

Learning Enhancement



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

EQA External Examiner Handbook (Apprenticeships)

2023/24

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EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF APPRENTICESHIP END POINT ASSESSMENT - EQA EXTERNAL EXAMINER HANDBOOK

1. The Role of EQA External Examiners

- 1.1 The University of Leeds is on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR) as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) for a number of integrated and higher degree apprenticeships. For these apprenticeships, the end point assessment (EPA) is fully integrated into the on-programme delivery and the University is responsible for delivering EPA in line with the published EPA plan for the apprenticeship standard. The EQA external examiner role is required to provide external oversight of our EPA delivery and external quality assurance monitoring of our end point assessment.
- 1.2 The role is normally undertaken by the external examiner appointed by the University to have oversight of the higher education qualification which is integrated in the apprenticeship and the apprenticeship end point assessment (usually a module on the programme). The role is therefore normally a set of additional responsibilities to be undertaken by the programme external examiner alongside their regular duties.
- 1.3 The University of Leeds External Examiner Handbook provides information on Institutional policies and procedures related to external examining, appointments and duties, and how the University considers external examiner reports. The external examiner handbook should therefore be read in conjunction with this EQA external examiner handbook. Please see the dedicated [webpage for External Examiners](#) at the University of Leeds which includes a hyperlink to the current external examiner handbook.
- 1.4 For further details on the EQA External Examiner role please see the dedicated [EQA External Examiners](#) webpage or contact the Learning Enhancement Team: LE-Apprenticeships@leeds.ac.uk

2. EQA External Examiner activities

- 2.1 EQA external examiners are required to comment on assessment practice and procedures for the EPA against the requirements of the specific apprenticeship standard, through the review of documentation, attendance at meetings or assessments (remotely/in-person) or visits to the University. The EQA external examiner will also complete an annual report which informs the University's internal quality monitoring processes and provides evidence required for EQA monitoring checks undertaken by the Office for Students (OfS).
- 2.2 The EQA external examiner will have oversight of and be able to comment on the following in relation to end point assessment, (where applicable for the standard):
 - i. that the EPA is delivered in line with the published EPA plan;
 - ii. the management of gateway and mandatory qualification requirements and the involvement of the employer in deciding the apprentice is ready for EPA;
 - iii. individual assessment instruments/methods are fit for purpose;
 - iv. the EPA assessor's knowledge is up to date;
 - v. the accessibility of EPA and the management of reasonable adjustments;
 - vi. a sample of assessments, including live assessments;

- vii. physical and digital versions of documents, including marked assessment materials from apprentices;
 - viii. interviews with assessors and other EPAO staff;
 - ix. feedback from apprentices and employers;
 - x. assessment is reliable and comparable across different EPAOs, employers, places, times and assessors.
- 2.3 The EQA external examiner will be provided with a schedule of EPA activities for each academic year (such as visits and observations), once these are known. The EQA external examiner will normally observe the meeting at which the final decision on the EPA is confirmed (such as the End Point Assessment and Awards Board/Examination Board);
- 2.4 The EQA external examiner will usually conduct a visit to the EPAO for each cohort of apprentices completing EPA (normally annual). The visit will be in-person or online, depending on what is most appropriate and practical according to the individual assessment plan.
- 2.5 For apprenticeships with fully integrated EPAs where apprentices are not required to complete any additional assessment and the Nursing and Midwifery Council is statutory regulator (such as Nursing Associate, Registered Nurse), the EQA external examiner will have oversight of the gateway approval process and internal quality assurance of the EPA delivery. The EQA external examiner will also normally observe the meeting at which the final decision on the EPA and award of the apprenticeship is confirmed.

3. EQA External Examiner Reports

- 3.1 The EQA external examiner will produce a written report on their activities and findings for submission to the University as EPAO. This document will:
- i. detail the work conducted by the external assessor including observations, meetings and the sampling undertaken;
 - ii. provide commentary and feedback on EPA delivery that covers the areas listed above (see paragraph 2.2);
 - iii. identify areas of good practice and provide developmental advice;
 - iv. identify any issues or activities within the context of the delivery of EPA that do not meet with the requirements of the Standard or pose a risk to effective EPA delivery and/or the achievement of occupational competence;
 - v. comment on progress with any items for improvement previously raised with the EPAO by the EQA external examiner.
- 3.2 An EQA external examiner report will be produced for each year that EPA delivery occurs. The date for submission of the report will be confirmed as part of the annual schedule of EPA activities for the EQA external examiner (see 2.3 above).
- 3.3 A standard report form is provided and the EQA external examiner will submit the report directly to the Learning Enhancement Team via email. The delivering School and Learning Enhancement Team will each provide a response to the EQA external examiner report. The final report will be shared with the School and feed into the University's internal quality monitoring of EPA delivery.

- 3.4 EQA external examiner are encouraged to liaise with appropriate School staff should they have any comments on the EPA that may require immediate consideration, and they may raise any issues of concern in advance of submission of the annual report by contacting the Learning Enhancement Team.

4. Criteria for the selection of EQA External Examiners

- 4.1 The University criteria for the selection external examiners will be followed (see the external examiner handbook), and in addition:
- i. are independent from the apprentices, employers, assessors and from the delivery of EPA, with no conflicts of interest;
 - ii. are impartial in judgement and independent of the EPAO and its staff, and any relevant employers and/or partners;
 - iii. meet the requirements of any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies for the apprenticeship Standard;
 - iv. have appropriate knowledge, relevant experience and occupational competence in the area of work related to their appointment.
- 4.2 EQA external examiners are required to undertake continuous professional development (CPD) and training in line with the standards set out in the EPA plan. EQA external examiners should maintain up-to-date occupational and assessment skills, and knowledge of the relevant apprenticeship standard developments.

5. Fees and Expenses

- 5.1 Fees are paid to EQA external examiners by the School concerned following receipt of the annual EPA report. A schedule of payments for EQA external examiners is produced annually and run in line with the schedule of payments for external examiners. For information on the schedule of payments, please see the dedicated webpage for [EQA External Examiners](#).
- 5.2 Valid expenses will be reimbursed by the School concerned which will provide the necessary claim forms. The levels of reimbursement are the same as for University staff. Valid expenses include the costs of travel to and from the University, overnight accommodation, postage and general subsistence.