2.5.5 Established breach of contract and/or eligibility
- 2.5.6 Failure to progress to EPA

2.6 Where discretion is applied this will be noted and reported to the University Education Committee.

2.7 AAB discussions should be held in a collegiate manner with involvement of the External Examiner(s) and any EPA Independent Assessors present who will be offered the opportunity to make any observations either in discussion of individual apprentices or apprenticeships and/or at the end of the Board.

3. Constitution

3.1 The Parent Body of the Board is the University Education Committee.

3.2 The AAB is normally convened at the end of the apprenticeship stage or year.

3.3 The quorum for the Board is as determined by the Chair.

4. Membership

4.1 Head of Department or nominee (Chair). Nominees to Chair should be of a suitably senior level, such as another Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department.

4.2 Directors of Education

4.3 Directors of Apprenticeships

4.4 Programme/Apprenticeship Leaders

4.5 External Examiners (who can be a professional body representative) appointed to the AAB as a full voting member. At least one External Examiner must be present at boards considering levels 5 and above.

4.6 Secretary: Registrar or nominee

4.7 Ad Hoc Attendees:

- 4.7.1 At the discretion of the AAB Chair, examiners or PSRB assessors, including EPA Independent Assessors, may be admitted to meetings of the AAB as observers or, in circumstances deemed appropriate by the Chair, as voting members



- 4.7.2 The AAB Chair has the final authority for determining membership of the AAB that is appropriate to the apprenticeships under consideration. The number of attendees at a meeting (i.e., individuals who are not members) should not exceed the total membership numbers of the meeting.
- 4.7.3 Module Leaders and Apprentice Coaches may attend meetings of the AAB at the invitation of the Chair.

Appendix C – EPA Policy

University of Northumbria End Point Assessment Policy

1. Introduction

This document sets out the policy and procedures governing apprenticeship end point assessments (EPA) delivered as part of our apprenticeship programme for employers.

We are required to deliver an independent, objective assessment of the knowledge skills and behaviour as set out in the relevant apprenticeship Standard for every apprentice. As a registered End Point Assessment Organisation, we must also meet the requirements in the Education & Skills Funding Agency ‘Conditions for Organisations on The Register of End-Point Assessment Organisations’.

The aim of this policy is to ensure the University has a defined approach for managing and assuring the quality of the EPA for its Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.

2. Background

- 2.1 This policy provides detail on End Point Assessment (EPA). This policy will set out the roles and responsibilities for both integrated and non-integrated EPAs. Existing University policies and regulations govern any academic award made as part of an apprenticeship programme but proposing teams and approval panels should be cognisant of the requirements of EPA at the time of approval, including any requirements to adjust how the University would typically deliver its academic awards.
- 2.2 This policy adheres to the policy principles of the Education and Skills Funding Agency Apprenticeship (ESFA) funding rules for main providers and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) external quality assurance framework.
- 2.3 All apprenticeship standards will have an accompanying EPA. This determines if the apprentice has met the requirement of the apprenticeship standard: that is, they are able to demonstrate the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB) and are occupationally competent.
- 2.4 Prior to being eligible for the EPA the apprentice will need to successfully meet the ‘Gateway’ requirements as determined by the standard. The Employer’s permission is required to proceed to EPA.

- 2.5 The detail of the EPA is described in the Assessment Plan associated with the standard. The EPA may be integrated or non-integrated and this is pre-determined:
- i Integrated: EPA is an integral component of the University programme. The University will normally provide all the scheduled on-programme learning and deliver the EPA.
 - ii Non-integrated: the University delivers the programme and confirms either the University award and/or that Gateway criteria is met and the EPA is then conducted independently by an external EPAO who confirm the apprenticeship award.
 - iii For University integrated apprenticeships delivered by QA the University acts as the degree awarding body and the EPAO. QA is the Main Provider.
3. Registration as an EPAO
- 3.1 The University is required to maintain their status on the Register of Approved Training Providers (RoATP).
- 3.2 The University must be registered on the Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO) for each Apprenticeship Standard where the EPA is integrated.
- 3.3 The Apprentice Team within QTE will manage applications to the RoEPAO.
- 3.4 It is recommended application to the RoEPAO takes place as early as possible after the programme approval. ESFA rules require the application must be approved at least nine months before the EPA is scheduled to take place but apprentice and employer preparation for EPA should begin early in the programme.
- 3.5 The Educational Partnership Team will be the main point of contact with ESFA regarding the delivery and outcomes of Integrated EPA.
4. Delivering End Point Assessment
- 4.1 Integrated EPA
- 4.1.1 The Assessment Plan will indicate that the EPA is integrated or non-integrated: In the case of integrated, the EPA is part of the academic award and is normally the final project/module.
- 4.1.2 In the delivery of integrated EPA the University will apply the following principles:
- i the University, as the EPAO, will ensure the project fulfils the requirements of the EPA for the Apprenticeship Standard and Assessment Plan and the University's normal quality standards;
 - ii protocols demonstrating how the EPA will be delivered should be developed by the programme team including specific determination of the employer involvement where applicable.

- iii the independent nature of the EPA must be assured, each assessment panel must include an Independent Assessor who is professionally competent in the area and have the necessary skills, experience, occupational competence and qualifications required to facilitate the assessment (see 'Managing Conflict of Interest' below);
- iv if the apprenticeship includes PSRB recognition, the Assessment Plan may require that the assessment is conducted by Independent Assessor who holds a specified professional status and the programme team will need to comply with this;
- v Independent assessors are approved via Department management teams with support from HR, once competency is established and any conflict of interests addressed. The Educational Partnerships team will keep a register of all End Point Assessors. Assessors will be appointed for a period of 12 months and will be reviewed annually.
- vi Where required, Independent Assessor training will be co-ordinated and conducted by academic Departments with input from Educational Partnerships;
- vii Gateway, and progression to EPA is confirmed by the Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB).
- viii EPA assessment events will be co-ordinated by Educational Partnerships including communication with the employer to secure sign off.
- ix Where interviews, presentations and professional discussions are presented to a single assessor, they should be recorded and stored for quality assurance purposes in line with University data retention policies.
- x resits will be undertaken in line with University regulations except where the Assessment Plan sets out specific procedures in which case the assessment takes precedence.
- xi Educational Partnerships will request Apprentice certificates from IfATE and inform ESFA of EPA outcomes.

4.1.3 Standardisation

As EPAO we must ensure parity of standards across assessments this is achieved by:

- i IA attendance at assessor training.
- ii Standardisation of assessment approach and criteria prior to EPA taking place.
- iii Standardisation of outcomes following EPA.
- iv Establishment of Standardisation Group Meetings where Independent Assessors appointed to assess integrated apprenticeships End Point Assessment ensure EPA assessment is undertaken robustly, fairly and

consistently in line with the relevant IfATE apprenticeship assessment plan.
The meeting will be chaired by a member of University staff.

Standardisation guidance and note templates are appended in Annex A.

4.1.4 Standardisation of Assessment (prior to EPA)

- i Members consider a small sample of completed portfolios in detail, where available, and discuss points of merit and weakness to establish common principles of assessment.
- ii Where no samples or previous work is available the assessment plan, KSBs and scenarios are discussed to develop a common understanding of standards.
- iii Discussions are informed by the grading criteria which is set out in the relevant apprenticeship assessment plan and should include:
 - how these principles are used to ensure comparable standards are being applied
 - what topics and questions would be raised in the professional discussion
 - what feedback would be provided to the learner
 - Notes of the discussion are recorded, shared with the group prior to EPA and kept for audit purposes.

4.1.5 Standardisation of Grading (post EPA)

- i The standardisation meeting will review and confirm that the grading criteria has been applied consistently and fairly prior to results being released.

4.2 Non-integrated EPA

4.2.1 When the EPA is non-integrated, the EPA is carried out by an external End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). Normally, successful completion and ratification of the final academic award is required before the EPA can be attempted. ESFA require that the Employer determines the EPAO to be used and this should be established as early as possible. In theory, the University may be working with more than one EPAO for any one cohort of learners. All Higher Apprenticeships are non-integrated

4.2.2 In the delivery of non-Integrated EPA the University will apply the following principles:

- i Liaison with employers and engagement of EPAOs is co-ordinated by Educational Partnerships.

- ii Educational Partnerships will ensure contracts for EPA delivery are signed in a timely manner and in accordance with the University's standard financial practice;
- iii Planning has responsibility for paying the EPAO from the fees it receives from delivering the apprenticeship training. The maximum percentage cost that can be spent on the EPA is established by the IfATE;
- iv Gateway requirements are clear and communicated to both learner and employers including how this will be assessed, evidenced and verified;
- v where apprentices do not have level 2 qualification in Math and English, this must be remediated before they can enter the Gateway. The EPAO will require verification of these qualifications.
- vi Gateway, and progression to EPA is confirmed by the Apprentice Assessment Board (AAB).
- vii the apprentice will have the appropriate learner status within the University during their Gateway and EPA period;
- viii where it is identified that the learner is not ready to proceed with EPA, establish appropriate actions in liaison with the employer so the EPA can be taken within a specified timeframe.
- ix Resits and retakes are defined by the IfATE as:
 - a retake requires a period of further learning before the learner can attempt the EPA again;
 - a resit does not require further learning before attempting reassessment of the EPA or the failed component of the EPA.
- x The cost of retakes will be detailed in the contract with the EPAO.
- xi The Assessment Plan details the requirements and rules for resits and retakes.

5. Independent Assessors

5.1 Appointment of IAs

The University is responsible for appointing Independent Assessors (IAs) to conduct EPAs on all integrated standards. IAs must have not been involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship or support of apprentices (see Conflict of Interest Below). After acceptance, IAs are appointed on a consultancy basis and invited to join a pool to be allocated work when required. Appointments are made in adherence with the following principles:

- i The standard role description should be used and tailored by the Department delivering the apprenticeship according to subject specific requirements.

- ii Candidate selection is undertaken by the Department in accordance with the criteria on the IA Appointment form.
- iii An IA Appointment form is completed by the Department for suitable candidates and forwarded to Educational Partnerships.
- iv Educational Partnerships maintains a central pool of IAs.
- v The Department meets the cost of IAs.
- vi The Department appoints IAs using a specific IA consultancy contract, available from HR.

6. Consistency and comparability

6.1 The University will ensure consistency in EPA in the following ways and as shown above:

- i providing guidance on the EPA to learners and employers in relation to the delivery of the EPA (practical and technical activities, marking guidance for EPA activity);
- ii consulting with industry/technical experts and External Examiner (in the case of integrated EPA) when developing relevant work-based projects to ensure there is comparability and consistency in terms of breadth and depth of assessment across the provision where the standard is being delivered to ensure the assessment is reliable, valid and fair to all learners;
- iii through recruitment, preparation and on-going training of appropriate Independent Assessors;
- iv developing protocols to determine how the assessment process will be carried out;
- v holding regular standardisation meeting to ensure consistency of assessment and marking practice;
- vi through recording and retention of any practical components of assessment for moderation and quality assurance processes;
- vii monitoring outcomes from Board of Examiners;
- viii using the annual monitoring and evaluation process to review outcomes and enhance practice.

7. Conflict of Interest

7.1 Scope of Conflict of Interest Policy

- i This policy covers the delivery of all apprenticeship End-point Assessments undertaken as part of our Apprenticeship programme.
- ii The University, as the organisation accountable and responsible for EPA, and the individual assessors and invigilators that we use must be free from any conflicts of interest that could adversely affect their judgement or objectivity in administering and undertaking a robust and consistent EPA. We must ensure that none of the individuals undertaking the EPA are involved in or are responsible for any on-programme delivery, line-management or on-programme assessment of the same apprentice.
- iii This guidance applies to all staff, consultants and partner institutions/organisations taking part in or supporting an End-point Assessment as defined above. This includes individuals involved with any aspect of the delivery of an End-point Assessment, and also in the creation, marketing, sales, distribution, marking or any other activity connected with tests and assessments, resources or services used within the End-point Assessment.
- iv Explicitly included in scope for this guidance are all employees, contractors, agency, or associate staff, including assessment associates, verifiers/examiners and other support roles. This list is not exhaustive. Every individual must complete a Conflict-of-Interest form (set out at Annex A) when asked to do so, and we will assess the risk and impact based on each set of circumstances.
- v Where mitigating action is needed as a result of a declaration on an Col form, this may mean that an individual will not be able to take part in a specific EPA, or they may be moved to different duties. EPA Leads will, working with the Registrar for Educational Partnerships, consider whatever action is needed to protect the objectivity and integrity of the End-point Assessment.

7.2 Definition of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has competing interests or loyalties which could compromise, or appear to compromise, the outcome of an End-point Assessment if it is not properly managed. The possible scenarios where a conflict of interest may occur includes:

- The University is involved in both the EPA and the training delivery of a standard.
- An individual may be employed by the University and has links with and /or is also employed in the same organisation as the apprentice,
- When an individual has a position of authority in one organisation that conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation
- An individual involved in EPA has a prior link with the apprentice or their employer for the standard they are assessing against. For example, they may have friends or relatives working with the apprentice, or who have delivered the teaching elements of the apprenticeship.

- When an individual has interests that conflict with his or her professional position where someone works for or carries out work on our behalf,
- Where an individual working on the EPA has personal interests – paid or unpaid – in the employer organisation undergoing the EPA
- At both organisational and individual level, the official role of the individual/organisation undertaking the EPA has any other interests that may compromise their assessment decisions.
- Where an individual participating has a personal or business gain from the outcome of the assessment
- Where an individual undertaking the end-point assessment of apprentices for an organisation within which they have previously worked, trained, managed or assessed the same apprentice.

7.3 Responsibilities under Conflict of Interest Policy

EPA Leads

- I. EPA leads are responsible for early identification of, and planning for Col as part of their department responsibilities and the planning for every individual EPA.
- II. EPA Leads are responsible for ensuring that all individuals contributing to an EPA are clear on the impact of the Policy on their roles and for full implementation of this policy.
- III. EPA Leads must ensure that all those in scope complete Declaration of Interest (DoI) forms prior to each EPA. Where needed the EPA Lead must implement mitigating actions, agreed with the Educational Partnerships Registrar before the EPA commences. (*See Appendix A for Declaration of Interest Form*)
- IV. Where an EPA is to be hosted at the employer or training provider premises the EPA Lead must, as part of the planning process, review any Col risks and, where identified, set out the actions required to avoid potential conflicts of interest in the EPA Plan. This must be documented and evidence that this has been implemented must be included in the EPA record.
- V. Individual DoI forms must be stored with the Educational Partnerships team and available as part of internal and external audits.
- VI. EPA leads are accountable for briefing any contractors, consultants, agencies or other workers not employed by the University and for collation of EPA DoI Forms.
- VII. They must ensure that, where third parties are engaged to conduct EPA, only the agreed contract template is used between both organisations, or individuals and this organisation. All contracts and Col forms must be in place before the start of the EPA.

- VIII. EPA Leads are responsible for ensuring that all new staff receive conflict of interest briefing. No individual may take part in the EPA process until this training has taken place.
- IX. Managers and EPA Leads are responsible for escalating reports of actual or potential conflicts of interest identified by the EPA Lead, or other routes set out in this policy, to the Educational Partnerships Registrar.
- X. The Educational Partnerships Registrar is responsible for maintaining records of Declaration of Interest forms and making available for scrutiny and audit. They are responsible for authorising the outcome of DoI submissions and advising on appropriate mitigating actions where appropriate.

Staff Engaged in EPA activity (defined as ‘in Scope’ above)

- I. Every individual in scope as described in 7.1 above, is responsible for ensuring that they are familiar with this policy before undertaking work on an EPA.
 - II. DoI forms should be completed and submitted to Educational Partnerships for every member of staff at least 2 weeks before the EPA activity is scheduled to take place.
 - III. Individuals must also notify if, at any point, a conflict of interest arises which is not reflected in their COI form, or for where a Col has not previously been registered. It is the responsibility of all staff, consultants, partner institutions and organisations to protect the independence of the apprenticeship assessment process, and both comply and support others to comply with these guidelines.
 - IV. Individuals must not begin work on any aspect of an EPA as outlined above where they have not submitted a DoI form or where a conflict of interest has been declared and authorisation has not been granted by the Educational Partnerships Registrar
 - V. Every individual is accountable for upholding this policy, and for escalating to EPA leads or Managers, where colleagues, contactors, or other staff involved in the EPA take action, or fail to act in accordance with this policy. Any individual may raise this with the EPA Lead or with the Educational Partnerships Registrar. Individuals can also raise concerns anonymously, by following the process set out in the Whistleblowing Policy. University Public Interest Policy and Procedure (northumbria.ac.uk)
8. Applying for Completion Certificates
- 8.1 Where the EPA is integrated, Educational Partnerships will be responsible for claiming the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate from the Apprenticeship Assessment Service.
 - 8.2 Where the EPA is non- integrated, it is the responsibility of the EPAO to apply for



the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate on behalf of the learner. If the learner fails to successfully complete the EPA they may still receive the relevant University award where applicable. They will not receive the Apprenticeship Completion Certificate.

9. EPA Appeals and complaints

9.1 When the EPA has been carried out by the University it is subject to the normal appeals and complaints procedures. If the issues cannot be resolved it may be escalated to the External Quality Assurance provider and IfATE.

9.2 For non-integrated EPAs the apprentice must follow the complaints process of the EPAO.

ANNEX A

STANDARDISATION AND END POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA) - GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

CONTEXT

An important aspect of the reform of apprenticeships is the end-point assessment (EPA). The purpose of the EPA is to test that an apprentice is fully capable of doing their job before they receive their apprenticeship certificate. It also helps to demonstrate that what an apprentice has learned, can be applied in the real world. For integrated apprenticeships the EPA is undertaken by an independent end-point assessor (IA). IAs are responsible for designing, administering, and marking assessments. It is important to ensure that apprentices are assessed consistently and fairly. For an integrated apprenticeship Northumbria are responsible for the policies, procedures, and systems for controlling the quality of our assessments. This involves ensuring that assessors are qualified and trained, that grading is applied consistently and that assessment instruments such as test questions or practical tasks are robust.

A function of Northumbria University Internal Quality assurance process is to ensure standardisation becomes a natural occurrence with all new IAs. This is achieved by compulsory attendance at assessor training/standardisation prior to any EPAs taking place. Standardisation of assessment practices and outcomes will be observed and monitored over a given period to make sure they are consistent and look for improvements to be made. The IA must ensure that:

- consistency and reliability of assessment is maintained
- records of standardisation meetings/exercises are kept
- feedback is provided to Assessor/Trainers
- problems encountered with individual learners are discussed and appropriate action taken.

We aim to ensure valid, reliable, manageable, comparable EPAs for apprentices, which have robust processes to combat bias. The success of this aim relies significantly on the competency of our IAs.

BEFORE THE EPA

Where EPA involves specific assessed elements, standardisation is an important part of the IA duties. While team meetings may be held, these will often focus on relaying information and tracking learner progress. These are clearly important elements of internal quality assurance, but it is also crucial that standardisation activities are undertaken with all team members on a regular basis, particularly where several dispersed, peripatetic, part time, contracted assessors are used.

The simplest means of completing a standardisation activity uses sample pieces of learner(s) work or evidence and asks all assessors to make an independent assessment decision for this work. It is also helpful to ask them to record what actions they would give the learner resulting from this assessment. Consideration would then be given as to how these principles are used to ensure comparable standards are being applied. This type of standardisation activity would ordinarily happen prior to EPA. In addition, it is helpful to ask IAs to record what feedback they would give the learner if they were the actual assessor of the work. This enables the University to ensure that assessors are:

- Asking the right questions
- Making accurate assessment decisions

- Providing suitably detailed and specific feedback
- Fully recording the outcome of the assessment process

In addition, the IA could organise standardisation activities which may include assessing each other's candidates, judging evidence together, working through the requirements of the standards together and agreeing on assessment decisions. The frequency and type of standardisation activity will depend on a range of considerations such as any new requirements in the qualifications, changes within the qualification delivery team, previous standardisation activities and findings, the need for continuous improvement, and the outcomes of external audits. All assessors are subject to formal observations to monitor their practice to support continuous quality improvement and safeguard assessment practice.

STANDARDISATION MEETING TO DISCUSS THE EPA

The standardisation meeting between IAs following the EPA for integrated assessments should include the following as a minimum. All meetings should be recorded; with detailed notes outlining attendees, the nature of the discussions, any decisions and follow up activity required. A copy of these notes should be shared with the Educational Partnerships team.

Review of the quality and robustness of the portfolio evidence: All the methods of assessment used within the EPA involve some form of evidence gathering. This forms part of the competency units, which show the learner has met the standards required. It demonstrates that they not only have the knowledge required to pass the apprenticeship; but they are able to apply this too. The standardisation meeting should confirm that there is comparability in the quality, level and quantity of information provided across the apprentices being assessed, and that this aligns to apprentice standard.

Grading Criteria: Each method of assessment will have their own grading criteria. The grading criteria will be set out within the assessment plan specific to the apprenticeship. It is important that **ALL** EPA assessment components must be passed for the EPA to be passed overall. The standardisation meeting will review and confirm that the grading criteria has been applied consistently and fairly. Standardisation is the process of checking that all assessors are working to the current IFATE apprenticeship assessment plan and are assessing to the same principles and standards. The requirements for each qualification should be strictly followed, and consistently met for each apprentice.

Independence of an apprentice's work: standardisation meetings should also carefully consider whether there are any issues of authenticity or integrity of an apprentice's work. The IA should be able to clearly identify that this is an independent piece of work, distinctive (including in relation to the evidenced submitted to the portfolio) from any other apprentice, and that it is all the apprentice's own work.

Borderline Marks/ clarification. – in some cases, the standardisation meeting may be used to review the grading of an EPA where there are borderline marks, or concerns raised by an IA.

The standardisation meeting will also confirm that:

- All apprentices have undertaken an assessment that has been developed and verified
as valid and appropriate for the apprenticeship standard.
- That where an apprentice has a Disabled Students' Support Recommendation (DSSR)



and requires a reasonable adjustment, that the appropriate assessment arrangements have been made.

- That all apprentices receive clear, consistent, and timely guidance ahead of the EPA.
- That any technical extenuating circumstances that may have affected an EPA are recorded and the Educational Partnerships team notified.
- That all apprentices and employers have been given the opportunity to feedback on the EPA process.
- That all IAs have completed a detailed and timely report outlining the apprentice's performance against the KSBs in the apprentice standard for each component of the EPA.
- That all EPA information is stored appropriately (in line with the University guidance), and in line with GDPR guidance.

PRINCIPLES TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE STANDARDISATION

Departments must ensure that:

- All IAs must attend at least 2 meetings per calendar year.
- All new IAs must complete any compulsory IA training or briefings depending on the requirements of the Standard.
- All IAs must hold the 'essential' qualifications and skills as outlined in the End-point Assessor job description.
- All new IAs must shadow delivery of at least one in-person EPA.
- All IAs must be shadowed delivering an in-person EPA at least once every 6 months.
- All IAs must complete and evidence relevant CPD on an annual basis.
- IAs ability to assess in line with required standards to be reviewed by the Department annually.
- All IAs must complete a conflict-of-interest check for each EPA they undertake.

Notes of Standardisation Meetings

To support the University's internal quality assurance processes, the purpose of Standardisation Meetings is to ensure EPA assessment is undertaken robustly, fairly and consistently in line with the relevant Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) apprenticeship assessment plan and University guidance and policy.

Pre-EPA Standardisation Meeting

Apprenticeship Standard	
Meeting Time and Date:	
Chair:	
Attendees:	
Form of Assessment e.g., professional discussion, panel presentation:	
<p>Notes of Discussion</p> <p>Please ensure the following are covered in the meeting and a record is made of discussions and agreed outcomes below.</p>	
The application of grading criteria with reference to the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan and the KSBs required by the Apprenticeship Standard.	
The application of criteria to ensure comparability and consistency of grades, with examples.	
The agreement of what is considered suitably detailed and specific feedback, with examples	
Questions to be used in any element of EPA, e.g., Professional Discussion, if applicable.	



Actions to be taken and recommendations for improvements:	
Completed by (Chair):	

Please complete this template in line with the 'Standardisation Meetings Guidance' document. On completion, these notes should be forwarded to the EPA or Apprenticeship lead in your Department and a copy sent via e-mail to the Apprenticeships Educational Partnerships team, as.end.point.assessment@northumbria.ac.uk

Notes of Standardisation Meetings

To support the University's internal quality assurance processes, the purpose of Standardisation Meetings is to ensure EPA assessment is undertaken robustly, fairly and consistently in line with the relevant Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) apprenticeship assessment plan and University guidance and policy.

Post-EPA Standardisation Meeting

Apprenticeship Standard:	
Meeting Time and Date:	
Cohort (month and year this group of apprentices began their apprenticeship):	
Attendees:	
Form of assessment e.g. professional discussion, panel presentation:	
Notes of Discussion	
Please ensure the following are covered in the meeting and a record is made of discussions and agreed outcomes below.	
Review of the quality and robustness of the portfolio of evidence.	
The application of consistent and fair grading criteria with reference to the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan and the KSBs required by the Apprenticeship Standard.	
Individual grades, noting points of contention e.g., borderline marks, and resolution.	
The suitability of questions used in any element of EPA e.g., Professional Discussion, if applicable.	



Any other points of note as outlined in Standardisation Guidance, e.g. independence of apprentice's work, Technical Extenuating Circumstances (TEC), reasonable adjustments in place etc.	
Actions and recommendations arising:	
Completed by (Chair):	

Please complete this template in line with the 'Standardisation Meetings Guidance' document. On completion, these notes should be forwarded to the EPA or Apprentice lead in your Department and a copy sent via e-mail to the Apprenticeships Educational Partnerships team, as.end.point.assessment@northumbria.ac.uk