Operations Departmental Manager – version 2 assessment plan: FAQs

Please re-visit our webpage regularly to see additional questions. These FAQs will be reviewed and added to regularly.

Last updated 16.12.2020	

Question	Answer
Background / General	
When will the new Assessment Plan come in to effect?	All apprentices registered onto their ILR from the 21st October 2020 must undertake the new assessment plan. Please register your apprentices onto 9309-22. ILM and City & Guilds will be open for registrations from 15th January.
Is there an end date for registering learners against version 1?	We are keeping 9309-12 (version 1) open to registrations to ensure all apprentices registered on their ILR before the 21st October 2020 to undertake EPA against version 1.
If an apprentice was registered for EPA in early November on 9309-12 will this still be accepted?	It will depend on when the apprentice was registered onto their ILR. Please refer to the above question and answers.
Please can you confirm that the 12 weeks prep time for the apprentice and the 2 weeks LIEPA time means that it is a 14 week minimum time from Gateway to EPA, so can it be longer if there are project delays?	The time from gateway to the EPA event will be at least 14 weeks due to the 12 weeks for the apprentice and 2 weeks for the IEPA. If there are exceptional circumstances, please contact the EPA bookings team to discuss.
What are the benefits of the revised assessment plan for the learner and the employer?	The apprentice will undertake 2 assessment methods compared to 5 different assessment methods, which we provide a much more focused end-point assessment (EPA) experience. Additionally, there are pass and distinction descriptors which group KSBs so that apprentices can provide a much more 'rounded' response to questions.
Can you confirm why apprentices are now required to achieve 100%?	This is a requirement set by The Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Will learners still be classed as being 'in learning' after gateway while preparing over the 12 weeks?	All on-programme learning must be completed prior to gateway, continued EPA support can be completed post gateway.
What support can we expect if we do not deliver the Diploma as part of the on-programme?	We have a range of support available such as get-to-gateway, EPA pack to prepare for end-point assessment. Please see the ILM website for resources available
Why is there a focus on project management when in large companies they have specific project teams?	The assessment methodology within the new assessment plan has been driven by IfATE and the Employer Trailblazer group.
You mentioned 2 years plus, however under the right circumstances would you consider 15 months to be reasonably possible for most learners with no prior knowledge, or would you generally consider this to be too short of a time period for on-programme learning?	The standard actually states 'typically this apprenticeship will take 2.5 years. So, to reduce it to 15 months seems a little short. The apprentice needs to undertake all their learning in work time and so to condense this into such a short amount of time may be a challenge to the employer.
Are there any planned CPD sessions or guidance on conducting PD?	It is not something we have planned at the moment; however we can consider this for the future.
Does this mean that the period for EPA is extended - currently it is expected to take place within 3 months of Gateway?	The EPA period has been extended in the new assessment plan.
Can you please confirm EPA timescales?	This can be best described through our slide from webinar 1 on slide 24
How will knowledge be assessed?	The knowledge criteria has been split across the two assessment methods.
Currently some of Level 5s have been receiving MERIT grades. Does the new assessment plan not include a MERIT Grade?	The merit grade has been removed from the new assessment plan.
Feedback	
What level of feedback can apprentices expect to receive?	Apprentices who fail will receive feedback that will detail the grading descriptors which were not met and why, but they will also be able to see which grading descriptors have met at Pass and Distinction.
Portfolio	
Will evidence exceeding 20 pieces of evidence be rejected or is this amount an approximate?	This is set within IfATE's Assessment plan and says typically will contain 20 pieces of evidence. We won't automatically reject a portfolio if it contains slightly more but this should be your aim.

What is classified as excessive evidence? Can you give examples?	The recommendation is 20 discrete pieces of evidence, these may contain linked annexes, but these should be related to the main evidence item. Evidence should be key evidence that potentially covers multiple criteria. There is not an exact number that has been identified yet, if it's significantly above 20 pieces it might be rejected. The bundling of evidence should be approximately no more than 5 pieces of evidence included in one piece of evidence.
Will reflective accounts be accepted?	The new standard does not allow for reflective accounts to be included as evidence expect for S8.1.
Can reflective accounts be used if they are authenticated with product evidence or a witness testimony?	Reflective accounts are not accepted but as an annex you could provide reflection outlining the relevance of the evidence or a description of what the circumstances were in relation to the evidence, especially if it is complex.
Are case studies permitted? How does this compare to Team Leader / Supervisor?	Case Studies for both Team Leader and Ops/Departmental Manager are not permitted. We communicated this is our August newsletter Spotlight on simulation: providing evidence for an area of the standard which is not routinely included in an apprentices' role - link is here
Can a piece of evidence have an overview of what was done following S.T.A.R.R?	I would imagine that would be covered in the 'S' of STARR. S = Situation. This is just a suggested model to help the apprentice to fully answer their question in their Professional Discussions and Questioning.
In regard to portfolio evidence it was suggested a short video of the meeting would be a good piece of evidence, can you please give guidance on how long or 'short' this should be?	As stated in assessment plan - maximum total duration 20 minutes.
Is there an expectation that the learner will provide a narrative that provides context for the portfolio evidence?	This is not a requirement, however if you felt a summary of evidence was helpful to better explain what the evidence was about this could be an annex to any piece of evidence or one overall.
Does the portfolio only have evidence for the modules met by the PD?	Yes, the portfolio is only linked to the professional discussion.

Will electronic signatures be accepted for VARCS?	Yes, all submissions are accompanied by a statement of authenticity so this would be acceptable.
You said a brief recording, WT, Agenda, Notes & Action points could bundle together to make one piece of evidence? Is this not counted as 5 - 5 pieces of evidence?	We would accept this as one piece of evidence.
Is there a limit on the amount of electronic evidence e.g. mp4 recordings for learners who have an electronic portfolio?	Yes, the maximum time allowed for recordings in total throughout the portfolio is 60 minutes and no more, if it is a video the apprentice must be visible in the shot.
Does the Diploma mapping document help with keeping within the 20 pieces limit?	The mapping document will give guidance on types of evidence that can be used linked to specific criteria as well as tips around the content of the evidence. The best evidence will need to be selected by the apprentice; each piece of evidence should be holistic (covering multiple criteria) to support you to stay within the 20 pieces of evidence.
Is an appendix included in the 20 pieces of evidence?	No, see earlier responses.
Regarding the evidence, is it a requirement to annotate each piece and how it is used, to be signed and confirmed by assessor?	It helps if the evidence is either self-explanatory or with some description. It is good practice to annotate each but as there is a statement of authenticity it is not a requirement.
Can you confirm the situation for evidencing S8.1?	To cover this criteria a reflective account or any other method of self-assessment will be allowed.
How can an apprentice consider personal development without self-reflection?	There is an exception for 8.1 as per the centre guide and the requirements for the standard
Does every piece of evidence need a description of what it is used for and does it have to be confirmed by the tutor /employer and learner - 3 signatures?	It is good practice to ensure it is clear what the evidence is being used for, so evidence descriptors are always helpful but not a requirement. It is good if the evidence is authenticated but does not need three signatures. The authenticity statement that is signed confirms this. The Portfolio mapping document will allow you to indicate the link to the relevant KSBs.
If the portfolio of evidence has to be returned for missing evidence, does this affect the learner getting a distinction?	No, this will not impact the grade.

Can a witness testimony be recorded rather than written?	Yes it can be recorded, as long as it details the relationship with the apprentice, their name and job title, evidence that was generated on programme, approximate date of work based examples and clear examples of direct observation where the apprentice has demonstrated competency against the standard whilst on programme.
With the knowledge criteria, if a learner has completed multiple assignments, can we create one large document with all the knowledge questions combined?	There will be a revised mapping document from the qualification to the standard which might help, a way of summarising the knowledge could be helpful if it is clear where it is mapped to and what criteria is being claimed by it. Please consider 20 pieces of evidence where bundling is allowed to around 5 documents, but each document within it cannot be a lengthy document with hundreds of pages.
The 20-minute max for video evidence is this for any single piece of evidence or total for the whole portfolio? Is the 20-minute max mandatory or a recommendation?	There is a 20-minute maximum in total for videos overall, this is not per item.
Professional Discussion	
Will the PD focus on the weaker areas of the apprentices?	No, the PD will focus on mapped KSBs to this assessment method.
Is there still a requirement for CPD in the PD compared to version 1?	CPD by itself is no longer an assessment method, the PD will focus on the mapped KSBs groups: Operational Planning and Management Managing Teams Communication Skills Personal & Professional Development
Can the PD have been completed at any point after Gateway or will the presentation and PD happen at the same time?	Apprentices usually sit both assessments on the same day.
Project proposal	
Will the Employer and Training Provider be required to be part of the Project Proposal?	No, this is no longer a requirement within this assessment plan.
Can the proposal be retrospective, or does it have to be based on a project happening on or around gateway?	It must be based on post gateway work.
Can it be a part of a wider organisational project that they take full responsibility for post gateway?	Yes, it can, as long as the project work starts post-gateway and not before, and the apprentice is able to meet all pass and potentially distinction grading descriptors, post-gateway.

If the proposal is rejected, does this impact on the apprentice's ability to get a distinction?	It doesn't have an impact on the grade.
What is the difference between the "Brief summary" and the Project Proposal?	The Brief Summary is 500 words about the scope on the intended Project and is not assessed; The Project 'proposal' implementation plan is 4000 words (+/- 10%) document and is assessed.
If a proposal is rejected, how much time is given to resubmit this?	The Assessment plan doesn't specify a timeframe, it should be around 3-5 working days.
Is it just the proposal they have to do post gateway or does the project have to be completed?	The name proposal in misleading, it's a project that needs to be fully implementable and only certain skills (stated in the slides) must be commenced during EPA.
Can the learner submit a project plan for a project they have started prior to Gateway?	No, this is no allowed. It must be post gateway work, as set out in the assessment plan.
Is the Project title not given by EPAO after gateway like the new TLS?	No, for level 5 EPA the title is proposed by the apprentice together with the employer and then accepted/rejected by the IEPA.
What happens if a suitable project is not available at the appropriate time that meets the need of criteria and business?	This is a requirement of the Assessment Plan as set by IfATE and so this needs to be planned ahead. Providers need to work closely with employers from the beginning of the apprenticeship to provide clarity on the expectations and requirements of the end-point assessment to ensure that the apprentice is not disadvantaged when they get to EPA.
What happens if a learner does not have the authority to implement a project without it being agreed so would not be able to implement within the 12-week timeline?	The actual implementation is required for certain skills, for the rest it has to be an implementable project.
Presentation and questioning	
Will the apprentice be able to use a PowerPoint presentation during their presentation?	Yes, it's the apprentice's choice on the presentation media they use.
Is there still a requirement for someone from the training provider and the employer to attend the presentation?	No, the presentation is between apprentice and IEPA only.
Switching assessment plans	
I have learners on-programme and are due to go through Gateway Easter 2021. Can they remain on the previous assessment plan as they have already started their projects?	Where an apprentice has started their apprenticeship prior to 21st October 2020 they can remain on the current version of the assessment plan for end-point assessment.

If a learner is currently working towards the current EPA and may go into the new EPA timeframe, can they still take the current EPA?	You are able to choose between yourselves and the learner which assessment plan they to continue on, you have the choice between the current and new assessment plan as long as the apprentice has started their apprenticeship prior to 21st October 2020. If they started their apprenticeship after this date they would complete the new assessment plan.
If a learner has failed an element of EPA on the old, current Standard, can they do one of the new elements from the new version, or do they have to do all the new EPA's version of assessments?	If an apprentice has commenced end-point assessment they cannot switch assessment plans.
Documentation	
We use another EPAO as well as yourself, so can we use their template for the Project Proposal?	Yes of course - as long as it contains the information stipulated in the Assessment Plan
Will there be a mapping document for the Diploma to show the evidence generated from the Diploma maps to the new assessment plan?	Yes, we will have that ready from 15th January 2021
Where will exemplar materials be found?	Exemplar material can be found in smart screen under the end-point assessment preparation and guidance and within EPA Pro
Will there be an exemplar document to show how the assessment criteria can be achieved?	The revised qualification mapping document against the standard will give guidance for the portfolio of evidence to use also for EPA.
Platform support	
Will the SmartScreen EPA preparation be updated?	The documentation will be updated for the new version, these documents will also appear in EPA Pro
Are you updating the Get to Gateway platform to incorporate the new assessment plan?	The on-programme learning has not changed the knowledge skills and behaviours within the standard are the same, however how those KSBs are assessed has changed. For learners on programme currently in Get to Gateway it is likely that they will continue with the current Assessment Plan, so nothing needs to change for them. For new learners, the EPA portfolio 'course' for preparing the EPA will be amended to reflect the needs of the portfolio for this version. For apprentices who

	wish to switch to the new version - we can do this - just make contact with customersupport@cityandguilds.com
Will apprentices who have been previously registered on version 1 but are currently on a planned break in learning? Will they need to switch?	As long as the apprentice started their apprenticeship prior to 21st October 2020 they will be able to complete version 1 and also have the choice to change to version 2
We currently us 'Get to Gateway' eportfolio to support development of KSB - is this being adapted for new assessment planning? Is it worth us registering new learners on this?	Get-to-Gateway is for the on-programme delivery which has not changed, only the assessment methods for end-point assessment has changed.
Qualifications	
Can the post gateway project be used as evidence for the diploma? Can it be RPL'd to the qualification units around project Management?	This isn't as straight forward as you may think. Of course, yes this would be possible - it would mean that the apprentice would not be able to complete their qualification (which is designed to cover all the on-programme) ahead of EPA. This is not an issue in itself however the provider needs to ensure that the apprentice is gateway ready so you would need to consider how you would ensure that the learner is competent in these areas before confirming they are gateway ready.
Does the 12 Week project need to be an additional project to the one completed in the final 6 months of the L5 Diploma 8420 if using to deliver map into the apprenticeship?	Yes the project has to be implemented post gateway
Will the Level 5 diploma stay in its current format or will it change?	The Knowledge Skills and Behaviours have not changed and so the learning on the qualification is still fit for purpose however we recognise that we need to look at the assessments within the qualification so that they better reflect the EPA assessments. This is in progress.
Results and EPA pro	
When will we get notification of switching over to EPA pro?	The main centre contact will receive an email from the onboarding team 8 weeks prior to switching to EPA Pro

How long after the EPA event will the apprentice get their results?	In EPA Pro the results will be released into EPA Pro 7 working days after each element of their end point assessment, once all elements have been completed the final result will be released 7 working days later into EPA Pro.
I do use EPA Pro. I normally register learners on there. Is this something that you will be doing, or will we need to still register on WG?	Where you are already using EPA Pro you will continue to register your learners in EPA Pro, the new version will be open for registrations from 15th January 2021.
Can you confirm that the learner will not get their final overall grade until the Project proposal is completed, post 12 weeks after EPA?	The final overall grade will not be delivered until all elements of the end-point assessment have been completed.
Who decides on whether an apprentice requires a resit or a retake?	This is a joint decision between the apprentice, the provider and the employer.
Costs	
Will SmartScreen be free for this?	The end-point assessment prep and guidance documentation will be available after an apprentice has been registered for the end-point assessment, this fee is £25.00 the remaining balance if payable after the end point assessment has been completed.
Will there be a fee for switching from V1 to V2?	There is no fee for switching assessment plan from V1 to V2
What are the costs for the new assessment plan?	Total of £950.00 - Registration fee £25.00 profession discussion/portfolio of evidence £310 Project proposal, presentation and questioning £615