



Pearson

IfATE update on Apprenticeships (23 March 2020)

# Detailed Operational guidance for Providers and Colleges delivering Apprenticeships during COVID-19 situation

## Training and Assessment

**Apprentices who are deemed ready for assessment and cannot be assessed due to assessor illness or Covid-19 related measures are allowed to have a pause in learning as per ESFA rules**

**Pearson Guidance:** Apprentices who are 'Gateway completed' are deemed 'ready for assessment' as per ACE360 records. The following are scenarios in which a planned assessment cannot be delivered on time:

- If the assessor is ill and the apprentice is due a remote assessment, we will re-assign another assessor to the apprentice. Assessment delivery maybe delayed by a few days in this case.
- If the EPA includes an observation which cannot be carried out remotely. The assessor will be in touch with the apprentice and/ or line manager to agree alternate arrangements as soon as the government advice changes (delay due to COVID-19 related measures).

- If the apprentice is ill for an undefined period, providers should put the apprentice on a pause in learning. Once the apprentice returns to work, we will follow the 'extenuating circumstances' policy to ensure the apprentice is not disadvantaged. Providers must ensure that end dates on ACE360 must be amended for the specified learners.

## **Apprentices who experience gaps in training in the workplace or off-the-job due to Covid-19 related prevention measures or illness can classify this period as a break in learning**

**Pearson Guidance:** For apprentices who are currently on-programme and due to progress to Gateway by end of June 2020 but experiencing gaps in training in the workplace or off-the-job due to COVID-19 prevention measures as a result of which they have been put on a 'break in learning' on the ILR, end dates on ACE360 must be changed to ensure gateway sign-off and timely EPA delivery.

Providers should change end dates on ACE360 AT LEAST 4 weeks prior to Gateway ready date.

## **Delivery of EPA**

Pearson intend to deliver all EPAs remotely to the extent permissible as per IfATE guidance. This is already being implemented from 16 March 2020.

**Specific operational guidance following IfATE's update to COVID-19 response is detailed below.**

**Gateway sign-off can be conducted remotely, with the agreement of the apprentice, employer and provider.**

**Pearson Guidance:** Gateway declaration forms should include an electronic signature from the apprentice, employer and provider. Date of Gateway sign-off should be reflected on the form as the date the virtual sign-off was undertaken.

**Where an apprentice is post Gateway and where the EPA Plan specifies a time limit by which EPA must be completed post Gateway, this may be extended by up to 12 weeks. Where this is the case EPAOs need to log each instance and share with their External Quality Assurance Provider (EQAP) on a timely basis.**

**Pearson Guidance:** For any EPAs where the assessment plan specifies a time limit within which the EPA must be completed post Gateway and this needs to be delayed due to COVID-19 prevention measures, the end date on ACE360 MUST be changed to reflect the delay. This will allow EPAOs to evidence each instance with the EQAPs. The standards this is applicable for are:

- Business Admin
- Customer Services Specialist L3

**Should an apprentice move employers during the extended period, the EPA should still take place wherever possible**

**Pearson Guidance:** If an apprentice moves employers during or post COVID-19 prevention measures without the EPA completed, providers must liaise with EPAO to inform of the change in circumstances so EPAO can liaise with new/ old employers to agree EPA completion logistics.

Details of the new employer must be updated on ACE360 to ensure EPA delivery logistics and certificate delivery are not affected for the learner.

**If the application of an extension were to cause hardship to the apprentice, EPAOs may choose to apply the following professional discretions in order to conduct assessments:**

**The requirement for assessment methods to be completed in a set order can be relaxed to allow flexibility in delivery, where this is deemed reasonable and feasible:**

**Pearson Guidance:** The flexibility in the delivery of the set order for EPA is applicable for the following standards. Guidance specific to the standards are available here

- [Adult Care Level 2](#)
- [Lead Adult Care Level 3](#)

## **Where an assessment method requires face to face engagement, this can be conducted remotely, subject to the following conditions:**

- Arrangements are cleared in advance by the EQAP.
- The apprentice's identity is verified; appropriate technology and systems are in place.
- Remote tests are supervised by an appropriately trained invigilator, or qualified assessor, who has the necessary qualifications, training or experience; and who has not been involved in the training, preparation or line management of the apprentice. This supervision can happen remotely.
- The impact that remote assessment may have on apprentices is to be taken into consideration to ensure a fair and reliable assessment of occupational competence.
- Where remote alternatives are not appropriate, a pause in assessment might be the only action.

**Pearson Guidance:** [The EQA Guidance document](#) provides some of the solutions Pearson have identified in relation to specific EPA's. Any flexibilities in remote delivery, from an employer, training provider or apprentice will be discussed on a case by case basis and cleared by the EQAP.

**Some assessment methods require a manager or team leader to be present. This should continue to be the default practice, and should be delivered remotely where it is reasonable and feasible to do so; the identity of the apprentice has been verified; and that the physical absence of a manager or team leader has been agreed by the apprentice**

**Pearson Guidance:** No impact for Pearson. As far as we are aware, no specific EPAs delivered by Pearson require the presence of a manager or team leader.

**Tests must only be carried out within a supervised and controlled environment and EPAOs must ensure all testing meets security requirements. Details of invigilators are to be recorded and available for confirmation by EQAPs.**

**Pearson Guidance:** [Detailed guidance on remote test delivery and invigilation](#)

**In addition to the discretions above, where it is believed that a specified assessment method for a standard could be further modified without compromising safety and still meet the original intent as set out in the Assessment Plan, this should be reviewed in conjunction with your EQAP and referred to the Institute for approval. The authority to significantly modify (or substitute) an assessment method remains with the Institute. The Institute will keep the need to offer substitute assessment methods under review at this stage.**

**Pearson Guidance:** Pearson are in constant dialogue with the Institute and the individual EQA bodies. We believe the detailed guidance provided above covers all the EPAs and scenarios where we are able to deliver remote EPAs as permissible by IfATE and the EQAP guidance. In cases where there is a possibility to further improve/enhance the learner experience via remote EPA delivery, we will consider this on a case-by-case basis.

Please get in touch with your BDM for an initial conversation on additional flexibilities for EPA delivery.