

GUIDANCE NOTE

Issued: 7th August 2020
Valid Until: 31st Dec 2020

MAINTAINING WORK-BASED OBSERVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The following guidance is designed to enable end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) to take the actions described in this guidance if they deem it necessary. The scope of this guidance is limited to those EPAOs working with NSAR as their EQAO and is only those apprenticeship standards listed below:

Rail Infrastructure Operator Apprenticeship Standard Level 2 ST0419

NSAR is aware that the opportunity to have an independent (EPAO) assessor to carry out the workplace observations is now severely diminished because of the current Covid-19 situation. In response to this there are two potential courses of action available:

1. Implement any break in learning that has been introduced by the ESFA in light of the current Covid-19 situation, as a way to postpone end-point assessment and as a result, the workplace observation. Where this is not an option then:
2. EPAOs can use the Covid-19 temporary discretion agreed by NSAR or the IFATE to replace the practical observation with an adjusted methodology:
 - a. IFATE and NSAR have agreed that EPAOs can make an adjustment to the planned observation methodology, allowing EPAOs to access assessors locally, (from the employer and not from the training provider) to provide observation evidence to the EPAO Independent Assessor (who will make the EPA decision), if each of the following conditions can be satisfied:
 - i. The person from the employer (the 'employer-assessor') who is providing the observation evidence must have substantial demonstrable experience in the job role that they are assessing
 - ii. The 'employer assessor' must be currently working in the industry and be occupationally competent in the field of infrastructure operations with at least three years' experience
 - iii. The 'employer assessor' must be in a day-to-day line management, training or quality assurance role in the area they are assessing
 - iv. The 'employer assessor' who is providing the observation evidence must have been trained in the assessment requirements of the assessment intervention (observation in the workplace) to the satisfaction of the EPAO thus enabling the employer-assessor to be registered with and recognised by the EPAO and preferably holding or working towards an assessor qualification or credential.
 - v. There is no conflict of interest risking compromising the integrity of assessment decisions about apprentice performance,

