



End-point assessment newsletter archive 24/25



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September 2024

NCFE and Active IQ EPAO integration update

In April 2024, we shared the decision to integrate the NCFE and Active IQ end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) into one single EPAO, regulated through NCFE. We're sharing more information about this on a regular basis so please look out for emails coming from our Relationship team about platform changes, key dates and support.

Gateway and bookings

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Funding Rules 2024-2025

The ESFA has recently published the 2024-2025 Apprenticeship Funding Rules that came into effect from 1 August 2024.

The rule (equivalent gradings) has been updated to reflect the latest gov.uk guidance. The grading change clarifies that GCSE grade D to G or 3 to 1 are equivalent to a Level 1 qualification, and therefore apprentices holding these grades have met the requirement to hold a Level 1 in English and maths. This change will apply to both new starts from 1 August 2024, and apprentices who are currently on-programme.

The ESFA has confirmed they will be updating the [English and maths requirements in apprenticeship standards at level 2 and above](#) in due course.

Delivery and assessments

Business Administrator evidence tracker

We'd like to remind you to use the updated evidence tracker stored on the Resources Library, released in March 2024, to reflect the Business Fundamentals criteria no longer being assessed within the portfolio-based interview. You can download the latest version of the evidence tracker from the [Resources Library](#).

Employability Practitioner assessments

Remind your Employability Practitioner apprentices during their Gateway preparation meeting that they need to complete the Q&A session after the observation. The Q&A session must be completed in a room that is quiet and free from distraction, so the assessment can be conducted under exam conditions.

Clinical Coder and Prosthetic and Orthotic Technician

We've decided to withdraw from the apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR) for the following standards from 1 October 2024:

- Clinical Coder
- Prosthetic and Orthotic Technician.

Please get in touch with the Relationship Team if you have any further questions at eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk.

Quality and compliance

Reasonable adjustments



Read our top tips to support you when completing reasonable adjustment forms, to avoid delays and ensure you've shared all the information we need. You should include:

Details of the reasonable adjustments being selected: These should match the SEPA drop down list.

- **A description of the apprentice's disabilities and/or conditions where appropriate:** This should include the type of disability and how it affects the apprentice.
- **Relevant supporting evidence:** We require the supporting evidence that the apprentice has available historically, and/or during EPA. The apprentice may have had previous support plans such as an EHCP, a SEN or a medical consultant report. If there are no supporting documents, please share with us information on what measures have been put in place on programme to support the apprentice. Types of evidence that could be submitted are support plans or cognitive reports. Unfortunately, we cannot accept a self-diagnosis or a statement confirming that an apprentice may benefit from a reasonable adjustment.
- **Information on how reasonable adjustments are currently used:** The apprentice will most likely have had support in assessment either historically or during the on-programme element of their apprenticeship. The use of reasonable adjustments could also be in use in the apprentice's workplace. This section covers what they have done during the on-programme element and how this reasonable adjustment currently supports the apprentice. The details must evidence what the reasonable adjustment is, how it is currently used, and how it'll support the apprentice in assessment. Knowing what kind of disability or condition the apprentice has will help us to understand what methods they can be used in, and how we can support.

If you have any queries on reasonable adjustments, please contact our Relationship team.

October 2024 – No update

November 2024 - No update

December 2024 - No update

January 2025

Advice, guidance and support

Gateway changes

As part of the integration activities, we've reviewed the full end-point assessment (EPA) journey. We'd like to thank all of our customers who have provided feedback over the last 12 months, as this is vital in supporting us to improve our efficiency and support.

As part of this, we've reviewed the gateway process to ensure it is streamlined and we've looked at how we can reduce the administrative burden for customers to support apprentices entering EPA in a timely manner. We've focused on the below key areas which we hope will support you when interacting with the gateway process:

Portfolio upload

We recognise that portfolios containing voice recordings and videos can pose challenges at present, during the upload process due to their larger file sizes. To resolve this:

- We're collaborating with epaPRO to increase the allowable file size.
- As a temporary solution, if the file sizes remain too large even after zipping, we will accept recordings and videos via a file-sharing link, your e-portfolio system, or a company SharePoint link. Please note that this exception applies only to recordings; all other evidence must still be uploaded directly to the gateway checklist on epaPRO.

We'll keep you informed on progress and updates from epaPRO to increase the file sizes.

Images and video recordings within the portfolio of evidence

We understand that apprentices strive to showcase well-rounded evidence that effectively demonstrates their knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) within their portfolio of evidence and thoughtful selection of this evidence is considered for achieving success in EPA.

Apprentices often include evidence such as images and recordings of their sessions with service users. While we encourage all images to be redacted where possible, we acknowledge that there may be instances where this isn't feasible.

To ensure compliance with safeguarding measures, we trust that you and employers have strict protocols in place, including signed permissions for using such materials



with third parties. To reinforce this, we're incorporating the following statement within the gateway declaration form:

- All submitted evidence has been approved from a safeguarding/GDPR perspective and is provided with the consent of those depicted. This includes any submissions containing images and videos as evidence.

Whilst we continue to request that apprentices make every effort to redact faces where possible, portfolios with unredacted evidence will not be rejected at gateway. However, we ask you to remain mindful of safeguarding considerations, particularly for evidence involving protected children.

Reflective accounts and self-assessments

Whilst some assessment plans stipulate apprentices cannot include reflective accounts and/or self-assessments, we understand that certain pieces of evidence may contain minimal reflective references. Moving forward, we will accept such evidence; however, Independent End-Point Assessors (IEPAs) will discount these reflective references when preparing questions for the apprentice during their assessment.

It's important to note that portfolios must still meet the required minimum number pieces of evidence at gateway. If a portfolio includes a full reflective account and this causes the total number of evidence pieces to fall below the minimum threshold, the portfolio will not be accepted at the gateway stage.

This approach ensures that we maintain compliance with gateway requirements while accommodating evidence that provides value without relying heavily on reflections.

Invoicing

We'd like to share some information with you regarding upcoming changes to our billing process.

Changes to our billing process – consolidated invoicing

We're making improvements to our billing process that will simplify and streamline your experience with us. From early 2025, we'll be transitioning to consolidated invoicing for all our customers across all areas of our business including awarding, end-point assessment (EPA) and skills assessment. We'll confirm the exact date for the changes to take effect shortly.

Please note that if you only work with NCFE for EPA, you'll need to amend your payment details when this change comes into effect as they will be different to the ones you usually use. See below for more information.

What is consolidated invoicing?

Consolidated invoicing combines all monthly orders into a single, comprehensive invoice. This means that instead of receiving separate invoices for each business unit, you will now receive one consolidated invoice per month that summarises all your charges within a specific billing period.

What are the benefits of consolidated invoicing?

- Simplified billing: You'll receive one convenient, easy-to-understand invoice covering all your transactions.
- Improved visibility: You'll gain a clearer overview of your spending patterns and transactions with us.
- Streamlined payment: You can now make a single payment to one bank account for all your charges, reducing the risk of missed or late payments.

How does it work?

From the change date (to be confirmed), your monthly invoice will include all sales orders and cancellations accrued during that time. The consolidated invoice will continue to be sent electronically in two parts, including:

- summary invoice detailing the monthly period and invoice amount
- backing document that provides full details of each individual order for your reference and transparency.

What are the next steps?

We'll be in contact early in the new year to confirm the date that you'll receive your first consolidated invoice. If you have any questions or need further information, please speak to your Account Executive or email our Customer Support team at customersupport@ncfe.org.uk. You can also view our [consolidated invoicing FAQs](#).

Important: Check or change payment details

Please check that you're using the following payment details for all payments to NCFE:

Bank Details for payments via BACS

Bank Name:	Barclays
Account Name:	NCFE
Sort Code:	20 59 42
Account No.:	43472345
IBAN:	GB29BARC20594243472345
SWIFTBIC:	BARCGB22

As stated above, if you only work with NCFE for EPA, please update these details when the invoicing change comes into effect as they'll be different to the ones you usually use. If you require support in validating these bank account details, please contact finance@ncfe.org.uk.

UCAS tariff points allocated to apprenticeships

UCAS has recently announced that from the 2026 cycle, UCAS tariff points will be allocated to Level 3 apprenticeships. The aim of this new initiative is to position apprenticeships across the UK as a recognised pathway into higher education, alongside A Levels, T Levels and other Level 3 /SCQF Level 6 as part of UCAS' broader aim to support a diverse range of progression routes into university or college. Further information about the announcement can be found [here](#).

Gateway and bookings

When submitting a request for EPA, please ensure you include or update the details for both the on-programme assessor and the workplace mentor. These colleagues will receive automated notifications through EPA Pro and throughout the booking process. If this information is left blank, only the colleague who submitted the EPA request on behalf of the apprentice will be included in the notifications.

Quality and compliance



We've recently completed our annual review of our EPA policies and as part of this process, we've made some changes to ensure that these policies:

- are aligned with the system change to epaPRO
- reflect our regulatory requirements to deliver EPA efficiently and effectively
- streamline the process for you as our customers.

When did the policies come into effect?

The updated policies will come into effect from 2 December 2024.

Where can you access the new policies? The policies have been updated on the [NCFE website](#).

What has changed within the policies? We've summarised the changes that have been made and you can access this summary [here](#).

Further support Please remember to refer to the epaPRO user guide, stored on epaPRO, for support on how to apply for Reasonable Adjustments, Special Considerations, and Enquiries and Appeals.

Products and resources

The following standards are now live for registrations on epaPRO along with the guidance materials:

EPA standard
Dental Nurse Integrated v1.3
Learning and Skills Teacher v1.3
Dental Nurse GDC 2023 v1.0
Leader in Adult Care v1.1

Specialist Teaching Assistant

We're excited to announce that we've submitted our application to Ofqual for approval to become an EPAO for the Specialist Teaching Assistant standard in December 2024. We'll keep you up to date as we get further information on the stages of approval. Further information on the standard and assessment plan can be found [here](#).

Specification and guidance materials

We are currently updating all standard specifications and guidance materials to remove references to the Resources Library and SEPA, aligning them with epaPRO. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Associate Project Manager

We've recently been informed by Ofqual, that IfATE has published changes to ST0310 Associate Project Manager (Version 1.3) assessment plan. The changes, which did not result in a version change, were as follows:

	Previous assessment plan	Updated assessment plan
Presentation	A maximum of 45 minutes (+10% so the apprentice may complete their final point).	60 minutes ($\pm 10\%$) for Presentation no more minutes for Q&A

	Presentation no more than 30 minutes and 15 minutes for Q&A session	
Professional Discussion	A maximum of 1 hour (+/-10% at the discretion of the IEPA).	A maximum of 90 minutes at the discretion of the IEPA).

We've updated our guidance materials which can be accessed under the Support materials tab on epaPRO. We've also contacted apprentices who have assessments scheduled in and increased the assessment durations in line with the assessment plan changes.

Aspiration Awards 2025

Could your apprentice be the next **Apprentice of the Year**?

Do you know an apprentice who has taken innovative approaches to their work or gone the extra mile? If so, we want to hear from you!

What will they win?

If your apprentice is chosen as the winner, they'll receive:

- a prize worth up to the value of £250* (or £100 if they're highly commended in this category)
- the opportunity to be featured in a video case study celebrating their success
- a certificate of recognition – great for their CV or other applications!

Don't miss out!

Time is running out to get your nominations in, as the window closes on Friday 21 February 2025. For more details on categories, nomination guidelines, and submission deadlines, visit our Aspiration Awards webpage.

[Nominate your apprentices](#)

*Terms and conditions apply. The learner must be completing a qualification awarded or accredited by NCFE or be completing an apprenticeship with NCFE as the end-point assessment organisation.

February 2025

Advice, guidance and support

Functional Skills

You may be aware of the latest update regarding apprenticeship training requirements, covered in the latest Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules. Apprentices who are aged 19 or over at the start of their apprenticeship can now proceed to their EPA without achieving Functional Skills English and/or maths at Level 1/2, provided certain conditions are met.

Last week we communicated that we'd added a Functional Skills exemption declaration form on epaPRO, but we're pleased to announce that we've carried out development on the platform and you no longer need to complete this. Instead, and to ensure compliance with these new regulations, we've added an additional question to



the Gateway requirements section on epaPRO, which must be completed when accessing the exemptions and the following requirements:

- the apprentice was 19+ at the start of their training
- the option to continue with Functional Skills English and maths training has been discussed and recorded
- if English and/or maths training is removed, the training plan will be updated and re-signed accordingly.

When accessing the exemption, you won't be required to upload evidence to the English and maths section within the 'elements section' on epaPRO.

If you have any queries on the changes to Functional Skills requirements, please contact our Relationship team on 0191 240 8950

or eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk.

End-of-year timeline and SLAs

Last month, we shared that we're reducing our SLA durations for some of our standards where the assessment plans allow. These new SLAs have been tailored to fit the end-of-year schedule, ensuring you have the tools and time needed to prepare for key deadlines. To simplify your planning, we've created a timeline and tips document that covers everything you need to know to ensure your apprentices complete their end-point assessment (EPA) by 31 July 2025. The end-of-year timeline can be found in the support materials section on epaPRO.

Relationship team support

We want to remind you about the support available from our Relationship team. We acknowledge all emails within 24 hours and aim to provide a resolution as quickly as possible. If additional investigation or information is required, we'll keep you updated every step of the way.

To ensure you receive the right support, we also have dedicated mailboxes for specific queries – however, you can still continue to reach out

to eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk or your dedicated point of contact:

- Gateway audit queries - epagatewayaudit@ncfe.org.uk
- EPA booking queries - epabookings@ncfe.org.uk
- proctoring queries - eparemoteexams@ncfe.org.uk

Delivery

Assessment re-sit/re-takes

When apprentices need to complete a re-sit or re-take, they'll only be assessed on the criteria they previously didn't pass. They'll have the full assessment duration to provide any additional information. However, if the assessment plan specifies a capped grade, they will not be able to achieve a higher grade regardless of any extra content they include.

Assessments

Please remind apprentices that if they're completing their EPA assessments at their workplace, they should book a quiet meeting room that is free from distractions and interruptions.

Secure client and paper-based assessments

To simplify the process for invigilators, we've merged the invigilation register and checklist into a single document.

Paper-based assessments

Please return all answer papers, question papers, and supporting documentation to our EPA team via recorded courier within one working day using the provided return envelope.

Online assessments

All invigilation documents should be securely stored on your system for auditing purposes.

Product**Facilities Management Supervisor v1.0 sample paper**

We've released the full sample paper for the Facilities Management Supervisor v1.0. This is now available on epaPRO under the guidance materials section.

Facilities Management Supervisor v1.1 - project proposal template

We've recently introduced a project proposal template for apprentices to complete to present at Gateway. This ensures apprentices capture all key information and confirm the project has not been started. This template should be used for any future Gateway requests from 1 April 2025.

Customer Service Practitioner v1.1

We've recently updated the Customer Service Practitioner specification and guidance document, now available on epaPRO under the guidance materials section.

As part of this update, we've aligned our guidance and removed the notes statement. Apprentices can now refer to the plan and prepare document during assessments for additional support.

Fundraiser v1.0

We've recently introduced a template to help apprentices map their case for support pitch to the relevant KSBs for the presentation with questions and answers assessment component.

Apprentices may continue using their own template or opt for NCFE's version.

However, whichever template is used, it must be submitted along with the case for support pitch and presentation within 28 days of acceptance at Gateway.

The case for support pitch evidence tracker is now available on epaPRO under the guidance materials section.

We're here to help!

- For apprentices accepted at Gateway before 29 November 2024, please reach out to apprenticeships@activeiq.co.uk.
- For learners presented after 6pm on 29 November 2024, or those that have not yet entered Gateway or are awaiting acceptance, contact the EPA Relationship team at eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk



March 2025

Advice, guidance and support

Apprentice assessment feedback

Last year, we updated our feedback approach for apprentices, providing detailed insights for each assessment component. Our feedback forms now include all relevant Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs), grading descriptors, and the achieved grade. Based on customer input, we've further refined this process.

Starting from Monday 31 March 2025, apprentices will receive a summary from the Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA), outlining where they met the criteria, supported by specific examples. This enhancement aims to offer apprentices a clearer understanding of their performance. For any results released from Monday 31 March 2025, the feedback form will include the enhancements and will be available on epaPRO within the results page's Q&A section.

Plan and Prepare document

In response to valuable customer feedback, we are removing the mandatory use of the Plan and Prepare sheet for recording key discussion points during assessments. While we still recommend its use, apprentices who are unable to print the template may opt to use a blank sheet of paper or a similar template for structuring their responses. Please be aware that no more than two sheets may be used during assessments. The IEPA will confirm compliance with this rule before the assessment begins. Additionally, reading long, pre-structured sentences will be considered a breach of assessment conduct for presentations, interviews, or discussions.

An updated version of the Plan and Prepare sheet, along with an example, is now accessible under the Support Materials tab on epaPRO.

End-of-year timeline and SLAs

We recently announced a reduction in Service Level Agreement (SLA) durations for some standards where assessment plans allow. These revised SLAs are aligned with the end-of-year schedule, providing you with sufficient time to meet important deadlines.

To help you plan effectively, we've created a comprehensive timeline and tips document, offering all the necessary information for completing end-point assessments (EPAs) by Thursday 31 July 2025. This resource can be found in the Support Materials section on epaPRO.

Support Materials on epaPRO

epaPRO has introduced an updated landing page for the Support Materials section, making it easier to find standard-specific guidance. If you prefer the previous layout, you can revert by selecting the '**Old View Support Materials**' button located in the top right corner of the '**View Support Materials**' section.

Delivery and assessments

Assessment re-sit/re-takes

If apprentices need to complete a re-sit or re-take, they'll only be assessed on the criteria they didn't pass previously. They'll have the full assessment duration to

provide any additional information. However, if the assessment plan includes a capped grade policy, they'll not be able to achieve a higher grade, regardless of any extra content they submit.

Portfolios within assessments

We've noticed an increase in apprentices attending assessments without their portfolios. Access to portfolios during an assessment is often a key requirement outlined in assessment plans, as it supports apprentices in demonstrating their best performance during their end-point assessment. Therefore, we strongly encourage all apprentices to bring their portfolios to their assessments.

We understand that preparing for an assessment can be challenging, so we have adjusted our approach to ensure every apprentice has the opportunity to access their portfolio if needed.

At the beginning of each assessment, there is a 15-minute window for apprentices to join, receive an overview, and prepare. If an apprentice does not have their portfolio, they may use this time to retrieve it. Alternatively, they can choose to proceed without it.

However, if an apprentice wishes to use their portfolio but cannot obtain it within the 15-minute window, the assessment will be stopped and rescheduled as a re-sit. If this is the apprentice's first attempt, the re-sit will not be subject to a grade cap.

Product and resources

New standards

The following standards are now live for registrations on epaPRO and the guidance materials can be found within the Support Materials section.

- Team Leader v1.4
- Operations Manager v1.4
- Senior Healthcare Support Worker v1.6
- Customer Service Specialist v1.2

Sports Coach - project outline template and project report template

We've recently introduced a project outline template and project report template for apprentices to complete to present at gateway and once they have carried out their project. This ensures apprentices capture all key information.

Quality and compliance

We've updated Appendix A of the EPA Cancellation, Re-sit and Re-take Policy, presenting it in a clearer format to make the rules for re-sits and re-takes easier to understand. The updated policy can be found on [our website](#).

April 2025 – no update

May 2025

In this edition, we'll provide you with updates on supporting apprentices with their end-point assessments, information on updated policies, and a change to business hours. Please read on to discover the latest insights that will help you achieve your apprenticeship goals.

Advice, guidance and support

New reports now available to support your learner outcomes

We're pleased to let you know that four brand new reports are now available on epaPRO to help you gain clearer insights into learner performance and support continuous improvement.

These reports give you a detailed view of pass/fail and first-time pass rates, helping you track performance across each assessment component and overall certification.

Here's a quick overview:

- **Assessment pass/fail report** – Understand how your learners are performing at each assessment component level, with a breakdown of pass and fail rates per standard.
- **Assessment 1st time pass report** – View how many of your learners are passing each component on their first attempt, helping you identify strengths and opportunities for targeted support.
- **Certification pass/fail report** – Provides a clear picture of your overall pass and fail rates per standard, supporting wider strategic planning and quality assurance.
- **Certification 1st time pass report** – Monitor first-time achievement rates at the full certification level to inform your delivery approach and learner readiness strategies.

These reports have been developed with your needs in mind, offering actionable insights that can support quality improvement, curriculum planning, and learner support strategies.

You can access these reports now through epaPRO. If you have any questions or would like support using them, please contact your dedicated point of contact within the Relationship team.

Active IQ integration – contact update

We're pleased to share that the integration of Active IQ and NCFE into one end point assessment organisation is now complete. As part of this transition, the Active IQ mailboxes and phone lines have now been closed.

To ensure a smooth handover, please contact us directly via:

eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk 0191 240 8950

Our team is here to support you with any queries or guidance you may need.

EPA booking contact details

To help us keep the right people informed and ensure a smooth EPA journey for your apprentices, please remember to include the relevant contacts when submitting EPA booking requests.

When requesting EPA, please ensure the on-programme assessor and mentor email addresses are completed. If you'd like a generic mailbox, for example, a team mailbox, to be copied into communications, please enter it in either the on-programme assessor or mentor field.

This helps us share timely updates and important EPA information with the right contacts throughout the process.

Apprentice availability

To help us arrange assessment dates as smoothly and quickly as possible, please ensure that any dates the apprentice is unavailable are clearly shared with us at the Gateway stage.

We're seeing an increase in cases where no availability restrictions are provided, which can lead to delays - offered dates may be declined, new ones need to be found, and the process can repeat.

Informing us in advance of any dates the apprentice cannot attend their assessment, we can:

- offer more suitable dates first time
- avoid unnecessary delays and back-and-forth
- support a better experience for both you and the apprentice
- ensure your apprentices access EPA within our SLAs.

EPA pricing update

We are pleased to inform you that we will be freezing our fees for our end point assessment services for the 2025/26 academic year across all standards, with the exception of Healthcare Support worker and Senior Healthcare support worker where a price increase will be applied to all apprentices that successfully pass through gateway on or after 1 August 2025.

The integration of Active IQ and NCFE into a single, unified end-point assessment organisation has now been successfully completed. As part of our commitment to supporting Active IQ customers throughout this transition, we have maintained existing fees during the transition period. This fee structure will remain in place until 31 July 2025. From 1 August 2025, the fees outlined in the NCFE Fee Guide will apply to all apprentices.

This decision reflects our ongoing commitment to providing consistent, high-quality assessment services while supporting our customers through a time of change in the sector. We understand that the landscape of apprenticeships is continually evolving, and we are closely monitoring developments. Please be assured that we will review our position on fees as more information becomes available and any changes in the sector are confirmed.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and partnership and we look forward to continuing our work with you.

May 2025

Advice, guidance and support

Supporting apprentices during assessment start times

We're introducing a new process for when an apprentice has failed to access their Microsoft Teams assessment link within three minutes of the agreed start time, to support them to access the assessment.

If an apprentice doesn't join their Microsoft Teams assessment call within this timeframe, we'll promptly reach out to check if they're experiencing technical difficulties and offer support. If the apprentice doesn't answer, we'll attempt to contact their on-programme assessor (as listed on epaPRO) to ensure the apprentice has every opportunity to join within the allowed timeframe.

Keeping apprentice contact details up to date

To ensure smooth communication throughout the EPA process, please make sure apprentice contact details are accurate and up to date in epaPRO. These details help us with booking assessments and reaching out to apprentices when necessary.

You can review and update contact information in the apprentice's profile or during the Gateway confirmation stage.

New foundation apprenticeships

Last month, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) announced the launch of the first seven foundation apprenticeships, designed to offer a more accessible route into apprenticeships.

We're looking at the approval process to become an assessment organisation for two of the foundation apprenticeships:

- Health and Social Care
- Software and Data

If you have any queries or questions about foundation apprenticeships or would like any further information, please contact your Relationship team contact

or eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk.

Active IQ – contact update

Now that the integration of Active IQ and NCFE into one EPAO is complete, the Active IQ EPA mailboxes and phone lines have been closed.

If you have any questions, please contact us directly via:

eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk

0191 240 8950

Our team is here to support you with any queries or guidance you may need.

PARS bursary application

The NCFE PARS (Post-Apprenticeship Recognition Scheme) bursary, available to eligible learners on Level 2 or 3 apprenticeships, is still open for applications.

We spoke to two former apprentices about their experiences with the Post-Apprenticeship Recognition Scheme - Sha'delle Momus, a 38-year-old from Streatham, London, recently completed a Level 3 apprenticeship in Business Administration, and Tracey Savage, a 55-year-old from Warrington in Cheshire, who returned to education after a cancer diagnosis. [Read about their experiences.](#)

To learn more about the NCFE PARS bursary, visit our [dedicated webpage.](#)

Delivery

Exporting feedback from epaPRO

We've made it easier for you to share assessment feedback with your apprentices. Previously, feedback from epaPRO could only be downloaded as an Excel document, which we know isn't always the most user-friendly format. We're pleased to let you know that feedback is now also available to download as a PDF, making it easy to share with your apprentices.

Product

Update to Assessor Coach and Learning Mentor dispensations

The temporary dispensation from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), which removed the requirement for apprentices to hold a Level 2 ICT qualification at Gateway, has now ended.

This means that apprentices on the Level 3 Learning Mentor and Level 4 Assessor Coach standards must now achieve a Level 2 ICT qualification before progressing to EPA.

Please note, this change applies only to the retired versions of these assessment plans. It doesn't affect the new Level 3 Learning and Skills Assessor or Level 4 Learning and Skills Mentor standards.

New assessment plan: Early Years Educator V1.5

Skills England launched a new version of the Early Years Educator (V1.5) standard for enrolments from 12 June 2025 to clarify the professional recognition requirements. The new update doesn't impact any of the knowledge, skills or behaviours (KSBs) or the EPA.

Previously this read:

"This apprenticeship aligns with Department for Education for Full and relevant at Level 3

*Please contact the professional body for more details."*The updated version reads:

"This apprenticeship aligns with Department for Education for Full and relevant at Level 3. To count within the ratios at level 3, staff holding an Early Years Educator qualification must also have achieved a suitable level 2 qualification in English. Setting managers must hold a suitable level 2 qualification in maths or must achieve one within two years of starting in the position. These are additional EYFS requirements that are independent of the apprenticeship requirements.

Please contact the professional body for more details."

We've added the new version to epaPRO for registrations and our guidance materials will be available shortly.

New assessment plan: Early Years Practitioner v1.1



IfATE has released an updated assessment plan for Early Years Practitioner v1.1 which goes live from 1 August 2025. Any new apprentices who start on programme on or after this date will need to be enrolled on this version

We're developing guidance materials, and we'll confirm once these are live. If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact your Relationship team contact or eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk.

Updated sample papers now available

We've updated our Healthcare Support Worker V1.0 and Oral Health Practitioner V1.0 sample papers for the multiple-choice questionnaire to ensure they remain accurate and relevant.

They're available to download from the Support Materials section on epaPRO.

Reminders from last month's newsletter

EPA pricing update

Last month we shared information on our fees and pricing for the 2025-26 academic year, including the good news that we're freezing prices for EPA across most of our standards (with the exception of Healthcare Support Worker and Senior Healthcare Support Worker). Read more on our [fees webpage](#).

New reports now available to support your learner outcomes

Remember to access our four new reports on epaPRO to help you gain clearer insights into learner performance and support continuous improvement.

These reports give you a detailed view of pass/fail and first-time pass rates, helping you track performance across each assessment component and overall certification.

- The reports offer actionable insights that can support quality improvement, curriculum planning and learner support strategies.

EPA booking contact details

To help us keep the right people informed and ensure a smooth EPA journey for your apprentices, please remember to include the relevant contacts when submitting EPA booking requests.

When requesting EPA, please ensure the on-programme assessor and mentor email address fields are completed. If you'd like a generic mailbox, for example, a team mailbox, to be copied into communications, please enter it in either the on-programme assessor or mentor field.

This helps us share timely updates and important EPA information with the right contacts throughout the process.

Apprentice availability

To help us arrange assessment dates as smoothly and quickly as possible, please ensure that any dates the apprentice is unavailable for assessment are shared with us at the Gateway stage.

We're seeing an increase in cases where no availability restrictions are provided, which can lead to delays in scheduling assessments.

By informing us in advance of any dates the apprentice cannot attend their assessment, we can:

- offer suitable dates first time
- avoid unnecessary delays

- support a better experience for both you and the apprentice
- ensure your apprentices access EPA within our SLAs.

June 2025

In this edition, we'll provide you with updates on supporting apprentices with their end-point assessments, information on updated policies, and a change to business hours. Please read on to discover the latest insights that will help you achieve your apprenticeship goals.

Advice, guidance and support

New reports now available to support your learner outcomes

We're pleased to let you know that four brand new reports are now available on epaPRO to help you gain clearer insights into learner performance and support continuous improvement.

These reports give you a detailed view of pass/fail and first-time pass rates, helping you track performance across each assessment component and overall certification.

Here's a quick overview:

- **Assessment pass/fail report** – Understand how your learners are performing at each assessment component level, with a breakdown of pass and fail rates per standard.
- **Assessment 1st time pass report** – View how many of your learners are passing each component on their first attempt, helping you identify strengths and opportunities for targeted support.
- **Certification pass/fail report** – Provides a clear picture of your overall pass and fail rates per standard, supporting wider strategic planning and quality assurance.
- **Certification 1st time pass report** – Monitor first-time achievement rates at the full certification level to inform your delivery approach and learner readiness strategies.

These reports have been developed with your needs in mind, offering actionable insights that can support quality improvement, curriculum planning, and learner support strategies.

You can access these reports now through epaPRO. If you have any questions or would like support using them, please contact your dedicated point of contact within the Relationship team.

Active IQ integration – contact update

We're pleased to share that the integration of Active IQ and NCFE into one end point assessment organisation is now complete. As part of this transition, the Active IQ mailboxes and phone lines have now been closed.

To ensure a smooth handover, please contact us directly via:

eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk 0191 240 8950



Our team is here to support you with any queries or guidance you may need.

EPA booking contact details

To help us keep the right people informed and ensure a smooth EPA journey for your apprentices, please remember to include the relevant contacts when submitting EPA booking requests.

When requesting EPA, please ensure the on-programme assessor and mentor email addresses are completed. If you'd like a generic mailbox, for example, a team mailbox, to be copied into communications, please enter it in either the on-programme assessor or mentor field.

This helps us share timely updates and important EPA information with the right contacts throughout the process.

Apprentice availability

To help us arrange assessment dates as smoothly and quickly as possible, please ensure that any dates the apprentice is unavailable are clearly shared with us at the Gateway stage.

We're seeing an increase in cases where no availability restrictions are provided, which can lead to delays - offered dates may be declined, new ones need to be found, and the process can repeat.

Informing us in advance of any dates the apprentice cannot attend their assessment, we can:

- offer more suitable dates first time
- avoid unnecessary delays and back-and-forth
- support a better experience for both you and the apprentice
- ensure your apprentices access EPA within our SLAs.

EPA pricing update

We are pleased to inform you that we will be freezing our fees for our end point assessment services for the 2025/26 academic year across all standards, with the exception of Healthcare Support worker and Senior Healthcare support worker where a price increase will be applied to all apprentices that successfully pass through gateway on or after 1 August 2025.

The integration of Active IQ and NCFE into a single, unified end-point assessment organisation has now been successfully completed. As part of our commitment to supporting Active IQ customers throughout this transition, we have maintained existing fees during the transition period. This fee structure will remain in place until 31 July 2025. From 1 August 2025, the fees outlined in the NCFE Fee Guide will apply to all apprentices.

This decision reflects our ongoing commitment to providing consistent, high-quality assessment services while supporting our customers through a time of change in the sector. We understand that the landscape of apprenticeships is continually evolving, and we are closely monitoring developments. Please be assured that we will review our position on fees as more information becomes available and any changes in the sector are confirmed.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and partnership and we look forward to continuing our work with you.

Reminders from last month**End-of-year timeline and SLAs**

Remember to access our timeline and tips document that covers everything you need to know to ensure your apprentices complete their end-point assessment (EPA) by 31 July 2025. This can be found in the Support materials section on epaPRO.

Online assessments

Apprentices can now access their online assessments from the originally scheduled start time, with access remaining open until 11:59pm on the day the test is scheduled. If any issues arise with the assessment links, please contact us at eparemoteexams@ncfe.org.uk or call our Customer Support Team on 0191 240 8950

Changes to apprentice assessment feedback

Last year, we revised our approach to providing feedback on each assessment component for apprentices. Our feedback forms detail all the KSBs and grading descriptors, along with the grade achieved for each. We've further refined this approach based on customer feedback. Going forward, apprentices will receive a summary from the IEPA, highlighting where they met the criteria effectively, with examples of how they achieved this. This enhancement will offer apprentices more insight into their performance. The updated feedback form will apply to grades released from Monday 31 March 2025, issued within five working days of the assessment. It will be available on epaPRO, within the Q&A section on the results page.

Updates to the Dental Nurse Integrated standard

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) has released an update regarding the ST0113 Dental Nurse apprenticeship standard. Version 1.3 will now remain open for new starts only until **31 July 2025**.

This is a change from the previously planned end date of **31 August 2025**, which has been brought forward due to learners enrolling on the alternative standard, **ST1431 Dental Nurse (GDC)**.

Delivery**Exporting feedback from epaPRO**

We've made it easier for you to share assessment feedback with your apprentices. Previously, feedback from epaPRO could only be downloaded as an Excel document - which we know isn't always the most user-friendly format. We're pleased to let you know that feedback is now also available to download as a PDF, making it quicker and easier to view, save, and share with your apprentices.

This improvement is part of our ongoing commitment to making the EPA experience as smooth and efficient as possible.

Product**Updated sample papers now available**

Our Healthcare Support Worker V1.0 and Oral Health Practitioner V1.0 sample papers for the multiple-choice questionnaire have recently undergone routine maintenance and updates to ensure they remain accurate and relevant.

The refreshed sample papers are now available to download from the Support Materials section on epaPRO.



We recommend reviewing and sharing the updated materials with your apprentices to help them prepare effectively for their assessment.

New assessment plan: Early Years Practitioner v1.1

IfATE have released an updated assessment plan for Early Years Practitioner v1.1.

Early Years Practitioner v1.1 goes live from 1 August 2025. Any new apprentices who start on programme on or after 1 August 2025 will need to be enrolled on this version. We are currently in the process in developing our guidance materials and will confirm once these are live.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact your Relationship Colleague or eparelationshipteam@ncfe.org.uk.

New standards

The following standards are now live for registrations on epaPRO and the guidance materials can be found within the Support Materials section on epaPRO.

EPA standard
Team Leader v1.4
Operations Manager v1.4
Senior Healthcare Support Worker v1.6
Customer Service Specialist v1.2
Specialist Teaching Assistant v1.0
Early Years Educator v1.4

March 2025

Advice, guidance and support

Apprentice assessment feedback

Last year, we updated our feedback approach for apprentices, providing detailed insights for each assessment component. Our feedback forms now include all relevant Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs), grading descriptors, and the achieved grade. Based on customer input, we've further refined this process.

Starting from Monday 31 March 2025, apprentices will receive a summary from the Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA), outlining where they met the criteria, supported by specific examples. This enhancement aims to offer apprentices a clearer understanding of their performance. For any results released from Monday 31 March 2025, the feedback form will include the enhancements and will be available on epaPRO within the results page's Q&A section.

Plan and Prepare document

In response to valuable customer feedback, we are removing the mandatory use of the Plan and Prepare sheet for recording key discussion points during assessments. While we still recommend its use, apprentices who are unable to print the template may opt to use a blank sheet of paper or a similar template for structuring their responses. Please be aware that no more than two sheets may be used during assessments. The IEPA will confirm compliance with this rule before the assessment begins. Additionally,

reading long, pre-structured sentences will be considered a breach of assessment conduct for presentations, interviews, or discussions.

An updated version of the Plan and Prepare sheet, along with an example, is now accessible under the Support Materials tab on epaPRO.

End-of-year timeline and SLAs

We recently announced a reduction in Service Level Agreement (SLA) durations for some standards where assessment plans allow. These revised SLAs are aligned with the end-of-year schedule, providing you with sufficient time to meet important deadlines.

To help you plan effectively, we've created a comprehensive timeline and tips document, offering all the necessary information for completing end-point assessments (EPAs) by Thursday 31 July 2025. This resource can be found in the Support Materials section on epaPRO.

Support Materials on epaPRO

epaPRO has introduced an updated landing page for the Support Materials section, making it easier to find standard-specific guidance. If you prefer the previous layout, you can revert by selecting the '**Old View Support Materials**' button located in the top right corner of the '**View Support Materials**' section.

Delivery and assessments

Assessment re-sit/re-takes

If apprentices need to complete a re-sit or re-take, they'll only be assessed on the criteria they didn't pass previously. They'll have the full assessment duration to provide any additional information. However, if the assessment plan includes a capped grade policy, they'll not be able to achieve a higher grade, regardless of any extra content they submit.

Portfolios within assessments

We've noticed an increase in apprentices attending assessments without their portfolios. Access to portfolios during an assessment is often a key requirement outlined in assessment plans, as it supports apprentices in demonstrating their best performance during their end-point assessment. Therefore, we strongly encourage all apprentices to bring their portfolios to their assessments.

We understand that preparing for an assessment can be challenging, so we have adjusted our approach to ensure every apprentice has the opportunity to access their portfolio if needed.

At the beginning of each assessment, there is a 15-minute window for apprentices to join, receive an overview, and prepare. If an apprentice does not have their portfolio, they may use this time to retrieve it. Alternatively, they can choose to proceed without it.

However, if an apprentice wishes to use their portfolio but cannot obtain it within the 15-minute window, the assessment will be stopped and rescheduled as a re-sit. If this is the apprentice's first attempt, the re-sit will not be subject to a grade cap.

Product and resources

New standards



The following standards are now live for registrations on epaPRO and the guidance materials can be found within the Support Materials section.

- Team Leader v1.4
- Operations Manager v1.4
- Senior Healthcare Support Worker v1.6
- Customer Service Specialist v1.2

Sports Coach - project outline template and project report template

We've recently introduced a project outline template and project report template for apprentices to complete to present at gateway and once they have carried out their project. This ensures apprentices capture all key information.

Quality and compliance

We've updated Appendix A of the EPA Cancellation, Re-sit and Re-take Policy, presenting it in a clearer format to make the rules for re-sits and re-takes easier to understand. The updated policy can be found on [our website](#).
