



# End-Point Assessment for the Level 7 Academic Professional Apprenticeship: Information Pack

Updated: February 2020



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## End-Point Assessment: Information Pack

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## 1. How we will conduct assessments

Detailed guidance and templates will be released to institutions we contract with to deliver end-point assessment (EPA). Guidance will clearly describe to apprentices, employers and training providers<sup>1</sup> key information such as how we conduct assessments, how to upload evidence for assessment, and how assessors will evaluate assessment evidence (including the templates they will use to record assessment feedback and outcomes). Our EPA will feature the following:

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### Connected

Apprentices will be provided access to an online community for Academic Professionals (as part of the Advance HE Connect platform) as a place for Academic Professionals to share early career experiences, make use of additional resources relating to Fellowship and provide peer support for EPA. Training providers will also be provided access to their own community as part of the [Advance HE Connect](#) platform.

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### Personal

Each apprentice will be assessed by one assessor and one moderator

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### Flexible and virtual

EPA will be delivered virtually:

- Academic Professional Practice Assessment: for example, through video(s) of practice;
- Professional Conversation: a web conversation between the apprentice and assessor at a mutually agreed time;
- Written submission: uploading a portfolio of evidence-based reflection.

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### Professional

A dedicated Advance HE EPA team will manage and administer the service, supported by industry-leading EPA software.

Sector experts in early career academic development and assessment form our group of Independent Assessors (IAs).

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### Developmental

We will provide full training and guidance documentation on the process for submitting evidence, undertaking assessment, and receiving ESFA certificates and EPA feedback.

All assessment outcomes will include developmental feedback to support Academic Professional's onwards professional and career development.

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'training provider' is used throughout this document to refer to both training providers (**an organisation listed on the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers which has a contract with the Employer to provide training to one or more apprentices**) and employer-providers (*a training provider which is also an employer of apprentices and which delivers training to its own apprentices under this agreement*), unless otherwise stated. Definitions: ESFA, January 2020.

All those who successfully complete EPA will receive an invitation to the Advance HE Academic Professionals Connect network.

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## **Responsive**

We will respond to requests for reasonable adjustments to the service to meet specific needs of apprentices

The service is guided by a Reference Group of Higher Education teaching and learning, researcher development and apprenticeship experts, and we have ongoing mechanisms for engaging with this group to review and develop service delivery.

The service is guided by annual feedback from all of our stakeholders – apprentices, training providers and independent assessors.

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## **1.1 The components of End-Point Assessment**

We will administer the assessment in the following way:

1. Apprentices and training providers will be supplied with guidance documents and templates to support preparation for EPA. Apprentices must use the templates supplied when submitted assessments.
2. Training providers (and employer, if distinct and where relevant) will upload information about apprentices due for EPA.
3. Apprentices will be invited to join an Advance HE Connect group to access additional peer support from all apprentices engaged with Advance HE / Vitae EPA.
4. Employer-providers (or employers in consultation with training providers, if applicable) will confirm gateway requirements are met for each apprentice.
5. Apprentices upload their Written Submission and Academic Professional Practice Assessment submissions to our online platform.
6. Independent Assessors (IAs) will be screened for conflicts of interest and allocated to apprentices.
7. The IA will review the Written Submission and Academic Professional Practice Assessment elements prior to the Professional Conversation.
8. IA and apprentice will agree a mutually convenient time to conduct the Professional Conversation assessment element.
9. The Professional Conversation will be conducted online via specialist video conference software, and recorded for moderation and audit purposes.
10. The IA will be guided by specifically-designed guidance documentation and the L7 APA Assessment Plan for the Knowledge, Skills, Values and Behaviours (KSVBs) to be evidenced for each assessment element, and provide an outcome (Pass, Distinction or Fail) for each element of the EPA, along with feedback.

11. Assessment outcome, including developmental feedback, will be communicated to all apprentices and training providers within 20 working days from the final assessment taking place.
12. Apprentices are offered the opportunity to retake or resit EPA, should an element be failed. There is a maximum of two opportunities to resit across the three elements. A retake involves a need for further learning before an assessment is taken; as such, if an apprentice fails two **resit** attempts, they are required to **retake** the entire EPA. An apprentice will only be required to resit the failed element, and the focus should be on the KSVBs that were not passed, as per the feedback received.
13. Successful EPA outcomes will be communicated by Advance HE to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and apprentices' ESFA certificates of completion will be claimed by Advance HE on behalf of the apprentice (permission granted). The ESFA will administer apprenticeship certificates. NB: certificates will be sent to training providers at the address supplied at the point of contracting.

## 2. Contracting for End-Point Assessment

Contracting arrangements for EPA have been based as far as possible on standard practice in the sector, to meet the needs of employers and training providers, and to provide a level of certainty to Advance HE for business planning purposes.

We are committed to transparency in all aspects of the service: if you require any further information, please get in touch via [endpointassessment@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:endpointassessment@advance-he.ac.uk) or [endpointassessment@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:endpointassessment@vitae.ac.uk)

Please note that we have the capacity to deliver a limited number of EPAs in 2019/20. To ensure that we work within those capacity limits we will be contracting on a first come, first served basis.

Contracts will operate for an academic year duration (normally 1 August – 31 July) with annual contract review and renewal.

### 2.1 Contracting process

If you are considering us as your EPA Organisation, please email our team on [endpointassessment@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:endpointassessment@advance-he.ac.uk) or [endpointassessment@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:endpointassessment@vitae.ac.uk) providing the following information which we will use to prepare a contract:

- Your institutional point of contact for end-point assessment. This would normally be your institution's lead for your Academic Professional Apprenticeship scheme;
- Your institutional point of contact for requesting a purchase order being raised, and invoices to be sent (usually someone from your departmental or central finance team);
- The number of staff you are planning to offer for end-point assessment in the forthcoming academic year;
- Your current plan for when those staff will be ready for assessment (to the nearest month).

Current Advance HE member institutions are encouraged to also contact their Advance HE Head of Membership for further information on our EPA service.

Alongside the contract, we will typically request a purchase order be raised and an invoice made against this purchase order at a later date. Further information on relating to payment of assessments can be discussed during the contracting stage.

At three months before the earliest date for assessment (as provided by you in the contract), we will request that you confirm the number of apprentices, reasons adjustment requests and preferred dates for EPA, to enable us to plan our Independent Assessors' workloads. We will reconfirm these numbers and any requests for reasonable adjustment during an EPA Team 'Prior to Start' call one month before assessment.

## 2.2 Why we are charging £1,800 per assessment

The Assessment Plan for the L7 APA describes the required assessment elements:

- Academic Professional Practice Assessment
- Written Submission
- Professional Conversation

EPA is regulated by the Educational and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and external quality oversight for EPA of the L7 APA is provided by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). High quality delivery of EPA is critically important for training providers and apprentices, and failure to effectively manage EPA can result in large fines for EPA Organisations. We are therefore investing in a robust and effective service that is professionally staffed and supported by industry leading EPA software.

Delivering EPA includes:

- Management and administration of the service
- Recruiting and training independent assessors and moderators
- Developing guidance and training materials
- Managing quality assurance
- Paying fees and reporting to the External Quality Assurance provider (QAA)
- Managing appeals and complaints procedures
- Allocating assessors to assessment
- Moderating assessment decisions
- Paying assessors
- Managing resits
- Confirmation of EPA outcome and ESFA certification requests
- Using industry-leading, EPA-specific software to enable an online service

Advance HE is unable to cross subsidise delivery of EPA from other areas of its services, and £1,800 is the lowest rate at which it can offer EPA at the levels currently indicated by the sector. It may be that in future years, and subject to sufficient demand and economies of efficiency, we are able to offer EPA at a lower rate.

## 2.3 Cost of re-assessment

Advance HE recognises that costs to EPA are significant and therefore commit to providing re-assessment at marginal cost only, to keep re-assessment costs low. We will charge £262 per element (Academic Professional Practice Assessment; Professional Conversation; Written Submission) that requires assessment.

## 3. The End-Point Assessment Team

Dan Amin, EPA Adviser: Working with assessors and moderators to ensure consistent and high-level EPA, providing guidance to employers, training providers and apprentices in relation to EPA. Email: [daniel.amin@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:daniel.amin@advance-he.ac.uk); Tel. +44 (0)1904 717664.

Sara Collins, EPA Lead Co-ordinator: Management of EPA software, communication functions, and certification processing. Email: [sara.collins@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:sara.collins@advance-he.ac.uk); Tel. +44 (0)1904 717683.

Kathryn Harrison-Graves, Director of Membership and Accreditation: Providing strategic oversight to Advance HE's role as an EPAO. Email: [kathryn.harrison-graves@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:kathryn.harrison-graves@advance-he.ac.uk)

Kate Jones, Senior Manager Learning and Development: Providing strategic oversight to Vitae's role working with Advance HE. Email: [kate.jones@vitae.ac.uk](mailto:kate.jones@vitae.ac.uk)

Jen Reynolds, Professional Development Manager: Working with Advance HE to ensure consistent and high-level EPA.

Dr Nicola Watchman Smith, Head of Academic Apprenticeships and Excellence Awards: Developing the EPA service, engaging with the sector and assuring quality enhancement. Email: [nicola.watchmansmith@advance-he.ac.uk](mailto:nicola.watchmansmith@advance-he.ac.uk)

## 4. About Advance HE

Advance HE was formed in March 2018, following the merger of the Equality Challenge Unit, the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

Our purpose is to support and enable higher education (HE) providers to put institutional strategy into practice for the benefit of students, staff and society.

We bring together HE-focused expertise in teaching and learning; equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); leadership; and governance, to help you to deliver world-leading teaching, research and scholarship, your civic mission and student outcomes at your institution.

We do this through the provision of specialist knowledge and resource, externally recognised benchmarking and recognition schemes and a member-focused, collaborative approach.

We are driven by the strategic needs of HE. Through our passion for excellence we aim to create an inclusive culture that champions the continuous development of teaching, EDI, leadership and research. We use an evidence-based approach to identify what works and develop practice-based solutions.

Our vision is that the world-class reputation and standing of HE is enhanced and recognised for transforming lives, enriching society and developing the economy for the better.

## 5. About Vitae

Vitae is the global leader in supporting the professional development of researchers, experienced in working with institutions as they strive for research excellence, innovation and impact.

We are a non-profit programme, part of the Careers Research & Advisory Centre (CRAC), with nearly 50 years' experience of enhancing the skills of researchers. We strengthen our members' institutional provision for the professional development of researchers through research and innovation, training and resources, events, consultancy and membership.

Vitae has four aims:

- Influence the development and implementation of effective policy relating to researcher development;
- Enhance higher education provision to train and develop researchers;
- Empower researchers to make an impact on their careers;
- Evidence the impact of professional and career development support for researchers.

Our partners include governments, funders of research, academies, professional bodies, trusts, and foundations, universities and research institutes.

# Contact us

## Advance HE

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