

CLARIFICATION GUIDANCE NOTE

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LEAD PRACTITIONER IN ADULT CARE (LEVEL 4) ST0007

Useful definitions

A **re-take** involves a need for further learning before an assessment is taken, while a **re-sit** does not. Where an EPA assessment has been interrupted, postponed or cancelled as a result of unforeseen technical or work-related reasons, this should not be counted as an assessment occasion.

There are areas within the assessment plan that need some further clarification. This guidance is designed to bring that additional level of clarity required. The guidance may be developed further to include other areas in need of clarification. EPAOs must check that this is the latest version of the guidance.

Area of concern	Guidance
<p>Assessment Plan, page 5: Observation of Practice must include the ability to demonstrate their skills, behaviour and leadership to external/internal stakeholders.</p>	<p>In line with the nature of the job role, good practice would gravitate towards the observation involving both internal and external staff. For example, this could be specialist external dementia specialist, local authority social worker, or anyone working beyond the immediate care employer that has a reason to be at the meeting. However, this is not always possible or necessary and the 'external/internal stakeholders' phrase should be taken to mean internal and/or external stakeholders.</p>
<p>Assessment Plan, page 5: The assessment methods may be conducted face-to-face or via an on-line platform e.g. video-conferencing as appropriate.</p>	<p>There is no requirement to record the Observation within the assessment plan (whether face-to-face or using video conferencing) but using video conferencing as a method of observation offers the ability to do so. EPAOs may find this useful for training, moderation and/or appeals purposes. If this is to be recorded in this way, the relevant permissions will need to be secured.</p> <p>Most video-conferencing packages should prove suitable and the EPAO may have to work with the local system being used by the apprentice, with the assessor invited to attend. How best this might work is at the discretion of the EPAO, in discussion with the employer.</p> <p>EPAOs need to make sure there are appropriate arrangements in place to move between the on-line observation (group participation) and the subsequent on-line questioning interventions which are one-to-one engagements.</p>
<p>Assessment Plan, page 5: The apprentice should be given 4 weeks to prepare for this activity following Gateway.</p>	<p>To bring this in line with the more flexible approach adopted at Level 5, this should be now interpreted as:</p> <p><i>The apprentice should be given a minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 4 weeks to prepare for this activity following Gateway.</i></p>



Assessment Plan, Page 8: ‘An apprentice’s employer decides how many attempts an apprentice may have to re-sit/retake. Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for the **re-sit or re-take.**’

This paragraph should be ignored. As with the apprenticeship standards in adult care at levels 2, 3 & 5, there should only be **one further attempt** at an EPA assessment permitted, after the initial failed attempt.

As with Level 5, there should only be one further opportunity to take any one assessment again. In these circumstances the assessment instruments used for re-sits/re-takes must have:

- A different focus for the Observation of Leadership
- Different discussion points used in the Professional Discussion

A passing grade is the only available grade in re-sit/re-take situations, unless there have been exceptional circumstances that account for the previous failing performance.

Only the failed assessment component needs to be re-sat/re-taken.

Further Guidance in Response to Questions Asked

Is there too much time between Gateway and EPA?

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Isn't the two-day period for EPA too restrictive, potentially causing issues with EPA?

EPA must be completed over no more than two days and can occur at any point within a period of typically three months. So, for example, this could be:

- Immediately after Gateway requirements are met and the portfolio reviewed, and/or
- On two consecutive days (within the three-month window), or
- On any two days (within the three-month window), or
- The same day (within the three-month window), and
- In any order

The three-month period is typically the window that should be adhered to. While this approach seems relatively loose and prescriptive, it does allow EPAOs plenty of scope to find the most efficient, customer friendly and flexible approaches.

Isn't there too much evidence needed for Gateway?

The Gateway requirements are:

- Proof of the English and maths achievements
- Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care
- A portfolio of evidence to inform the professional discussion that:
 - Covers the KSBs assigned to the professional discussion (see Annex A, page 11)
 - Typically show six pieces of evidence of holistic application of KSBs drawn from their working practice
 - Could contain some direct observation of practice, undertaken by the employer and written up as a witness testimony. Good practice would suggest that this observation is aware of the KSBs being addressed, and identifies these within the witness testimony.

Reflective accounts and/or self-evaluations, while worthwhile, are not needed in the portfolio.



How do the Observation of Practice timings work and what happens if they finish early?

The direct observation of the activity, itself, is 60 minutes long. After the observed activity, there are 15 minutes for questioning of the apprentice based on what the independent assessor has observed. This gives a total assessment duration of 75 minutes.

So, 60 continuous minutes of observation and 15 continuous minutes of questioning. The assessor is not interrupting the observation to ask questions.

If required, assessors can allow for up to 10% more time, in either or both methods. So, 6 minutes more in the observed activity to allow the apprentice to complete or wind up their workplace activity and/or just under 2 minutes to complete a point being made in the professional discussion.

60 minutes has been allocated to ensure that the apprentice has sufficient time to demonstrate the KSBs assigned to the observation of practice and to demonstrate their ability to meet the grading criteria. If an apprentice finishes in less time, the same judgements, assessing the sufficient coverage of the required KSBs still need to be made.

What is the point of the three questions to be asked after the direct observation?

There must be a minimum of three questions based on the direct observation and have the following purposes:

- Seek clarification on points that are not clear
- Reassure the assessor of the skills and behaviours coverage and/or sufficiency in meeting the assessment and/or grading criteria; to give the assessor more confidence in the assessment decision to be made.

What is the point being made about complying with GDPR and safeguarding duties?

The points concern:

- (GDPR) making sure EPAO processes and practice are built around ensuring the suitable consents and permissions are in place where there is to be recordings, for example:
 - permissions from other parties, where applicable, if they are to be discussed during the course of the observation
 - the permissions of those in the room for this to be the focus of an EPA and for permission to record, if it is to be recorded.
- (Safeguarding) taking proportionate action if any safeguarding concerns become apparent during the course of the observation that aren't identified by the apprentice

What happens if the direct observed activity is interrupted by others?

Many of the leadership activities observed will involve a level of participation by others. Where this is the case, the apprentice is expected to be able to manage the interventions in a way that meets the needs of the activity. B4; S2; S22; S10 and in particular S12 all come into play when the apprentice manages these interventions.

Are the timings for the Professional Discussion clear enough?

The professional discussion is 90 minutes long with an additional 10% (9 minutes) available at the assessor's discretion to allow the apprentice to finish a point being made.



How does an apprentice evidence the different grading requirements?

The Observation is graded pass or fail, and the professional discussion is graded distinction, pass or fail. So, only the professional distinction carries the distinction grade. Both must be passed for the apprentice to be passed. (See assessment plan, pages 7-8)

An overall distinction grade means achieving pass for the observation of practice and a distinction for the professional discussion.

When a re-sit or re-take is involved in one or more assessment methods, only a pass can be accessed as an overall grade; unless there are exceptional circumstances to explain the failing performance.

How should we handle standardising the assessment of the professional discussion?

There are key areas of concern for standardisation of assessors when looking at consistency in assessing the professional discussion:

1. The purpose of the portfolio and how it is to inform the professional discussion; ensuring that this leads to at least one question being asked in each of the KSB groups identified in Annex A.
2. How follow-up questions are to be used and what are the limitations on this for assessors
3. How each assessor is to access the EPAO's question bank, given the coverage requirements (common) and the evidence seen in the portfolio (individual to each apprentice).
4. Time management, recording and reporting requirements for EPAO IQA purposes.