

# EMPLOYER BRIEFING

## SELECTING AN END-POINT ASSESSMENT ORGANISATION (EPAO)

Employers have to select an end-point assessment organisation to assess their apprentices.

Apprenticeship assessment is administered by independent bodies called end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs). They offer their services in a controlled market place that is externally quality assured by external quality assurance organisations.

NSAR provides the employer-led, external quality assurance for the digital apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4. We also provide employer-led, external quality assurance for key rail and logistics apprenticeships.

We are responsible for implementation of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (IFATE) framework for external quality assurance. We provide you with the reassurance that whichever EPAO you choose the apprentice assessment outcome should be the same. This means you can look at what EPAOs offer you, as the customer, to meet your apprentice assessment needs knowing that the standard of assessments will be the same.

We also ensure that each EPAO is compliant with the assessment intentions agreed by employers responsible for creating the apprenticeship standard. These are as expressed in the employer written, assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard.

Our role is to make sure the assessment marketplace you choose your EPAO from is working properly, providing quality end-point assessments. This leaves you to decide which EPAO suits your apprenticeship needs best.

The first thing you need to establish is which EPAOs are available to choose from when it comes to assessing your apprentices.

### WHICH EPAOs CAN BE SELECTED?

An employer wanting to contract an EPAO to provide end-point assessment services for a particular apprenticeship standard needs to establish which EPAOs are able to offer these services for the apprenticeship standard.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/register-of-end-point-assessment-organisations#using-the-register-of-end-point-assessment-organisations>

Look for the spreadsheet that lists all the apprenticeship standards as a list and shows you all the EPAOs registered to offer end-point assessment for them. This register is regularly updated so make sure you are working with the most recent one rather than a version you may have downloaded and put to one side.

If you wanted to use an organisation that is not on the register, that organisation will need to apply and be listed against the apprenticeship standard before you can consider them for conducting independent end-point assessment of your apprentices.

To help choose an end-point assessment organisation you can ask an organisation on the register for more information about the service they offer. Some of this information should be on their website. Alternatively, you can ask about an EPAOs application. If you would like to see information from an application, please email [apprentice.assessment@education.gov.uk](mailto:apprentice.assessment@education.gov.uk).

Only employers involved in the delivery of an approved apprenticeship standard can access additional information about organisations on the register.

### WHAT TO CONSIDER IN SELECTING AN END-POINT ASSESSMENT ORGANISATION

Having established which EPAOs offer assessment of the standard their apprentices are working to, ideally, there will be a choice to be made, i.e. there are more than one EPAO on the Register for the standard in question.

EPAOs should have key information available on their websites and should be setting out a clear value proposition to their potential employer customers.

The diagram on the next page is designed to help inform your decision making process by setting out some questions you may want to consider when choosing an EPAO.

### Readiness

- Is the EPAO ready to offer assessment or will they be ready when you need them to be?

### Price

- How much will the end-point assessment cost?
- What are the resit arrangements and are they included in the price?
- What else is and isn't included in the price, e.g. support materials?
- Do the payment arrangements and payment processes suit your own needs?
- Is a copy of the service level agreement or contract available to look at?

### EPA frequency and convenience

- How many windows of EPA opportunity are there in the year and are the assessment arrangements manageable?
- Is it clear how you book end-point assessments for your apprentice/s?
- Are there any location or physical environment requirements or restrictions for the assessments?

### Support

- How will the EPAO manage the relationship with you? Will you have someone to contact about EPA?
- What guidance is available to help employers and apprentices?
- Will there be meaningful feedback on apprentice performance provided to help you, the training provider and the apprentice improve?
- What are the complaints/appeals procedures should you want to challenge an assessment decision?
- What arrangements are accessible or in place if an apprentice has special requirements?

### Assessor competence

- Are the assessors occupationally competent and competent as assessors?
- Will it be the same assessor for all parts of the EPA, e.g. assessing the portfolio or project and conducting the interview?
- Do we have a choice on assessor based on the suitability to the role specialism?
- What happens if an assessor is unavailable on the planned day - do you have a back up?

### Gateway to assessment

- What help or guidance is available to help with any Gateway decisions an employer has to make, e.g. deciding if the apprentice is ready for assessment or if the work they need to submit is sufficient?
- Is there guidance on the sufficiency and quality of apprentice evidence required?