



End-Point Assessment for the Level 7 Academic Professional Apprenticeship

Information pack

Updated: June 2021

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

Our End-point Assessment (EPA) service for the Level 7 Academic Professional Apprenticeship (L7 APA) standard is one of the many services that Advance HE provides to the sector, and we have been on the Register for End-point Assessment Organisations since January 2019. We have administered over 200 EPAs since our service began, and are contracted with over 20 employers.

We work closely with Vitae, the global leader in supporting the professional development of researchers, to ensure that our EPA service is expert-led for both the Teaching and Research specialist routes for this standard.

We currently have 38 Independent Assessors administering EPAs for us, who are all experienced experts in the field of early career academic development and assessment.

Our team

Nick Skeet, Associate Director (Memberships): Providing strategic oversight to Advance HE's role as an EPAO.

Dr Nicola Watchman Smith, Head of Academic Apprenticeships and Excellence

Awards: Operational and strategic lead of the EPA service, engaging with the sector, and assuring quality compliance and enhancement.

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.

Natalie Ford, EPA Lead Co-ordinator: Management of EPA software, communication functions and supporting the process.

Léonie Brown, EPA Co-ordinator: Communication functions, event administration and supporting the process.



How we assess

The EPA for the L7 APA comprise three assessment elements – a Written Submission (WS), an Academic Professional Practice Assessment (APPA) and a Professional Conversation (PC). All elements of the EPA are assessed online, via our Smart EPA (SEPA) portal, and each apprentice will have a dedicated independent assessor.

Written Submissions (WS)

The WS comprises two parts:

1. A Reflective Journal, which has a word limit of 3000 words (+/- 10%) and the purpose is to complement the supporting evidence provided in Part 2 with a reflective commentary on an apprentice's development as an Academic Professional.
2. Annex of Supporting Evidence, which has a word limit of 4500 words (+/- 10%) and the purpose is to provide evidence, attributable to the apprentice, that aligns with and maps onto the specialist knowledge and skills assessed by the Written Submission.

Academic Professional Practice Assessment (APPA)

The APPA comprises two parts, and is the only element that differs based on which specialist route the apprentice is undertaking.

Teaching specialist route:

1. A session plan, to include evidence of where teaching activities map to the standard.
2. A recording of up to four classroom-based sessions, which lasts for no more than 60 minutes. The submission could also include a five-minute recorded reflection on the session(s), which will be counted within the max. of 60-minute limit, but not towards the four session maximum. 'Classroom-based' can refer to physical and/or online classrooms. Both synchronous and asynchronous online classroom sessions are acceptable for this assessment.

The apprentice may provide up to two pieces of additional evidence per classroom experience recorded, to support demonstration of classroom engagement.

Research specialist route:

1. A presentation plan mapping the presentation/activities to outcomes.
2. A recording lasting no more than 60 minutes of an academic or professional conference presentation, or an edited composite recording with extracts from up to four presentations/activities e.g. public engagement activities, workshops or tutorials, etc., that detail the apprentice's research plan and/or future research strategy. Evidence of such activity can be drawn from online and/or in-person events.

The apprentice may provide up to two pieces of additional evidence per presentation / activity recorded, to support demonstration of audience engagement.



Professional Conversation (PC)

The 60-minute PC will take place between the apprentice and independent assessor via an online video platform, and we have a unique agreement with the Trailblazer group to place the PC at the end of the apprenticeship, following the submission of the other two assessment elements. This decision was based on sector feedback, and best serves the needs of the apprentice.

Why Advance HE?

- + **Long established.** Over 200 EPAs administered, contracted with over 20 employers, and have been providing a totally online service since inception.
- + **Efficient and effective turnaround times.** Average of 24 working days from EPA being requested to it being completed, and feedback returned.
- + Rated “**Good with Outstanding Elements**” and “**Low Risk**” by QAA during 6-month review of service (June, 2020).
- + **Partnered with Vitae.** We are the only EPAO to be so, thus have a specialist capacity to administer EPAs on the Research specialist route.
- + **Close sector body relationships.** We work closely with the trailblazer group for the L7 APA, IfATE, ESFA, QAA and Ofqual to provide a sector-leading EPA service.
- + **‘Gold standard’ independent assessors.** We have a large pool of IAs drawn from our wide networks, who are experts in early career academic development and assessment
- + **High first time pass rate.** We see over 90% of apprentices achieve pass or distinction at their first attempt.
- + **Education specialists.** We draw on Advance HE’s experience of leading in higher education enhancement and being specialists in fellowship-aligned programmes, so understand the context the L7 APA is delivered in and the support providers need when preparing for EPA.

“ “ What apprentices think of our service

“My conversation with my assessor was rigorous, encouraging, and a wonderful invitation to me to think through aspects of my pedagogy. I found it a great experience.”

“Advice is clear and timely and my queries have been resolved on the same day. Excellent support from the team.”

“My academic assessor was fantastic - so supportive and friendly which enabled me to perform to my best and she gave great constructive feedback.”



Additional benefits of our service

Guidance and templates

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 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).

Advance HE Connect

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.



Additional support

In addition to the handbooks, guidance documents and resources that you are provided with, we also include a variety of different additional support benefits as part of our service. These include:

Monthly one-to-one drop-in surgeries for apprentices

During these drop-ins apprentices can ask EPA-related questions of the EPA Team.

EPA orientation events

These are for apprentice cohort groups to attend at the beginning of their apprenticeship. These events are delivered by members of Advance HE's EPA team online to your apprentices and apprenticeship teams at your request.

Quarterly coffee mornings

Hosted for employers and providers to attend, network, share best practice, and receive service and sector updates from the EPA Team.

Quarterly catch-up calls

You have access to the EPA team to answer any questions you may have, provide you with updates, and to ensure that you are happy with all aspects of our service.



Costs and contracting

Each EPA costs £1800 per apprentice. Resits are charged at £262 per assessment element resit (maximum of two resit attempts per apprentice). The cost of a retake is the same as a first attempt EPA (£1800 per apprentice).

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

- + your institutional point of contact for EPA. 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 expecting to be put forward for EPA 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 relating to payment of assessments can be discussed during the contracting stage.

Good news stories from apprentices

We have recently published a number of pieces from successful apprentices that have come through Advance HE's End Point Assessment. **You can view all of our EPA stories here.**

Below you will find one of our recent stories:

"Rediscovering the power of feedback and reflection in driving improvement"

Emma Wood is a Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Exeter Business School and recently completed the Academic Professional Apprenticeship programme where she achieved distinctions in all three elements of the course.

Find out how she found the process in this interview with her.



Want to find out more?

@ endpointassessment@advance-he.ac.uk

🖱 www.advance-he.ac.uk/epa

