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Apprenticeship Standards – Mock End-Point Assessment Project

Written by the Association of Colleges as
part of the Future Apprenticeships
programme
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1. Executive summary

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) commissioned and funded the Association of Colleges (AoC) to set-up, support and report on a series of mock end-point assessments (EPAs) as part of the Future Apprenticeships programme. The objective was to test and trial apprenticeship end-point assessments before a major rollout, and obtain learning that could be shared more widely. This executive summary provides an overview of the emerging findings from this work.

- **Using mock or 'rehearsal' assessments is a valuable implementation tool.** This project indicates that using mock assessments to help plan, test and implement EPAs is extremely valuable. Feedback on the experience has been positive, and those delivering the EPA (assessment organisations) were able to take away valuable lessons and action points to implement prior to a full rollout.
Emerging finding: EPA organisations may find it helpful to undertake mock assessment activities prior to launch. Where this is not possible, a 'real pilot' with a small number of standard apprentices should be undertaken before a wider rollout.
- **Many do not feel ready for mock assessment activity.** It was clear that many of the participants we spoke to during the set-up phase did not feel ready to undertake a mock EPA (in early summer 2016). However, all agreed that it was a concept that they would find helpful. This indicates that, for some standards, preparation for EPAs is still some way off, which may be a concern.
Emerging finding: This project could usefully be repeated in late 2016/early 2017 when more standards are available and a greater number of participants are ready to be involved. We would also encourage assessment organisations and the relevant stakeholders to undertake mock assessment activity as early as possible, even if they do not feel completely 'ready'. Participants made it clear that the mock activity can drive implementation and provide a firm plan for full delivery.

- **Apprentices need to be well informed about the end-to-end EPA process.** Feedback from apprentices involved in this trial indicates that they need a clearer understanding of the EPA process. This includes what is expected of them during the EPA, as well as information regarding next steps once the EPA is completed.
Emerging finding: EPA organisations should ensure that apprentices are provided with a full overview of the EPA process – this may come in the form of a process chart or expected timeline. It is important that this includes steps and timescales following completion of the EPA (e.g. marking, grading, external quality assurance (QA) and applying for certificates).
- **Roles and responsibilities need to be fully detailed.** Although roles and responsibilities for those involved in the EPA are normally summarised in the assessment plan, it is clear that further detail is required at an operational level to ensure that the EPA runs smoothly. This is particularly important for training organisations, which need to better understand their role in the process. This detail will also support pricing discussions with employers.
Emerging finding: It would be helpful for EPA organisations to publish clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities within the EPA, and make these readily available to training organisations.
- **Clear systems and processes leading up to EPA are required.** Information and guidance provided in advance of the EPA should be clear and comprehensive so that all involved know what to expect and what their role is.
Emerging finding: It is suggested that assessment organisations develop a checklist of administrative and operational tasks prior to the EPA, to avoid delays and potential issues.
- **Clarity of EPA costs.** Findings from the project show that stakeholders would like greater clarity and transparency around the cost of EPAs.
Emerging finding: Assessment organisations should regularly review and make available details of EPA costs.

2. Introduction and background

This project was established as part of the Future Apprenticeships programme, which provides support to providers to deliver apprenticeships. The apprenticeship reforms, implemented on the back of the [Richard Review](#), created a shift away from on-programme assessment for apprenticeships to competence being fully assessed by an end-point assessment (EPA). These EPAs were designed by trailblazer employer groups, who also created the new apprenticeship standard for that particular occupation. The apprenticeship standard describes the skills, knowledge and behaviours an apprentice needs to acquire in order to be competent in their job. The assessment plan defines how that competence should be assessed in the EPA.

The move to EPA marks a significant shift in apprenticeships policy – and a very new way of working for all involved. It was important, therefore, to test the EPA process to support successful implementation.

3. Mock end-point assessment project objectives

The Association of Colleges (AoC) was commissioned to set-up, support and report on a series of mock EPAs. The key objective was to test and trial EPAs before a full rollout, and to obtain learning that could be shared more widely. The project ran over the course of summer 2016.

Participants in the project established mock EPAs for a small number of apprentices who were towards the end of their training (some apprentices were studying against standards and some on closely related frameworks). These ‘apprentices’ were put through an EPA that was as close to ‘real’ conditions as possible. The aim was to test the planning, organisation, process and delivery of the EPA. Learning was obtained by surveying all stakeholders involved in the mock EPA; further in-depth feedback was gathered from the project leads.

4. Project set-up and design

Project stages



4.1. Sourcing the apprenticeship standards

The first piece of work was to find stakeholders involved in apprenticeship standards that were willing and able to run a mock EPA. It quickly became clear there were a limited number that were progressed enough to enable them to deliver the EPA – even in mock format.

Through a combination of desk research and interviews with stakeholders involved in the trailblazer process (including professional and sector bodies, training providers, awarding organisations, sector skills councils, EPA organisations and employers) we identified three apprenticeship assessment organisations to take part in the project.

The organisations involved in the mock EPA project and the standards covered were:

- **Junior Journalist** apprenticeship standard – led by **National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)**.
- **Butcher** apprenticeship standard – led by **Food and Drink Qualifications Ltd (FDQ)**.
- **Power Network Craftsperson** apprenticeship standard – led by **Energy and Utility (EU) Skills**.¹

All of the partners and individuals involved and observing were given the opportunity to complete the project survey following the conclusion of the EPA.

All published standard and assessment plans can be found on the [Skills Funding Agency website](#).

¹ Please note that Power Network Craftsperson apprentices were undertaking a live pilot of the new apprenticeship standard and the research is based on this, not a mock EPA.

4.2. Set-up and running of the mock EPA

Project leads recruited the required partners to deliver the mock EPA. Partners included employers, training providers, mock 'apprentices' and assessors².

Junior Journalist apprenticeship standard – led by National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)

Standard and assessment overview

This Level 3 apprenticeship is designed for the Junior Journalist role, supporting apprentices to work in a number of different environments, including newspapers, magazines, broadcasting and online.

The mock project was supported by the NCTJ, the professional training body for the industry. The approach includes completion of a recognised, industry-standard qualification, the NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism.

The Junior Journalist EPA has two main elements:

- A work-related project.
- Assessment of the apprentice's qualities (behaviours).

Mock end-point assessment overview

The partners sourced by NCTJ were:

- Lambeth College (training organisation) – an established delivery partner of NCTJ qualifications and the existing apprenticeship framework.
- Three employers from the sector – KM Media Group, Sky Sports News and Haymarket Media Group, all of whom were already engaged as part of the trailblazer group that developed the apprenticeship.
- Three mock 'apprentices', one from each of the employers – these individuals were due to complete the existing journalism apprenticeship framework in September 2016 and have completed the NCTJ Diploma in Journalism, which forms part of the new apprenticeship standard. They are also working in jobs aligned to the standard.
- An independent assessor and quality assurance lead.

² As the Power Network Craftsperson pilot EPA had already taken place, the project leads' role was to gain agreement from stakeholders to take part in the research and follow that through to completion.

Butcher apprenticeship standard – led by FDQ

Standard and assessment overview

This Level 2 apprenticeship is designed to support individuals to become competent in the highly skilled butchery profession. On completion of the apprenticeship butchers will have gained the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for a range of careers in the industry. The standard is a core and options model, plus additional specialist competencies depending on whether the apprentice works in a retail or meat processing setting.

The Butcher EPA features three elements:

- Theory of Butchery Test.
- Butchery Practical Skills Test.
- Vocational competence discussion, including their log book.

Mock end-point assessment overview

The mock EPA project was supported by FDQ, and focused on the delivery of the Butchery Practical Skills Test element of the EPA. The other two components of the Butcher EPA were not part of this work.

The partners sourced by FDQ to support the delivery of the mock EPA were:

- Leeds City College, acting as the assessment centre – an established delivery partner of the existing apprenticeship framework. Their role was to provide specialist assessment facilities for the practical test. They also helped to source employers and mock apprentices.
- Three employers from the sector: Keelham Hall Farm Shop, Ainsty Farm Shop and McGee's.
- Four mock apprentices, from the above employers (two from Keelham Hall). Three were apprentices undertaking the existing Butchery apprenticeship framework; the fourth had completed the apprenticeship framework (now a skilled worker). All worked in roles aligned with the new Butchery standard (retail specialism).
- An independent assessor provided by the Institute of Meat.

On the day of the assessment there were additional observers:

- FDQ External Quality Assurance Consultant – observing from a quality assurance perspective in preparation for full delivery.

- FDQ Project Manager who will be designing the three elements of the full EPA.
- Representatives from Dunbia and Cranswick, two large employers who will be using the apprenticeship standard.

Power Network Craftsperson apprenticeship standard - led by Energy and Utility (EU) Skills

Standard and assessment overview

This Level 3 apprenticeship is designed for individuals who have responsibility for the safe construction, maintenance and repair of the UK's electrical power network. The standard is a core and options model plus three additional specialist competencies that are dependent on whether the apprentice works on overhead lines, underground cables or in substation fitting.

Energy and Utility (EU) Skills supported this project. The Energy and Efficiency Independent Assessment Service (EEIAS) is the assessment and assurance arm of EU Skills, and is also the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) approved independent assessment organisation.

The Power Network Craftsperson EPA has three elements:

- Trade test (final six months).
- Technical interview (final month).
- Behaviours and progress final assessments (minimum of two during the EPA period).

There is also a final decision panel that reviews evidence from the three EPA elements. The panel determines final achievements and grading. It is made up of two technical experts who are independent of the apprentices. The experts are drawn from employers³ other than those of the apprentices, and one acts as the chair of the panel. A representative from the apprentices' employer is also present. During the pilot independent observers from other employers were also involved.

³ The second independent panel member is either an independent employer or a PEI (professional body) representative.

Mock EPA overview

It is important to note that unlike the Junior Journalism and Butcher mock assessment projects, the evidence for Power Network Craftsperson is based on real EPAs undertaken by the first Power Network Craftsperson apprentices. They are now the first 'completers' of any of the trailblazer apprenticeship standards. The EEIAS, on behalf of EU Skills, undertook this pilot with an initially registered cohort of 17 apprentices – from which 15 were taken forward into independent EPA. The EEIAS agreed to share their results and survey the participants to inform this project.

As the approved SFA assessment organisation, EU Skills delivered the EPAs with the following partners:

- UK Power Network – employer of all 15 apprentices.
- Independent assessors – technical experts appointed by EU Skills and drawn from employers in the power sector to deliver the components of the EPA.
- Final decision panel – chaired by independent employer Northern Power Grid and supported by another employer, Northern Ireland Electricity, with a third employer, SSE, acting as an additional independent employer observer.
- Auditors employed by EU Skills – who quality assured the assessors throughout the process and presented their findings to the panel.

4.3. Survey of project participants

A survey of participants was undertaken and detailed feedback gathered from the project leads.

The survey

The survey was completed online and took around 10-15 minutes to complete and included closed and open questions to allow participants to provide more detailed feedback where appropriate. A copy of the survey can be found in appendix 1.

The survey questions covered three different elements of the EPA:

1. Preparation for the EPA.
2. The delivery process of the EPA.
3. Grading and feedback.

The 50 respondents were asked tailored questions, dependent on their category:

- Independent assessment organisation or assessor.
- Employers (both with employees involved in the assessment and observers to the process).
- Training organisations.
- Apprentices (to include all those who undertook the assessment as an apprentice, whether mock or real).

Feedback from project leads

In addition to completing the online survey, project leads also took part in a facilitated telephone discussion to elaborate on their survey responses.

The discussions focused on the outcomes and actions arising from the project. The questions discussed included:

- What can be improved?
- What went well?
- What are the key actions to be taken forward?
- What are the next steps?.

4.4. Reporting

The emerging findings in the report are taken from a combination of the survey results and facilitated discussions with project leads, plus insights gained during the project by AoC project managers. It is worth noting that respondent numbers are low due to the nature of the project and therefore the results are qualitative, which provides indicative insights. The project leads from each standard were given the opportunity to review and feedback on this report prior to publication.

5. Emerging findings

This section reports the emerging findings from the work and considerations for next steps. More sector and standard specific findings can be found in appendix 2.

5.1. Preparation for the EPA

When asked about their overall impression of the preparation of the EPA, the vast majority⁴ of respondents had a good or very good impression. This was similar across all three standards. Satisfaction was also generally high across each of the respondent types, although results were slightly less positive among apprentices⁵.

Most respondents were satisfied they had sufficient time to prepare and as a result felt equipped for the EPA.

The majority of apprentices felt prepared when going into the EPA. There is some indication, particularly among Power Network Craftsperson⁶ mock apprentices, that they could have been more prepared, but this is understandable given this was the 'real' assessment, as opposed to a potentially less important mock.

Across all standards, a significant proportion of apprentices said they spent about one week preparing for the EPA. It is notable, however, that a quarter of apprentices were not sure how long they spent on their preparations.

The majority of employers felt enough preparation time was provided, and that their apprentices were sufficiently equipped for the EPA. However two employers did not feel adequately prepared⁷, which may indicate an area where further, more detailed guidance and information is required.

⁴ When asked: 'On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the preparation for the end-point assessment (EPA)? (with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good'),' 88% of respondents responded either 4 or 5 (based on the total sample).

⁵ Of the 17 apprentice respondents, six (all from Power Network Craftsperson), rated a 3 for this question – with all other respondents scoring 4 or 5.

⁶ Three of the ten Power Network Craftsperson apprentices answered 'neither agree nor disagree' when asked about having enough time to prepare; three also answered the same when asked if they were fully prepared, with one apprentice answering 'slightly disagree'.

⁷ When asked if they were 'kept fully informed of preparations for the EPA and were prepared as an employer', two employers responded 'slightly disagree'.

Assessment organisations and/or assessors and training providers⁸ also felt that preparation time was sufficient.

All respondents emphasised the importance of the employer in preparation activities for the EPA⁹. However, respondents noted a blended approach to preparation, with *'a combination of all listed'* used.

Apprentices were more likely than other respondents to recognise the support they received from their training provider to prepare for the EPA¹⁰; however, only half of all apprentice respondents noted this. It is conceivable that in a real EPA situation this will increase substantially, as provider help was more prevalent among the 'real' Power Network Craftsperson apprentices. Notably, results from the Power Network Craftsperson and Butcher standards indicated that rehearsal assessment activities took place in preparation, including, for example, tutor-led mock activities or practice papers.

The provision of information about all aspects and stages of the EPA was a theme throughout the research findings. One Junior Journalism apprentice emphasised the need for information to be provided at an earlier stage:

"I'm not sure if the process I went through is exactly the same as it will be finally, but the EPA is something that should be mentioned right at the start of the course so apprentices are aware what's required for it. Employers should also be told what is required to make sure they give as much opportunity as possible to help the apprentice complete the necessary tasks. A course tutor should also spend some time with each person individually to draw their ideas together and make sure they fully understand what is required."

The assessment organisation for the Junior Journalism standard expressed a similar view:

"It is vitally important the candidate, the training provider and the employer know exactly what is required from the EPA- down to the last detail. All parties need to think how an end-point project will demonstrate ALL the requirements of the apprenticeship standard."

⁸ All but one assessment organisation representative and one training provider replied 'slightly agree/entirely agree' to these questions (the remaining replied 'neither agree nor disagree').

⁹ At least 75% of respondents across all respondent types replied 'help from employer'.

¹⁰ 56% of apprentice respondents said they had 'help from the training provider'.

A Butchery employer explained the kind of information needed in order to fully prepare:

"More knowledge for the candidate to learn beforehand, such as yields, white fat, clean bones, the basics are covered on all aspects, builds confidence into the candidates."

Junior Journalist apprentices are required to complete a project plan that is approved by the assessment organisation before they start their project. This ensures that the project covers the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours in the standard. A template was provided for this purpose; however, a key learning for the assessment organisation was that it needed to be more detailed to ensure that apprentices knew what to include in the plan.

One of the Junior Journalist apprentices explained:

"I think the spec given worked well and was specific in what skills we needed to show we had learnt. However, with the time it took me to complete the forms etc., I worry this could potentially affect the amount of time spent revising for exams if they were around the same time. Therefore affecting your grades."

Apprentices following the new Junior Journalist standard will need to undertake their diploma before starting the EPA. This emphasises the need for apprentices to be aware of all requirements upfront so they can plan their time effectively.

From the feedback session with the Power Network Craftsperson project lead it was clear that the time needed to plan ahead of the EPA should not be underestimated. Administrative and operational elements need to be factored in. For example, assessment organisations should have a process in place to check English and maths eligibility and confirm any mandatory qualifications. A 60-day notice period has been implemented, where training providers and employers should notify the assessment organisation of a cohort of apprentices approaching the EPA gateway to allow for these actions to be completed. This period also allows for any reasonable adjustments to be made for apprentices with special requirements.

This was also true for Junior Journalism apprentices, where various operational elements came to light – often around deciding whose role

something was – which in practice were quite small but helped smooth the process.

Summary: preparation of the EPA

When setting up this project and confirming participants to take part, it was clear that many did not feel ready to undertake a mock EPA (in early summer 2016). However, all agreed that it was a concept they would find helpful. This indicates that, for some standards, preparation for EPAs is still some way off, which may be a concern.

Emerging finding: This project could usefully be repeated in late 2016/early 2017 when more standards/participants are ready to be involved. We would also encourage assessment organisations and the relevant stakeholders to undertake mock assessment activity as early as possible, even if they do not feel completely 'ready'. Participants made it clear that the mock activity can drive implementation and provide a sharper plan for full delivery.

- Overall, the majority of respondents were satisfied with their preparation for EPAs; however, there were some areas that could be improved in the future.
- It is clear that preparation for EPAs is important and should be factored into the information and timing plans given to apprentices and other key stakeholders.
- Information provided in advance of the EPAs should be clear and comprehensive so that all involved know what to expect and what their role is.

Emerging finding: It is suggested that assessment organisations develop a checklist of administrative and operational tasks prior to the EPA to avoid delays and issues.

5.2. During the EPA process

Overall impressions of the EPA were very good¹¹. More than three quarters of all respondents had a good overall impression. This result is similar

¹¹ When asked the question: 'On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the end-point assessment (EPA) during the process? (with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')', 78% of respondents answered either 4 or 5 (based on the total sample).

across all respondent types and is generally true for each of the three standards involved. However, impressions were slightly more negative for the Junior Journalist standard ¹². Across all standards there is an indication that results were slightly lower among apprentices than other types of respondent, with only half rating it good or very good (four or five on the scale), and the rest giving an average score of three. In both cases, however, there is no indication of dissatisfaction.

A Power Network Craftsperson apprentice commented:

"I think everything went very well and smooth."

We asked respondents how organised they felt the EPA was and how smoothly it ran. Results indicate that the majority of respondents were happy with the organisation. The results were fairly consistent across standards and respondent types. However, there was an indication from the verbatim comments that there were elements of the Power Network Craftsperson EPA that could have been improved.

One apprentice said:

"As our group of apprentices were the first within the company to do this course, some of us found it difficult to keep up with the changes/tweaks made to fulfil the pass criteria. This hopefully won't be a problem for future participants as all kinks should have been ironed out by us and yourselves."

A Power Network Craftsperson employer said:

"Because the Power Apprenticeship EPA was the first of its kind we were having to make decisions as we went along. I think we will be in a much better position the second time around."

Another Power Network Craftsperson employer noted:

"Although there was plenty of time given prior to the EPA, due to [the] development of the process and requirements expected, extra work and documents were required to be completed at short notice. This has however been supported by the lessons learnt and will support future EPAs to run more smoothly."

¹² Of the 11 respondents for the Junior Journalist standard, four responded 3 to the above question.

The feedback suggests that any issues were due to the fact that this was a new project in its early stages. This reiterates the need to pilot EPA activities to iron out any issues.

The Power Network Craftsperson assessment organisation commented:
“This was the first EPA ever undertaken by the employer in the sector so naturally there have been minor process improvements identified which will be adopted by future employers as the process becomes embedded across the sector.”

Summary: during the EPA process

- Overall, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the EPA process. However, it is clear that lessons need to be learnt the first time an EPA is run, and improvements made for future delivery.
- It was clear that participants who took part in a mock EPA or pilot were aware of this fact, and understood that the process and delivery will be refined in the future.
- Preparation for the EPA is important, and should be factored into the information and timing plans given to apprentices and other key stakeholders at the start of the apprenticeship.
- It is clear that using mock assessments to help plan, test and implement EPAs is extremely valuable. Feedback on the experience was positive across all standards and respondent groups, and those delivering the EPA (assessment organisations), were able to take away valuable lessons and action points to put in place ahead of a full rollout.

Emerging finding: EPA organisations may find undertaking mock assessment activities helpful. Where this is not possible a ‘real pilot’, with a small number of apprentices on the standard, should be undertaken before a wider rollout.

- Although roles and responsibilities for those involved in EPA assessment are normally summarised in the assessment plan it is clear that more detail is required at an operational level to ensure that the EPA runs smoothly. This is particularly important for training organisations, which need to better understand their role in the process. This detail will also support pricing discussions with employers.

Emerging finding: It would be useful for EPA organisations to publish clear guidance on their roles and responsibilities within the EPA and make these readily available to training organisations.

5.3. Grading and feedback

While the overall response to feedback and grading was positive, it was the weakest scoring area of the survey. A third of respondents gave it an average rating¹³. This can be attributed to a lack of information at the outset of the project and limited understanding of this stage of the EPA process. It should be acknowledged, however, that detailed feedback and grading was not possible as part of the pilot, as this would take place post the EPA and verification process, so this may be reflected in the feedback.

The findings show that apprentices did not understand the timescales and process that followed completion of the EPA. Almost half of the apprentices were unsure as to what would happen next, and more than a quarter were unaware of the timescales for results and grading.¹⁴

A Power Network Craftsperson apprentice stated:

"I would like to have known what level/grade I attained on all submitted work, as a lot of effort/hard work had gone into all assignments."

A Butcher apprentice commented:

"I have not received a grade."

It appears that this issue centres on a lack of understanding and information about when apprentices will receive feedback and grades, rather than the actual process not having taken place. Apprentices did not appear to understand the process and its various stages with regards to marking and grading. Not all respondents expressed the same concerns. Although two employers from the Power Network Craftsperson standard felt that the grading criteria needed clarification, one said:

"The measurement of Pass/Distinction based on behaviours needs to be much clearer, this has been identified in the lessons learnt."

¹³ When asked: 'On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the feedback and grading (where known) of the end-point assessment (EPA)? (With 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good'), 69% of respondents rated it either 4 or 5; however, 30% rated it 3.

¹⁴ When asked if they agree or disagree with the statement 'I was made aware of the timescales for results and grades and how to gain my certificate', five of the 16 apprentice respondents replied 'slightly or entirely disagree'. Similarly, for 'when I had finished the EPA I knew exactly what would happen next', seven of the 16 responded 'slightly or entirely disagree'.

The need for clarification around marking and grading also emerged in discussions with project leads. For example, a key learning point for the Junior Journalist assessment organisation was to establish clear rules over whether or not it was permissible for an assessor to ask for further clarification once a project was submitted, as well as the rules surrounding retakes. In contrast, the Power Network Craftsperson assessment body had developed a 'prompting scale' for EPA interviews to assist with marking. They will also be developing a 'major and minor infringements' policy for the EPA so there is a clear understanding of when an apprentice who may have failed an element of the EPA can continue through the process, allowing constructive feedback for a future retake.

For some employers, value for money was an area of concern. The survey results indicate that employers need further evidence of cost implications before they can say whether the EPA is good value for money¹⁵.

One Butcher employer said:

"The assessor seems good, not sure it is value for money just yet."

A Power Network Craftsperson employer asked:

"Costings should be more clearly set out; I am currently confused as to where/why the money was required?"

This suggests that more information needs to be made available to demonstrate the scope of EPAs and explain the costs, especially in terms of employers who are not directly involved in delivery, but are contributing financially.

It was also apparent that trialling EPAs helps to demonstrate the true financial implications of the scheme. For example, the mock Butcher EPA highlighted the substantial cost of the meat cuts needed for practical assessment, which also vary seasonally. This is something that an assessment organisation needs to review and plan for.

Summary: grading and feedback

- It is clear that marking and grading is important and that establishing the planning, tools and procedures is key. Mock and pilot EPAs are

¹⁵ When asked whether they agreed with the statement 'I feel like the EPA represents good value for money', six of the 14 employers respondents stated 'neither agree nor disagree', with a further three stating 'slightly disagree'.

an ideal way to refine these processes and identify where further work is required.

- Research suggests that a key area for further improvement is the clarity of information provided on what happens following the EPA. This includes timescales and processes for feedback to apprentices regarding marking and grading. Understandably, apprentices were keen to receive this information. There was a feeling that they were not going to receive their grading, when in fact a process needed to be completed before the results could be shared.
- Information provided in advance of the EPA should be clear and comprehensive so that all involved know what to expect and what their role is. Apprentices need to be given more information about the EPA process, including what is expected from them during the EPA. Further clarity is also needed once the EPA is completed.
Emerging finding: EPA organisations should ensure that apprentices are provided with a full overview of the EPA process – this may come in the form of a process chart or expected timeline. It is important that this includes steps and timescales following completion of the EPA (e.g. marking, grading, external quality assurance (QA) and applying for certificates).
- Costs of the EPA were an area where respondents stated that further information would be useful. It is understandable that at this early stage of delivery exact costs are uncertain, particularly as they may reduce once apprentice numbers grow or the process embeds. However, feedback indicates a need for improved understanding and transparency regarding the financial implications of EPA – particularly for employers and training providers.
Emerging finding: Assessment organisations should regularly review and make available details of EPA costs.

6. Conclusion

The overwhelmingly positive feedback collected demonstrates that mock and pilot EPAs are an important tool in the development of a successful and high quality EPA rollout. The project leads were happy to have been involved and felt it was an invaluable learning experience that will enable more focused action planning going forward.

FDQ said:

"All in all a very worthwhile event, thanks for the mock assessment opportunity."

A colleague from NCTJ said:

"Planning is everything...and none more so than with end-point assessments. All parties must understand the part they play in the process and the high levels of detail required. Leave nothing to chance. Spell it out in the documentation."

One employer commented:

"Great to see it in practice, the day was well organised at a first class venue. Looking forward to working close[ly] on this scheme to get us up and running with our butchery scheme. Thanks for the invite it was well worth it."

The project also demonstrated the value of the EPA itself. Feedback suggests that each of the EPAs featured in this project were well received and clearly demonstrated the competence of the apprentices who took part.

A Junior Journalist apprentice (who had experienced the framework assessment approach) said:

"It's a good idea because it forces apprentices to show work, rather than just ticking boxes."

The feedback from the Power Network Craftsperson standard was very positive about the new employer-led approach. At the final employer panel, it was clear that employers were passionate about ensuring the EPA was a robust and high quality assessment for all apprentices in the sector. One employer commented:

"The notion of employer ownership of skills – it works!"

It is hoped that this project will focus the minds of others involved in EPA implementation, and inspire them to undertake their own mock and pilot activity using the findings presented in this report. The results suggest that, in general EPAs themselves are a positive move that adds further quality to apprenticeships.

7. Acknowledgements

The success of the mock EPA project can be attributed to a lot of hard work from those involved, of which there were many.

We would like to thank all of the stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery of the mock assessments.

Special thanks to the project leads for each of the standards:

- Terry Fennel, Group Operations Director at FDQ.
- Joanne Butcher, Chief Executive and Lyn Jones, Head of Qualifications at NCTJ.
- Jacqueline Hall, Head of Assessment Services at EU Skills.

We would also like to congratulate EU Skills, UK Power Network and the 15 Power Network Craftsperson apprentices, who have now become the first to graduate from an apprenticeship standard. A great achievement for all involved.

Appendix 1

Survey questions



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Mock End Point Assessment Survey, Summer 2016

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. All results will be anonymised and we will use the findings to help improve understanding of the end point assessment process across all apprenticeship standards. The survey is split into three sections:

- Preparation for end point assessment
- Execution of end point assessment and
- Overall evaluation of the end point assessment process

We will be asking for feedback from the following groups of people:

- Apprentice
- Employer
- Assessment Organisation (or assessor)
- Training Delivery Organisation
- Already Skilled worker (i.e. someone who has completed their apprenticeship in the past)

The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. Please submit your response by 5pm on Tuesday 28 June 2016. If you have any queries, please contact Tammie Harwin (email: tammie.harwin@outlook.com or telephone: 07843 449 484)

Thank you for your time. Your details will remain strictly anonymous.



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Mock End Point Assessment Survey, Summer 2016

Respondent information

1. Contact details

Contact name:

Email:

2. Which standard is your mock assessment covering?

- Butcher
- Junior Journalist
- Power Network Craftsperson
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

3. Which of the following categories best describes who you are?

(Please note your answer to this question will determine the subsequent questions)

- Apprentice
- Employer
- Assessment Organisation (or assessor)
- Training Delivery Organisation
- Already Skilled Worker (i.e. someone who has completed their apprenticeship in the past)



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Apprentices

Preparation

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the preparation for the end point assessment (EPA)?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

2. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Entirely disagree Slightly disagree Neither agree nor disagree Slightly agree Entirely agree

I was given enough time to prepare for the EPA. (This is time specifically dedicated to preparing you for the EPA, rather than your apprenticeship training prior to it)

I felt fully prepared for my EPA

3. What is the estimated amount of time taken to prepare specifically for the EPA?

- None
- 1-2 days
- Up to 1 week
- More than 1 week
- Not sure

4. What did the preparation include?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Tutor led 'mock' activities
- Self help guide
- Help from employer
- Help from assessment organisation
- Help from training provider
- Practice papers/assignments/activities undertaken at work
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

5. Thinking about any preparation that you undertook, do you have any point(s) that you would like to make?

(e.g. anything you think could have been done better, or that worked well)

Execution

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the end point assessment (EPA) during the process?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

7. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
It was well organised and ran smoothly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I knew exactly what to expect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA covered all the knowledge, skills and behaviours covered by the standard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt challenged by the EPA, but able to handle it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everything that I needed to complete each task was available to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't think I would have been successful in the EPA if I was not fully competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the activities that were graded would readily identify those who had achieved more than a pass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:

Evaluation

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the feedback and grading (where known) of the end point assessment (EPA)?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

9. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
I got feedback on my performance straight away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was made aware of the timescales for results and grades and how to gain my certificate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I agreed with the grade that I was given (if known)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA process was fair and objective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I had finished the EPA I knew exactly what would happen next	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA process added value to my apprenticeship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:



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Employers

Preparation

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the preparation for the end point assessment (EPA)?
(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

2. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
Enough time was given to prepare for the EPA. (This is time specifically dedicated to preparing for the EPA, rather than apprenticeship training prior to it.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My apprentices were fully prepared for the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was kept fully informed of preparations for the EPA and was prepared as an employer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What is the estimated amount of time taken by all parties to prepare the apprentices specifically for the EPA?

- None
- 1-2 days
- Up to 1 week
- More than 1 week
- Not sure

4. What did the apprentices preparation include?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Tutor led 'mock' activities
- Self help guide
- Help from employer
- Help from assessment organisation
- Practice papers/assignments/activities undertaken at work
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

5. Thinking about the preparation for the EPA, do you have any point(s) that you would like to make? (e.g. anything you think could have been done better, or that worked well)

Execution

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the end point assessment (EPA) during the process?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

7. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
It was well organised and ran smoothly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the apprentices and I knew what to expect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA covered all the knowledge, skills and behaviours covered by the standard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EPA challenged the apprentices, but no more than was needed to demonstrate competence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everything that was needed to complete each task was readily available to the apprentice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the EPA would readily identify those who were not fully competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the activities that were graded would readily identify those who had achieved more than a pass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:

Evaluation

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the feedback, evaluation and grading (where known) of the end point assessment (EPA)?
(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

9. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
My apprentices were given feedback on their performance throughout the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understood the timeframe for feedback and grading for my apprentices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I agreed with the grades that were given (where known)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA process was fair and objective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that this EPA will be easy for others to replicate consistently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA added value to the apprenticeship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that the EPA process represents good value for money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt my role as employer was appropriate in the EPA process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:



Mock End Point Assessment Survey, Summer 2016

Assessment organisations (or assessor)

Preparation

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the preparation for the end point assessment (EPA)?
(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

2. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
We (the assessment organisation) worked with the training provider to ensure enough time was given to prepare apprentices for the EPA. (This is time specifically dedicated to preparing for the EPA, rather than apprenticeship training.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The apprentices were fully prepared for the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was kept fully informed/ensured all were informed of preparations for the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What is the estimated amount of time taken to prepare specifically for the EPA?

- None
- 1-2 days
- Up to 1 week
- More than 1 week
- Not sure

4. What did the apprentices preparation include?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Tutor led 'mock' activities
- Self help guide
- Help from employer
- Help from assessment organisation
- Practice papers/assignments/activities undertaken at work
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

5. What did your preparation, as the assessment organisation, include?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Liaison with the training provider
- Liaison with the employer
- Liaison with the venue
- Sourcing materials/venue
- Sourcing/liasing with assessors
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

6. Thinking about the preparation for the EPA, do you have any point(s) that you would like to make? (e.g. anything you think could have been done better, or that worked well, or that you will do different next time)

Execution

7. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the end point assessment (EPA) during the process?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

8. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
It was well organised and ran smoothly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the apprentices knew what to expect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA covered all the knowledge, skills and behaviours covered by the standard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EPA challenged the apprentices, but no more than was needed to demonstrate competence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everything that was needed to complete each task was readily available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the EPA would readily identify those who were not fully competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the activities that were graded would readily identify those who had achieved more than a pass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:

Evaluation

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the feedback, evaluation and grading of the end point assessment (EPA)?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

10. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
The apprentices were given feedback on their performance throughout the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear guidance was given to apprentices on the timeframe for feedback and grading	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA process was fair and objective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that this EPA will be easy for other assessment organisations to replicate consistently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA added value to the apprenticeship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that the EPA process represents good value for money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:



Mock End Point Assessment Survey, Summer 2016

Training Delivery Organisations

Preparation

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the preparation for the end point assessment (EPA)?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

2. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
Enough time was given to prepare for the EPA. (This is time specifically dedicated to preparing for the EPA, rather than apprenticeship training prior to that.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The apprentices were fully prepared for the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was kept fully informed/ensured all were informed of preparations for the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. What is the estimated amount of time taken to prepare specifically for the EPA?

- None
- 1-2 days
- Up to 1 week
- More than 1 week
- Not sure

4. What did the preparation activities include?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Tutor led 'mock' activities
- Self help guide
- Help from employer
- Help from assessment organisation
- Practice papers/assignments/activities undertaken at work
- Other

If 'Other', please specify:

5. Thinking about the preparation for the EPA, do you have any point(s) that you would like to make?
(e.g. anything you think could have been done better, or that worked well)

Execution

6. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the end point assessment (EPA) process in execution?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

7. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
It was well organised and ran smoothly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The apprentices knew exactly what to expect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA covered all the knowledge, skills and behaviours covered by the standard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EPA challenged the apprentices, but no more than was needed to demonstrate competence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everything that was needed to complete each task was readily available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the EPA would readily identify those who were not fully competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the activities that were graded would readily identify those who had achieved more than a pass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:

Evaluation

8. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the feedback, evaluation and grading (where known) of the end point assessment (EPA)?
(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

9. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
The apprentices were given feedback on their performance throughout the EPA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understood the timeframe for feedback and grading for the apprentices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I agreed with the grades that were given (where known)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA process was fair and objective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that this EPA will be easy for other assessment organisations to replicate consistently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA added value to the apprenticeship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that the EPA process represents good value for money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt my role as training provider was appropriate in the EPA process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:



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Already Skilled Workers (i.e. someone who has completed their apprenticeship in the past)

Preparation

Execution

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the end point assessment (EPA) during the process?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

2. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
It was well organised and ran smoothly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I knew exactly what to expect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA covered all the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to do the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EPA was challenging, but no more than was needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Everything that was needed to complete each task was readily available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the EPA would readily identify those who were not fully competent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was confident that the activities that were graded would readily identify those who had achieved more than a pass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The EPA was more challenging than the assessment process that I went through in my training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:

Evaluation

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, what was your overall impression of the feedback, evaluation and grading of the end point assessment (EPA)?

(with 1 being 'my overall impression was very poor' and 5 being 'my overall impression was very good')

- 1 (my overall impression was very poor)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (my overall impression was very good)

4. How far do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Entirely disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Entirely agree
I got feedback on my performance straight away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was made aware of the timescales for results and grades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I agreed with the grade that I was given (if known)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt the EPA process was fair and objective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that this EPA will be easy for others to replicate consistently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel the EPA adds value to the apprenticeship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel this assessment process is more effective at identifying competence than the process I went through	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please use this space for any additional comments:

Appendix 2

Detailed feedback from each apprenticeship standard's mock assessment

This section details some of the more standard or sector specific learnings fed back by the project leads for each EPA.

Junior Journalist

Key findings and feedback from discussions with Joanne Butcher, Chief Executive, and Lyn Jones, Head of Qualifications, NCTJ:

- Each apprentice was provided with a project plan template, which they were required to complete and submit to NCTJ as the assessment organisation.
- The project plan was signed by the employer prior to submission. The NCTJ assessor then approved the project plans (confirming that it would cover the required skills and knowledge for the standard) prior to the apprentice starting the project.
- The assessor needed to ask the apprentice to add more or different information to their proposed project plan. It was clear that the final project plan template needed to be more detailed, and provide additional guidance on what is required.
- The project plans had to be returned because the apprentice had not got their employer to sign the plan before submission. This element needs to be made clearer to apprentices, and consideration should be given as to whether the training provider should check the plans for such details before submission.
- NCTJ was clear that better guidance was needed on the training provider's role in the EPA. They plan to develop a training provider guidance document.
- NCTJ also noted that this would support cost negotiations with employers, as they will have a better idea of their end-to-end responsibilities.
- Once completed, the project was submitted to the independent assessor for marking. In several cases the assessor needed to go back to the apprentice to ask for further evidence. In particular, additional evidence of social media use was needed.

- NCTJ propose to use the projects submitted for this mock assessment as the basis for exemplar projects – this will help apprentices to understand the types of evidence required in the future.
- The fact the assessor in this mock environment had to ask for further information triggered further thought on the rules and retakes for the standard, as asking for evidence is unlikely to be permissible for real apprentice submissions.
- The qualities (behaviours) assessment was also completed by the assessor, and NCTJ provided marking criteria to the assessor for both elements.
- Clear deadlines should be given for each stage of the EPA process.
- NCTJ commented that the mock assessment has been an extremely useful exercise to help with implementation.

Butcher

Key findings and feedback from discussions with Terry Fennel, Group Operations Director, FDQ:

- This opportunity came at a great time for FDQ as they are running live EPAs in autumn 2016 with a first batch of apprentices. Terry Fennel felt that they had learnt a significant amount and gained an insight into EPA procedures and how they will be put into practice when they go live.
- Feedback from the Institute for Meat, who were the independent assessors, raised some issues, but overall they were happy with the process. The assessor from the institute felt that the brief needed more work, however. The specification needs to be clearer, for example the boning of meat was in some cases not a skill that apprentices had spent a lot of time on. It was recommended that they be given 10 weeks to practice these skills in future. It also became apparent that the cutting of meat needs to be refined, for example where it states '6mm strips', this is not a 'best guess' and has to be accurate. This may well be a deciding factor in terms of grading, and so it is important to clarify and define ahead of the rollout of the EPA. If, for instance, the apprentice has to cut 10 pieces at 6mm and they are all correct in size, they could be looking at a distinction. However, if they have not confidently refined the skill of cutting the meat, this could lead to a pass or even a fail for this section.

- The assessor queried the questioning of apprentices during the practical skills test. He suggested that this should be tailored and standardised for future skills tests. For example, one apprentice was on a borderline pass in the skills test, but when questioned he answered very well, which enabled him to achieve a pass.
- The requirement for apprentices to work tidily needs to be made clearer as part of the assessment. More work may be needed with apprentices approaching the EPA to ensure they have embedded these skills (e.g. awareness of their working environment, being tidy and attention to detail).
- When the EPA is rolled out, apprentices will be given their results within seven days. Assessors will look at all four components of the EPA (log book included) to evaluate and grade, and this will then be submitted to the FDQ moderation panel. They will then let the apprentice know the result and apply for certification, if achieved. The certificate will specify the meat they were assessed on.
- A meeting will take place in August 2016 to write up the details of the EPA, and the learnings from the mock assessment will play a key part in its development.
- It has been agreed that a 'preparation document' will be created and shared with employers and providers prior to the application of the EPA. A 'prepare for the knowledge test' booklet will also be developed for apprentices.
- Cost is a small concern, as the cost of the meat needed for the EPA can be very expensive, and varies at certain times of the year.
- Terry suggested that there should be more support for assessment organisations, and proposed other methods, such as workshops.
- Terry noted that that this had been a great opportunity and a real learning curve. One stakeholder observed that it was the first actual 'skills test' for apprentices he had seen: *"In short we are giving employers exactly what they want to see, and it is working"*.

Power Network Craftsperson

Key findings and feedback from discussions with Jacqueline Hall, Head of Assessment Services, EU Skills:

- Jacqueline felt that the final panel ran extremely well and was expertly managed and delivered. The assessors and employers involved were

professional in their approach, and EU Skills felt they were a shining example of employer-led assessment and standards.

- The panel was chaired by an employer independent of the apprentices (Northern Power Grid), and included an additional employer who acted as an independent observer (from SSE Southern Electric, SSE Scottish Hydro and SSE SWALEC). The chair was challenging and professional, providing constructive feedback. Jacqueline felt that the employers involved stepped up to the challenge and took it very seriously.
- A consensus report was completed following the final panel. Employers will rotate the panel roles, an approach that should work well. For example, UKPN – whose apprentices undertook the EPA – will assume the role of chair for another employer’s apprentices. The independent employer observers will then step up to chair, with ‘new blood’ coming through as more employers come on board.
- The assessors (technical experts) who delivered the other aspects of the EPA (trade test, technical interview, behaviours and progress review) were on hand during the final panel to answer any queries.
- The auditors, who are involved throughout the process and ‘assess the assessors’ during the three end-point elements, presented their findings to the final panel to add further supporting evidence and robustness. Their evidence included photos. The technical interviews were also recorded for the panel.
- Conflict of interest checks were undertaken on each panel member beforehand, and again on the day.
- Other learnings to note:
 - Consent forms from employers and apprentices should be completed before the EPA, in case apprentices aren’t contactable following the panel. Otherwise, certification may be delayed.
 - The introduction of a 60-day window for training providers or employers to flag to EU Skills that they have a group of apprentices approaching EPA. Implementing this notification will trigger a checklist of steps to be completed prior to the EPA and final panel. For example, checking apprentice eligibility criteria and English and maths requirements (i.e. minimum apprentice policy English and maths needed before an apprentice undertakes the EPA). This needs to be in place beforehand.
 - The 60-day window also allows for notification of any reasonable adjustments needed for a particular apprentice due to special requirements.

- Jacqueline felt that it was a good decision to hold the first final panel at the site where the apprentices were based. It meant they had access to supporting information and people involved if they had any queries. She recommends that if others have a significant cohort going through EPA in a particular area or employer site, it helps to run it together and on site where possible, especially in the early days of EPA delivery.
- One apprentice failed the trade test element and was sent home. This should not have happened – the individual should have been allowed to carry on with the assessment so they could receive practical feedback for a retake. As a result the ‘major and minor infringements’ policy was refined to deal with such occurrences (defining when an apprentice can or can’t carry on with the test or apprenticeship).
- A ‘prompting scale’ was developed: 1 to 3 for EPA interviews and discussions. This scale allowed the interviewer to record how much prompting they had to give to the apprentice.
- EU Skills designed a detailed process in MS Visio prior to the final panel, which worked well. They also ensured they had appropriate templates in place (scoring sheets, guidance documents, etc.)
- Practical learnings were recorded throughout the process and final panel, which will be fed back to test key elements. Jacqueline felt the rigor and control was far better than she had experienced during previous processes.
- They felt that a group of 15 apprentices was a good size to use in the pilot. It was sufficient to learn from, but not too many to handle, and hence EU Skills recommend a small pilot like this before a larger cohort goes through EPA. This allows for further learning and development.
- EU Skills has produced a ‘lessons learnt report’ from their pilot.
- EU Skills was the first to try the Federation for Industry Sector Skills & Standards (FISSS) new online portal for applying for apprenticeship certificates, which features a digital voucher. EU Skills reported that it worked well, and their application was successfully submitted. They did note, however, that the level of detail required for these applications was higher than in the past. Others will need to be prepared for that, and ensure they have the right evidence and information to hand ahead of any application to FISSS.



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2-5 Stedham Place, London WC1A 1HU

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