

GUIDANCE NOTE

Issued: 6th October 2022

WORK-BASED OBSERVATION FOR TRAIN DRIVER (ST0645)

NSAR was aware that the opportunity to have an independent (EPAO) assessor to conduct the workplace observations was severely diminished because of Covid-19. In response to this the IFATE issued a temporary discretion in July 2020 that afforded EPAOs a temporary replacement for the Planned Working Observation assessment component.

A temporary dispensation has been applied to the assessment plan version ST0645/AP01 for this apprenticeship. The dispensation will last from 06/10/2022 to 31/12/2023 but may be withdrawn if the assessment plan is revised sooner or the dispensation is no longer necessary.

End-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) delivering EPAs for the apprenticeship will implement the dispensation as required, supported, and monitored by the relevant EQA provider.

The key changes to the assessment method – Planned Working Observation are:

- Observation can be replaced with a witness testimony of observed practice
- Questions and answer session with an external assessor will take place

EPAOs can replace the practical observation (planned working observation) with an alternative assessment comprising of witness testimony provided by the employer, and a question-and-answer session conducted by the EPAO Independent Assessor, (IA) if the following conditions can be satisfied:

- The person completing the witness testimony must be from the employer or 'employer-provider' (and not from a training provider *other than an employer-provider*) and must be occupationally competent or have responsibility for the occupational competence of people working in the apprentice's role. The person completing the witness testimony should be a person who has observed the apprentice in their role, such as Driver Manager, Head of Safety Standards (or equivalent) or Head of Drivers.
- There should be no risk of any conflict-of-interest compromising the integrity of assessment decisions about apprentice performance, when determining who is best placed to provide the witness testimony.
- The witness testimony supplied by the employer-representative will document the planned working criteria from the EPA plan. It will confirm that the apprentice-driver has been observed satisfactorily completing all elements of the planned working observation, and that relevant records are maintained on the CMS System.
- The person completing the witness testimony must have been trained by the EPAO in the requirements of the witness testimony, including training in assessing sufficiency in meeting the assessment criteria.
- Any apprentice who is recorded as not passing the witness testimony should not be put forward for other components of EPA.
- The witness testimony must be in accordance with the EPAO processes and requirements, meet with EPAO quality assurance requirements and be checked by the EPAO to ensure that it enables the EPAO to make a robust assessment judgement against each assessment criteria. Processes and recording mechanisms used must allow for robust EPAO scrutiny, assessment, and internal quality assurance.

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- The question-and-answer session conducted by the EPAO independent assessor can be done remotely following appropriate security and quality assurance practices, designed by the EPAO. This will check the authenticity and validity of the assessment evidence.
- There will be an auditable record of the assessments and the assessment judgements made including records of assessment decisions made against each assessment criteria (agreed by the EPAO).
- The final decision regarding any End Point Assessment methodology and outcome will be made by the End-Point Assessment Organisation. The EPAO will be responsible for ensuring that the Planned Working 'Pass Criteria' have been fully met.

IFATE also has agreed a flexibility which affords the use of remote assessments for some assessment methodologies. This allows the use of remote assessment in relation to:

- Online Tests. See NSAR website for further information on Knowledge Test Assessment Methodology (including Online and On-Demand Tests).
- Observation Degraded Work (Simulation Permitted) Remote Assessment.
- Observation Emergency Working (Simulation Permitted) Remote Assessment.
- Professional Discussion Remote Assessment.
- Questions and Answers (as part of Planned Working Observation see above) Remote Assessment.