



How we make our results decisions

Introduction

This document explains the steps undertaken by our End Point Assessment (EPA) service to ensure that a robust assessment process has been followed and grading decisions have been made in a fair and consistent manner. Fairness is at the heart of our EPA service, which means that we make sure assessments cover the expected content and are clear and error-free, we make sure that marking is completed on time and is of high quality, and that grading criteria are followed to fairly reflect the performance of the apprentice. It also means we make sure that apprentices who need them have access to enlarged or Braille question papers, or a scribe, or other reasonable adjustments during their EPA.

Whilst the instruments of assessment vary between apprenticeship standards, the end point assessment process followed by FDQ is identical for all apprentices, and so this document is relevant to all end point assessments carried out by FDQ. More specific information about grading for each standard can be found in individual assessment plans available from

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>

End Point Assessment Team

FDQ allocates an EPA team for each apprenticeship standard, consisting of the following:

- i. End point assessment manager
- ii. End point assessment support team
- iii. Independent quality assurer
- iv. Independent examiners
- v. Chief moderator
- vi. End-point assessment instrument writers/developers
- vii. On-line end-point assessment IT platform technician

Assessment Design

Each apprenticeship standard EPA plan specifies the assessment instruments (for example, knowledge test, observation and interview) that must be used to assess the knowledge, skills and behaviours content of the apprenticeship standard. FDQ's team of assessment developers and writers develop the detailed FDQ assessment specifications for each instrument, which may include question banks for knowledge tests, specified activities for practical observations, mark

schemes and question banks for interviews. All assessment material is mapped against the standard knowledge, skills and behaviours statements, to ensure its validity and reliability, and is externally quality assured by an external quality assurance organisation appointed by the trailblazer group for each standard.

Independent Examiners (IEs)

Each FDQ EPA team has a group of Independent Examiners allocated to it, who are chosen for their expertise in a particular sector (each IE must meet the mandatory criteria specified within the apprenticeship standard, which may include a minimum number of years of practical experience within the sector, achievement of compliance and assessor qualifications and a commitment to continuous professional development). All IEs undergo a comprehensive induction and training process, to ensure a valid and standardised approach to assessment judgements. In addition standardisation sessions take place on an on-going basis throughout the year to ensure consistency of assessment judgements.

IEs are allocated to EPAs as soon as an apprentice enters the gateway and are briefed on upcoming EPAs by the EPA Manager, which may include information about the business, the job role of the apprentice and the logistics of delivery of the EPA. IEs undertake the EPA at the agreed time, using each of the assessment instruments developed by FDQ to ensure consistency of approach. Results are not given on the day of EPA under any circumstances.

Marking of End Point Assessments

IEs complete FDQ EPA documentation after the EPA has taken place and make judgements against set criteria which have been specified in the EPA assessment plan and FDQ assessment instruments. All standards contain a minimum achievement for each knowledge, skills and behaviours statement which must all be achieved for the apprentice to succeed – failure in one or more area will render the EPA unsuccessful. Grading decisions for each assessment instrument are made, using the grading criteria given in the EPA plan for each standard. An overall provisional grade for the EPA is calculated using the rubrics contained in the EPA plan for the standard.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

The overriding purpose of the IQA process is to verify that IE assessment decisions are the product of sound assessment practice, recorded correctly and meet the requirements of the FDQ EPA service and the relevant external quality assurance body. The IQA has an important role to play in ensuring:

- i. the integrity of IE assessment decision and practices
- ii. the consistency and validity of assessment decisions across employers
- iii. the consistency in interpreting the assessment plan/criteria to ensure valid and reliable assessment decisions
- iv. the requirements for the completion and retention of data and records are met
- v. the equality of access to assessment

A wide range of sampling techniques is used to monitor all of the processes in the EPA to measure the comparability and consistency of assessment decisions. This is a major part of the internal quality assurance function and is essential to maintaining high quality assessment.

All IEs take part in a performance management programme where assessment performance is reviewed, and any support needs are identified.

Moderation of Results

FDQ's EPAO moderation process ensures fairness, accuracy and consistency in end-point assessment judgements and the provision of results. The moderation process ensures an accurate reflection of performance that can be relied upon by apprentices, employers and training providers, as well as the EQA regulatory body.

FDQ's Chief Moderator (CM) is responsible for conducting the moderation process, which is two-fold:

- i. To ensure the consistency of marking across all components, and consistency of assessment for all apprentices
- ii. To ensure that the marking across all components conforms to the assessment criteria specified in the standard.

The Chief Moderator moderates the EPA decisions using professional judgement to ensure outcomes are valid. A risk-based approach to moderation is adopted with at least 20% sampling per year per standard. Trends and issues are collated, reviewed and actioned by the EPA Manager at standardisation meetings. The quality of assessment practice is improved consistently through moderation reporting on a one-to-one basis and at standardisation meetings, which highlights any areas for improvement in IE judgments.

The Chief Moderator has extensive knowledge and experience in the food and drink industry as well as the right level of assessor qualifications. In addition to this, our Chief Moderator has held previous teaching / awarding positions relevant to the food industry.

External Quality Assurance (EQA)

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has a role overseeing external quality assurance across all EQA providers to ensure quality, consistency and credibility of EQA, as well as acting as an EQA body in its own right. Each EPA is externally quality assured by an independent body, appointed by the trailblazer group for each apprenticeship standard. FDQ works with several different EQA bodies, including IfATE, the Worshipful Company of Butchers and Ofqual. Each EQA body carries out extensive and robust quality assurance FDQ's EPA instruments and assessment resources, and samples several full EPAs across the range of apprenticeship standards.

Awarding of Results

After the full assessment process has been completed, including moderation of results, the apprentice receives their grade from FDQ, via their employer. A results statement is issued giving details of achievement in each of the assessment instruments, and an overall apprenticeship grade.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) manages the operational delivery of certificates for Standards, working with employers and EPAOs. FDQ complies with the certification instructions of the ESFA to ensure the final achievement of the apprenticeship is formally recognised.

Feedback

Where fail is the overall result of the EPA, the EPAO will provide brief constructive feedback to the apprentice that may improve performance for a re-sit or re-take in the element of the EPA that resulted in fail. The feedback will align to the relevant knowledge, skills or behaviour applicable from the standard. This information can be used constructively by the employer and/or provider to assist any re-sit/re-take activities.

Re-sits and Re-takes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit or re-take. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does.

There is no limit on the number of re-sits/re-takes.

Some apprenticeship standards have specific guidance on re-sit/re-take requirements, for example Fishmonger standard states that if the practical observation is re-sat or re-taken, supplementary evidence originally submitted and assessed as a pass or outstanding, need not be

reassessed and the original assessment decision on that evidence will be retained. The apprentice can however choose to submit new (replacement) supplementary evidence with the agreement of their independent examiner.

Appeals

FDQ is committed to providing the highest levels of service to its employers, training providers and apprentices. It anticipates that issues or complaints can be resolved through the complaints or enquiries procedures and these procedures will be followed in the first instance.

However, in the event that an apprentice remains dissatisfied having exhausted these procedures, they have recourse to the appeals process, using FDQ's Appeals Procedure available at www.fdq.org.uk

FDQ establishes and maintains robust procedures for handling complaints and appeals and ensures that: complaints and appeals are dealt with in a fair and timely manner; the specific needs and interests of apprentices are considered and protected; and that they are kept informed of progress. In the case of an appeal, FDQ will notify apprentices of any outcomes reached and, where appropriate, any further action that is to be taken.