Guidance

**Conditions for being on the register of end-point assessment organisations**

Information for organisations who are applying to register to offer independent end-point assessment for apprenticeship standards.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conditions-for-being-on-the-register-of-end-point-assessment-organisations#your-organisational-details>

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This document sets out the conditions (the conditions) for all organisations on the register (the register) of end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs).

1.2 The purpose of the conditions set out in this document is to ensure that all EPAOs are clear about the requirements which we (the Education and Skills Funding Agency) have implemented to ensure that public funding and apprentice needs are protected. Only registered EPAOs are eligible to receive public funding in connection with end-point assessment (EPA) activities. In the event of any conflict between the conditions set out in this document and any other documents produced by us relating to EPA, this document takes priority.

1.3 We ask that you (the organisation applying to the register) read and ensure you fully understand the conditions set out in this document before you start your application to the register. For organisations on the register before we published these conditions, we will apply them from 1 December 2017 and they will cover the standard(s) you are registered to assess against.

1.4 The conditions are set out below.

## **2. Your organisational details**

2.1 The application process guides you through the requirements you must meet to be registered as an EPAO. You will need to continue to meet these requirements to remain on the register.

2.2 The information you give us at the time of your application to the register must remain current and valid. Should there be any significant change in this information which reasonably impacts on your ability to deliver EPA you must inform us immediately at helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk. Depending on the nature of that change, we will review your listing on the register.

2.3 Significant changes in information covers all the areas in the application form, which would affect your ability to deliver EPA for the standard(s) and assessment plan(s) you are registered to assess against.

This includes, but is not limited to:

* changes in your financial health (unless you are exempt from financial audit)
* changes to your organisational structure that affect the delivery of the EPA
* changes to your overall resources to deliver EPA for a specific standard and its assessment plan
* information that you are now subject to a formal investigation, sanction or other form of penalty from any other organisation or government agency (this does not include generic regulatory activities that you may be subject to)
* changes to the contact information or web links that we hold about you on the register publication on GOV.UK

2.4 You must notify the external quality assurance (EQA) body for the relevant standard immediately if you become aware of any:

* instance of assessment malpractice
* incident which could compromise your ability to deliver EPA reliably and independently
* instance that could cause you to fail to comply with the requirements of the published standard and its assessment plan

2.5 We ask you annually to re-confirm the details of your application in the [Apprenticeship assessment service](https://assessors.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk). We will notify you in advance and you must comply with our request within four working weeks of receiving the notification. This may include a check of the information we publish about you on the register, and your organisation’s financial health assessment. At least once every three years we will ask you to re-confirm assessment and occupational capacity and capability details. We will require you to validate, update and resubmit these application details to us through the Apprenticeship assessment service for the standard(s) and assessment plans you are registered to assess against. We will give you advance notice of when we intend to do this.

## **3. Readiness**

3.1 In stage 2 of your application we need you to indicate when you will be ready to begin to deliver your EPA services in line with the requirements set out in the standard(s) and assessment plan you are applying against. While we expect that this should generally not exceed nine months of your registration for each standard you have applied against; we are aware that, for some standards EPA might not take place for a significant period of time, for instance two to three years. In addition, depending on the EQA body for the standard (also referred to as EQA providers or EQAPs), there may be other readiness requirements you need to take into account.

3.2 As a result, readiness in the context of these conditions means that:

* within nine months of your registration you must have in place the necessary administrative and systems infrastructure and associated internal quality assurance policies and procedures to support your end to-end EPA service. You should also have a starting base of assessor resource. This means you should be able to support meaningful engagement with employers to offer EPA services and that you are able to support them, and their apprentices, to understand and prepare for the end-point activity
* where you registered against a standard which is between 12 and 24 months’ duration (or where, as a result of prior learning the duration for individual apprentices has been shortened to between 12 and 24 months), you must also have all EPA support materials in place within nine months of your registration and final assessment instruments and tools ready three months in advance of the first EPA taking place, unless there is a requirement from your EQA body that these should be available earlier
* where you have registered for a standard which is above 24 months’ duration you must also have all EPA support materials in place within twelve months of your registration and final assessment instruments and tools ready three months in advance of the first EPA taking place, unless there is a requirement from your EQA body that these should be available earlier. This rule can also be applied to newly published standards and integrated degrees. Newly published standards are defined as those approved for delivery no longer than 6 months before you are applying for them

3.3 We understand that in some circumstances you may not be able to deliver EPA in the above timeframes. This could be due to EQA requirements, or due to amendments to the standard or assessment plan. If you find you are not ready within the original time scale you indicated, you must inform us immediately at helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk including the reasons for the delay.

3.4 We will notify the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) and the relevant EQA body of your intended readiness date. Shortly before the date you have indicated you will be ready to deliver EPA, the relevant EQA body will undertake a short audit to test your readiness before delivery can begin. If you wish to bring the readiness date forward please inform us through the helpdesk at helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk. Once the change has been made we will share this with the EQA body. Contact the EQA body if you require further information.

The audit will cover:

* development of assessment materials
* recruitment of assessors
* EPA delivery plans
* support materials
* internal quality assurance systems

3.5 Readiness to deliver is about you directly delivering EPA. You must not contract out EPA to another organisation to deliver on your behalf (although you may use contracted assessors who may be self-employed or drawn from other organisations to support your delivery of EPA). However, you are solely accountable and responsible for the EPA for the standard(s) and assessment plan(s) you are registered to assess against and you must deliver the EPA in line with the requirements set out in the assessment plan(s) you are registered to assess against.

3.6 In order to be ready to deliver EPA you must demonstrate that you are meeting the requirements set out for the EPAO in the standard and assessment plan (for example, preparation of test banks, supporting materials or assessor qualifications). You must also meet any requirements set out for the standard by the EQA body and/or relevant regulatory bodies.

3.7 Once you meet your readiness date indicated in your register application your entry will be included on the [Find an EPAO](https://find-epao.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk) service. If sufficient progress towards readiness is not being made, we may delay your publication on the service and ask you to agree a revised readiness date.

3.8 You must ensure you are responsive to requests for updates on your ability to deliver assessments for the standards you are approved for. If you do not respond to requests for information from the ESFA, your EQA body, employers or providers, we may review your position on the register using the following process:

* if you are unresponsive to requests for information from the ESFA, EQA body, employers or providers, we will write to you to clarify if you wish to remain on the register
* if you remain unresponsive we will write to you giving 14 days from the date of our correspondence to respond with the reasons why you should not be removed from the register.
* if a reply is not received within 14 days a final letter will be sent giving 14 days’ notice of removal from the register

## **4. Promotion and selection**

4.1 While we encourage you to directly promote your EPA service to employers, you must only do this once you are approved for the register and only for the standard(s) you are registered to assess against. As part of promoting yourself to employers, you must also make clear what your position is in relation to your readiness to deliver a full end-to-end EPA service. After you tell us when you will be ready to conduct your first assessment, you will be searchable on the [find an end-point assessment organisation](http://find-epao.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk) service.

4.2 If you are already listed on the register you may indicate, through your promotional activities, your intention to apply for further standards, but you must make clear that you are not yet registered to assess against these standards.

4.3 You must not promote your EPA service as an undifferentiated part of any package of broader services you may offer to an employer or apprenticeship training provider, including as part of an undifferentiated package of services linked to on-programme qualifications and/or delivery. While you may promote a range of services, and may do this through a single source, you must be clear that your EPA service is a separate and independent offer and costs will be separately charged for it.

4.4 Once contractual agreement is in place we have required training providers to record the selected EPAO in the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) for each apprentice once the identity of the EPAO is known.

4.5 Where you have been approached by a training provider to deliver EPA you should request details of the employer in order that you can meet with the employer and discuss and confirm arrangements for EPA directly. You may also need to inform your EQA body so that they can plan EQA activity and any charges due.

## **5. Eligible costs**

5.1 The employer will select you and negotiate and agree a price with you for EPA. The price agreed will include only those items identified as eligible costs as set out in paragraph 5.7.

5.2 Eligible costs should not usually exceed 20% of the funding band maximum for the standard. This does not mean that EPA must always cost 20%. The price an individual employer will pay for EPA will vary across standards and across EPAOs. In your negotiation with employers you must bear in mind the need to secure value for money.

5.3 Where the total cost of assessment (and training) agreed is higher than the funding band maximum the employer must pay the difference. [The apprenticeship funding and performance management rules](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules) contain further information on the rules which apply to all apprenticeship provision funded by us.

5.4 Payment from the employer to you is routed through the training provider. In order to receive payment, you and the training provider must have a form of contract agreed and in place as soon as possible after notification of your selection by the employer. This contract must cover roles and responsibilities and a schedule for the channelling of funding through the provider to you.

5.5 The terms of the contract between you and the training provider also need to be clear that you are delivering the EPA on behalf of the employer and that the training provider is acting as our agent in passing the payment (either from the employer’s apprenticeship service levy account or funded by us) that you are due through to you. This does not make you a delivery subcontractor of the training provider.

5.6 You must base the costs you quote and or charge for the service you provide including the administration and delivery of EPA (eligible costs) and may also comprise an element linked to profit. As part of arriving at these costs you may take wider business overhead costs into account. These costs may change over time depending on business need.

5.7 Eligible costs are costs:

* associated with the administration, registration and examination of EPA as set out in the standard(s), and their assessment plan(s), you are registered to assess against
* associated with providing guidance and support and the materials (non-capital items) used in the delivery of EPA (equipment or supplies necessary to enable the assessment to take place)
* associated with ensuring trained staff and appropriate premises are available to deliver EPA
* associated with the development and maintenance of assessment instruments and tools
* to support any special arrangements you may need to put in place to ensure any apprentices with special educational needs, disabilities or with another temporary or permanent debilitating condition can fairly access EPA
* associated with any further assessment required by the apprentice to achieve EPA (for instance retakes or resits)
* associated with ensuring consistent and robust internal quality assurance (for instance moderation and standardisation of assessment instruments and tools, assessors and assessment decisions)
* including any EQA charges you may incur (please refer to paragraphs in section 11)

5.8 Ineligible costs are costs associated with:

* any centre approval process (while you will need to assure yourself that the provider has appropriate systems and processes in place for presenting apprentices for EPA, you should not charge for this)
* the recruitment and continuing professional development of your assessors
* promotional activity and or materials
* any on-programme activity you may offer; these costs must be separate as they are ineligible for EPA and must not be packaged as part of the EPA charges you make to an employer

5.9. In addition, you must not directly or indirectly charge individual apprentices for any aspect of their EPA, for example, for materials.

5.10 You must only charge the employer (through the provider) for eligible costs that you legitimately incur as part of the actual administration and delivery of EPA. There may be occasions however, when you have incurred legitimate eligible costs, but due to unforeseen circumstances, an assessment has not been carried out. This may include apprentices who withdraw from attending a booked assessment. In such cases the reasonable eligible costs (i.e. those already incurred in arranging the assessment of the outstanding components) will be payable.

5.11. Similarly, you may incur costs based on anticipated numbers of apprentices and, through no fault of your own, the final number of apprentices undertaking EPA is fewer. In such cases there is no requirement for you to repay these costs on the basis that you have incurred them in good faith.

5.12. If the cost of EPA is higher than the price originally quoted to the employer, you must renegotiate and agree revised costs with the employer before charging additional fees.

5.13 You agree that you may be subject to audit from us. Where this is the case we will give you notice of the intention to audit and clearly identify what is in scope for audit. You must be able to clearly account for and justify, with clear evidence of service delivered, all money you receive. If we have evidence that you have claimed money through the provider that you were not entitled to, then you must return those funds as directed by us.

## **6. Conflict and collusion**

6.1. You must make every effort to manage and mitigate any potential or real conflict of interest in the delivery of your EPA service.

6.2 Where a potential conflict emerges you must take appropriate action to ensure that the integrity and validity of the EPA you deliver is not compromised. This may mean, for instance, removing individuals from any involvement in the assessment process where there is a risk of conflict. The independence of your decision on the competency of the apprentice is paramount. Any actual or perceived conflict of interest can undermine both the outcome of the EPA and your credibility as a trusted assessor of apprentices.

6.3 As part of the application process for the register you have demonstrated that you have a conflict of interest policy in place and that you understand the requirements for separate and independent EPA. You must actively maintain and review your conflict of interest policy, recognising that you will need to respond to changes in what may constitute a potential or real conflict as you build relationships with employers and providers, expand your EPA offer to new standards and assessment plans and engage with EQA bodies.

6.4 Your conflict of interest policy must operate at an organisational as well as at individual assessor level, including any organisations and individuals with which you have contracted to support your delivery of EPA. You are ultimately accountable and responsible if we find evidence that there has been a conflict of interest for your organisation, with an individual assessor, group of assessors, employers, providers, apprentices or an EQA body.

6.5 While on the register you may also wish to offer on-programme support to providers. Where this is the case, there must be a clear separation between your on-programme support services (non-mandatory or mandatory on programme qualifications, provision of support materials for on-programme learning) and your EPA activity.

6.6 It is possible for you to be listed on both the register of apprenticeship training providers and also the register of EPAOs. If this is the case, you must meet the respective entry criteria and requirements of both registers, ensure robust separation of your individual business offers (including how you manage them) and also ensure:

* there is a clear separation of individuals, processes, policies and roles and responsibilities between the training and the assessment arm of your organisation
* no individuals involved in on-programme delivery can be involved in EPA for the same individual or group of apprentices
* you do not deliver on-programme training and EPA for the same group of apprentices for the same standard (unless an exemption has been agreed or you are delivering both the programme and the EPA as part of an integrated degree apprenticeship)

6.7 The separation described above also applies if your organisation has dual or multiple roles. For example, if you are a professional body which is also an awarding organisation and EPAO, there must be clear separation between these functions. Similarly, if you are an apprentice employer, who has been granted an exemption allowing you to assess your own apprentices through the relevant published assessment plan, there must be a clear separation between these functions.

6.8 You must not collude with other EPAOs, providers, employers or any other organisation in the delivery of EPA.

6.9 By collusion we mean you and another organisation:

* entering the register with the express intention of delivering EPA to each other’s apprentices and or of circumventing the requirement both for the employer to select the EPAO and for separate and independent assessment
* already on the register entering into such reciprocal arrangements at a later stage

6.10 We will view such reciprocal arrangements as deliberate collusion which will not only undermine the independence of EPA but also limit open competition in the EPAO market.

6.11 You must not be party to or actively offer or accept incentives or inducements to or from employers and or providers in connection with your engagement to deliver EPA.

6.12 It is permissible to work with other organisations for the purposes of sourcing assessors. In such circumstances it is your responsibility to ensure any conflicts of interest are managed and it must be clear that whilst performing their assessor role, assessors are doing this on your behalf as the registered EPAO.

## **7. Gateway review**

7.1 Prior to undertaking their EPA, you must ensure that the apprentice has passed the gateway review. The employer conducts this review and is supported by the provider, who in turn will have a continuing duty of care for the apprentice as they undertake EPA. As part of the process of passing the gateway review, the employer must agree that the apprentice:

* is in their view competent in the role and therefore ready to do the EPA
* has achieved mandatory on-programme qualifications (where applicable)
* has achieved other specific requirements where these are listed in the assessment plan, such as completing a logbook or service record

7.2 You must not assess an apprentice who has not achieved all of the gateway requirements for their apprenticeship or where the rule for minimum duration has not been met. To ensure this is the case you must have in place a process for checking the requirements with the employer and provider and satisfying yourself that the apprentice has met all the requirements. This includes confirming that the apprentice has achieved eligible English and maths qualifications at the appropriate level (unless the apprentice has an exemption).

7.3 Once gateway requirements have been satisfied you must deliver EPA in line with any timings and requirements set out in the assessment plan. Only in exceptional circumstances would we expect EPA to take place beyond any timings set out in the assessment plan.

7.4 Apprentices may resit or retake elements of their EPA, in line with any requirements set out in the assessment plan. Any resit or retake should be agreed with the employer and training provider and take place within a reasonable timeframe.

7.5 Where EPA has taken place and the apprentice has ‘failed’, this must be recorded in the apprenticeship service, and only once the apprentice has ‘passed’ must the certificate be claimed.

## **8. Certification**

Issuing certificates

8.1 Under Section A3 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 the Secretary of State may issue an apprenticeship certificate in respect of a person who applies for it if it appears to the Secretary of State that the person has completed and achieved an approved English apprenticeship. The Education and Skills Funding Agency operate the process for issuing certificates on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Claiming certificates

8.2 The apprenticeship certificate is the formal recognition that an individual has achieved their apprenticeship.

8.3 You must request the apprenticeship certificate from us once an apprentice has achieved all components of their EPA. As part of this, you must ensure that the apprentice has given their written permission for you to apply for certification on their behalf.

8.4 When we receive your request for the apprenticeship certificate we will cross-check the apprentice’s details, including the apprenticeship standard being certified, with the information we receive from providers in the ILR.

8.5 We understand that it may be helpful for the individual apprentice to have a record or summary of their performance through the components of EPA and you may wish to issue such a record to an apprentice. If you want to issue such a record you must make it clear that such a record is not instead of the actual apprenticeship certificate and you must not charge either the apprentice or the employer for it (or make any charge to the provider).

8.6 You must not issue your own ‘apprenticeship certificate’. Any record of results you do issue to the apprentice on completion of their EPA must include a statement that makes clear such a record is not a formal apprenticeship certificate. You must ensure that any details of results you include in this record are for EPA and not for the overall apprenticeship. Where we find this happening we will treat this as a significant breach of these conditions.

## **9. Record keeping**

9.1 For audit purposes, you must retain a record to prove you have seen and checked evidence that the apprentice has achieved the English and maths qualification requirements and that you are satisfied all other gateway requirements have been met.

9.2 You must retain information about the EPAs undertaken and payment received for six years after the activity took place. This is for audit purposes and so that you can respond to any complaints or appeals from apprentices. This should include details of what assessments were undertaken, against which versions of the standard and assessment plan, when and by whom, along with assessment outcomes and evidence of the internal quality assurance of those assessments.

## **10. Monitoring and audit**

10.1 As an organisation registered to undertake EPA you consent to us obtaining, holding and processing information about you and using this information to monitor your activities as an EPAO and your ongoing compliance with these conditions, and for other purposes set out in this section.

10.2 Through this monitoring we will build a profile of your activity. We will monitor you through information we already hold or can directly access about you and your activities as an EPAO. For instance, from your application to the register, from the ILR, from the apprenticeship service.

10.3 Until we have fully embedded EPA and EPAOs in the apprenticeship service, we will require you, for an interim period only, to provide certain information to us on a regular basis about your activities as an EPAO, which will include information about:

* the employers who have selected you and the providers you have worked with
* your readiness and timescales for delivery of EPA
* the price you charge for EPA
* feedback from apprentices and employers you may have directly gathered
* any on-programme apprenticeship delivery you may be involved in

10.4 In each case we will specify the precise information required and collect the relevant information through quarterly surveys.

10.5 We will use the information we collect and the profile we build to monitor your activity as an EPAO and your compliance with these conditions. We may also use this information to inform our approach to risk management and intervention with regard to all EPAOs.

10.6 We will share the monitoring information we hold about you with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute). The Institute may then share this information with the EQA bodies for the standards you are registered to assess against.

1. 7 This will be to support the EQA bodies in the design and implementation of sampling and standardisation activities across all EPAOs undertaking EPA for the standards they have oversight of, and also to support them in building their own profile of the EPAOs operating across the standards they are responsible for. We will not share information relating to your application with any other third party.

## **11. External quality assurance**

11.1 You must carry out your own internal quality assurance checks to ensure the EPA decision you are making for a particular apprentice is robust, consistent and comparable across assessors and locations.

11.2 You must ensure the robustness and consistency of all EPAs. The EQA body for each standard will monitor that this is being achieved across each standard assessment plan through scrutiny of your:

* assessment materials
* processes and procedures
* delivery of assessment
* internal quality assurance policies and processes

11.3 The Institute has produced a [framework for what EQA covers](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/quality/external-quality-assurance) and how it will be conducted. This will be applied consistently across all EQA bodies.

You must operate within the EQA framework set down by the Institute. This specifically includes the requirement to meet Ofqual’s Conditions of Recognition where the Institute has published its intention that Ofqual is to become the EQA provider for a standard.

For standards in the [first phase of transition to Ofqual as the EQA body](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/changes-to-external-quality-assurance-for-end-point-assessment-organisations):

* EPAOs currently on the register who have not submitted an application to Ofqual by 1 July 2021 will be removed from the register
* EPAOs who have not gained recognition by 16 December 2021 will be removed from the register

For standards in the second phase of transition to Ofqual as the EQA body:

* EPAOs currently on the register who have not submitted an application to Ofqual by 16 May 2022 will be removed from the register
* EPAOs who have not gained recognition by 31 December 2022 will be removed from the register

11.4 You must meet any specific requirements set out by the appropriate EQA body relevant to the delivery of EPA for the standard(s) you are approved on the register for.

11.5 You must give the EQA body the information they will need in order to perform their role. This includes:

* policy documents
* assessment materials
* support materials
* details about internal quality assurance
* details of planning for the EPA service
* data on EPA including registrations, pass rates and distribution of grades
* CVs, performance reports and CPD records for assessors
* feedback from stakeholders, including apprentices and employers
* minutes of decision-making meetings
* conflict of interest records

11.6 To inform EQA if your EQA body requests it you must provide them with a monthly return of:

* assessments delivered and their outcomes
* estimates of apprentices in the pipeline
* details of where and when any assessments have taken place
* planned internal quality assurance activity

11.7 You should be aware that your EQA body may charge you and we accept these as eligible costs. You must make sure that you pay any charges due to your EQA bodies.

11.8 As detailed in paragraphs 11.2, 11.5 and 11.6, we will share information on you with the Institute. This will include content from your register application. In accepting these conditions, you agree to any additional reasonable requests for information made to you by your EQA provider or information about the EPA that you have undertaken or engaged to undertake in the future.

11.9 On an annual basis each EQA body will generate a report on each EPAO’s delivery of the standards they are registered for. They will also provide a report on each standard for which they deliver EQA. These reports will be submitted to the Institute for review by the Institute’s Quality Assurance Committee. Elements of these reports may be made public. You will be given the opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the report before they are submitted to the Institute. You are required to take any actions and respond to recommendations for improvement in the timescales agreed with the EQA provider.

11.10 If you believe that an EQA provider has acted unfairly or outside the framework for EQA provided by the Institute you should contact the Institute at ifa.assessment@education.gov.uk.

## **12. Accepting the conditions**

12.1 If your application to the register is successful, you must confirm that you accept the conditions set out in this document. Entry onto the register and your ongoing listing on the register is dependent on you accepting and complying with these conditions. We will not list you on the register until we receive this confirmation, and we will review your listing on the register if we are concerned that you have breached any of these conditions.

12.2 We will initially require you to confirm acceptance of the conditions when you submit your digital application.

12.3 We will only require you to confirm acceptance once, irrespective of how many standards and assessment plans you may be listed against.

12.4 We may need to update these conditions from time to time. Where this happens we will give you prior notice of this and how the conditions may be updated in order to receive feedback.

## **13. Suspension or removal from the register**

13.1 Failure to comply with any of the conditions detailed in this document may result in us suspending your listing against a particular standard and assessment plan on the register, or your removal from the register completely. This is action we may take separate to any sanctions imposed on you by your EQA body.

13.2 We will write to you as soon as reasonably practicable after we discover or suspect that you may be in breach of any of the conditions. We will also notify the Institute. When we write to you we will set out the process through which you may make representations about any alleged breaches before we take any action. In certain circumstances we may immediately suspend or remove you from the register, where the breach or suspected breach is sufficiently serious and or incapable of remedy.

13.3 We may also ask that you take certain steps within a specified timeline to rectify any breaches of the conditions and or ensure future compliance. If these actions are not taken within the time frames set out, then we may suspend or remove you from the register.

13.4 If you are unresponsive to the ESFA, EQA bodies, employers or providers, we may remove you from the register. Further details of the process for dealing with unresponsive EPAOs can be found in section 3.8.

## **14. Orderly withdrawal from the register of end-point assessment organisations**

14.1 We welcome responsible decisions by EPAOs to voluntarily withdraw from assessing particular standards or from the register of EPAOs.

We recognise that due to a number of factors, the situation might arise when an EPAO wants or needs to do this. Where there is such a withdrawal, it must be done in an orderly way in the interests of apprentices, employers, providers and the ESFA.

14.2 Withdrawal from standards without apprentices

Where an EPAO wishes to withdraw or is obliged to withdraw from a standard with no registered apprentices, the EPAO must:

* inform us through the voluntary exit process as soon as the decision to withdraw from the standard is made
* regularly update the relevant EQA body
* have no current or future planned apprentices taking an EPA (including resits or retakes) and not successfully negotiated with employers or providers about delivering EPA

We will review your withdrawal notification and if agreed, confirm removal from the register and timings. We reserve the right to refuse withdrawal until alternative arrangements have been found.

14.3 Withdrawal from standards with apprentices on programme.

Where an EPAO wishes to withdraw or is obliged to withdraw from a standard with registered apprentices, the EPAO must:

* give the ESFA 6 months’ notice in writing via the ESFA’s withdrawal form
* make alternative arrangements for EPA completion at no detriment to the apprentice or with additional costs
* inform us through the voluntary exit process as soon as the decision to withdraw from the standard is made
* regularly update the relevant EQA body
* promptly prepare, maintain, and comply with a written withdrawal plan, which must specify how the interests of apprentices in relation to that EPA will be protected. Apprentices on programme would include anyone currently doing resists or retakes

We will not confirm removal until all apprentices have completed their EPA or been placed in alternative arrangements.

14.4 Confirmation of withdrawal

Whilst you await review of your withdrawal notification, if any employers or providers contact you then you must not accept any new apprentices on this standard.

Once it is confirmed that your withdrawal has been accepted, you will not be able to apply to deliver against the standard for at least 12 months.

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