

Questions and Answers

New apprenticeship funding rules webinar – version 6 changes (England)

25 April 2018

Does the information covered in this webinar only apply to England?

Yes.

Does the duration of the standard only refer to on-programme, or does end-point assessment (EPA) have to be taken within this time frame?

Duration applies only to on-programme content. Time for EPA should not be included in the calculation of duration for apprenticeship standards.

Is it likely a market in "traded 10% transfers" will develop? For example, will the transferor seek to recover the 10% through their normal trading pricing?

This will not be possible as once the funding is transferred, it cannot be transferred back to the original employer, or transferred on to any other employer. Transferred funds can only be used by the receiving employer to deliver the number and type of apprenticeships that have been agreed with the levy-transferring employer. This information and agreement will form part of the contract between the transferring and receiving employers.

I'm an employer provider, do the levy transfer rules give us an opportunity to deliver apprenticeships to the employer we choose to transfer to? For example, we transfer money to an employer in our supply chain but deliver the apprenticeships to their staff and recoup the money as payment for the training?

No. As an employer provider, you can only deliver apprenticeships to your own employees.

When transferring 10% funds to another employer will this show in our apprenticeship service account?

The amount transferred out to the receiving employer will show as a debit in your account. The receiving employer will see the transferred amount in their apprenticeship service account.

Is there a template for the agreement between the end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) and the training provider?

No. Each EPAO draws up their own legal agreement for the organisations they are working with.

If a carpentry apprentice is working with a general builder and is being shown ground-working, brickwork etc. can this be used as off-the-job training?

Unlikely, unless ground-working and brickwork are included in the apprenticeship standard or framework being delivered. Only training and skills that map to the apprenticeship can be included in off-the-job training, i.e. knowledge, skills and behaviors written into the standard or framework.

EPAOs have fixed prices, but is there room for negotiation?

Each EPAO will have their own arrangements for pricing. Some may have room for negotiation if for example there are large numbers of apprentices that can be assessed in batches. However, EPAOs, like providers, have to cover their costs. Independent end-point assessor day rates can be quite high and some EPA plans are complex and require a lot of investment up front.

Please clarify the minimum amount of time on-programme for a 12-month apprenticeship. Is the EPA after day 365?

Yes. Duration of the apprenticeship is the on-programme, learning aspect of the apprenticeship and does not include time for EPA, which should be added onto the full duration required for individual apprenticeships.

When providing learner information to EPAOs, how do we ensure we're GDPR compliant? My assumption is that we should have this agreement with the learner as part of the learner agreement.

Each individual provider will need to ensure they are GDPR compliant and take their own legal advice on how to achieve this so they can effectively share the individualised learner record (ILR) and learner data with the EPAOs to enable EPA and certification to take place.

When the EPA payment process changes in 2019 employers will pay EPAOs directly from the apprenticeship service account. This means that employers will not be registered with e.g. City & Guilds and therefore won't be able to register for and get the EPAOs support. Are you going to change your systems?

EPAOs will make the necessary changes to ensure that payment for EPA can occur effectively from the apprenticeship service, when the process and rules for payment change in 2019.

When calculating the 20% off-the-job requirement is the time taken to complete EPA included? I.e if training is complete in 12 months but EPA takes a further month, does the 20% calculation apply to the full 13 months even though no further training is taking place?

No. Calculation of off-the-job learning applies only to the learning phase of the apprenticeship, not the assessment aspect.

Is VAT chargeable on EPA?

No.

Is there any suggestion/recommendation of where to include the statement regarding sharing the ILR data with EPAOs?

The funding rules state that providers must form a contract in writing with the employer-selected EPAO. The written agreement must set out the arrangements for sharing relevant apprentice information so EPA and certification can take place, including arrangements for any re-takes and payments.

Do the ESFA funding changes only apply to apprenticeships enrolled from a particular date, or do they apply to all ongoing apprenticeships?

The new version 6 of the apprenticeship funding rules apply from 1 May 2017 unless otherwise stated, e.g. the 10% transfer of funds only applies from 1 April.

Providers may need to recalculate some off-the-job hours to comply with the new arrangement for including holiday hours in the calculation. This set of funding rules only runs until 31 July 2018, when a new set of rules will apply.

Will my provider explain which details I need to share with our EPAO?

Yes. Or, if you have a direct relationship with your EPAO, they will also be happy to explain what information is required.

Do the 16 to 19 incentives for the apprenticeship frameworks continue into 2018/19 new starts?

The apprenticeship funding rules for 2018/19 have not been published so we cannot offer any insight into this query. We will run further webinars when the rules for next year are published.

Is the off-the-job training measured as total qualification time or guided learning hours?

Off-the-job is measured in working hours, not TQT or GLH. Please see the calculation in the webinar slides. The slide deck can be found [here](#).

Do you have any further information on how Ofsted will look at standards?

The Ofsted Common Inspection Framework explains what inspectors will look at and has a distinct section in the handbook dedicated to the apprenticeship inspection process. The 2018 handbook can be found [here](#).

Is there an additional charge to either the employer, apprentice or training provider for retakes of EPA?

Retakes of EPA can be paid for out of the levy and costs should be negotiated between employer and EPAO, or employer, EPAO and provider as part of the agreement for the whole cost of the apprenticeship. This should be arranged prior to starting.

Can we query the 18-month apprenticeship duration being exclusively on-programme time? In some assessment plans it states EPA occurring within this time? An example would be Civil Engineering...

Each apprenticeship standard has a duration included in the actual standard. This is the duration for on-programme learning, according to ESFA funding rules. If this conflicts with information in the standard, you may need to raise this with the trailblazer lead or the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA).

Can preparation for EPA count towards the 20% off-the-job training requirement, i.e practice interviews and so on?

This is yet to be confirmed. We have queried and are awaiting reply from ESFA.

Some of the early standards are now being revised, will there be version number/codes to differentiate between the old and new?

The IfA have not stated whether they will add version control processes into their revised standards. We will ask but it could take some time to receive an answer on this.

Do you have any advice for preparing for ESFA audits? We've just had one and would like some tips on providing specific costs for negotiated eligible costs.

The ESFA publish the funding monitoring rules and audit guidance annually. The link to those documents is [here](#) and they state what ESFA will monitor and look at during audits. The documents do not appear to ask providers for the details of eligible costs that are raised in this question and as such, we would advise contacting the ESFA directly to discuss why they are asking for information that is not in the guidance and what exactly they expect you to supply under the circumstances you have flagged.

How are providers expected to evidence the negotiation price of the EPA cost if it's been agreed directly between the employer and the EPAO?

At the moment, it's the provider that has to supply that information via ILR to the ESFA. This means any employer providers will need to share the final agreed price with their provider to enable you to include it in your ILR returns and draw down funding. This should probably be in your written agreement with the employer.

Once the process changes, the EPA payment will go straight from the employer's apprenticeship service account to the EPAO — so we presume providers will no longer need to include that information in the ILR return. However, the ESFA will publish the processes for the new arrangements nearer the time.

How are non-levy re-sits and extra learning paid for?

They can now be paid for out of the levy and providers and employers should agree this, if you think it will be required, as part of the initial price negotiations before the apprenticeship commences.

Who will monitor quality of EPA and how will they do this?

The IfA has offered trailblazer groups four options for monitoring EPA quality as part of the sign-off for the apprenticeship assessment plan. The options are:

- Employer-led approach
- Ofqual
- IfA
- professional body.

Each standard employer group chooses the options that best suits the needs of the apprenticeship standards, this should be included in the assessment plan on the standard.

Are all EPAs offered by awarding organisations?

EPA is offered by a variety of organisations, not all of which are awarding organisations. City & Guilds offers EPA for a selection of apprenticeship standards, where we feel we have the expertise and knowledge/capacity to do so successfully for our customers. A list of EPAOs can be found [here](#).

If apprentices are on the old frameworks does the 20% off-the-job requirement still apply?

Yes.

How will the certification process work for integrated standards and those with an EPAO? What evidence needs to be provided, and is there an acceptable evidence list for maths and English?

The EPAO applies for the certificates for the apprenticeship standards when the EPA is successful. Universities will have separate arrangements for certification. Annex G of the apprenticeship funding and performance rules is a list of acceptable maths and English qualifications and components to support apprenticeships.

Does the 20% off-the-job training have to relate to the standard?

Yes, it must map to the standard.

How will EPAs be standardised?

Each apprenticeship EPA is unique to the apprenticeship standard. External quality assurance of EPA will take place via four routes outlined earlier in this Q and A document. The IfA has published a framework for EQA of EPA, which can be found on [their website](#).

What support can be given to apprentices by the college for the EPA?

A provider can offer as much support as they think is required to ensure the apprentice is ready for EPA and to ensure they are successful. City & Guilds offer a variety of support options for EPA to assist providers with readying their apprentices. Please see our [apprenticeship EPA pages](#) for more information.

If a standard has a 13-month duration (372 days) and our ILR reflects that, does it mean the training must take place up to the point of 372 days, and EPA planned for any time after?

A standard with 13 months duration would be 395 days. And on-programme learning must take place during that time. EPA takes place after the end of the duration specified and so your ILR should show a planned end date greater than the duration, to take into account the time needed for EPA to occur.

How would that affect the ILR and timely completion, if the EPA is not taking place for another month or two? Would the ESFA recognise this as a late achiever?

You must put in a planned end date that includes the time for EPA to occur.

Does funding stop at the end of the on-programme phase?

Yes, although when EPA has occurred, the provider will then receive the 20% completion funds held back by the ESFA from the on-programme levy payments.

Can an apprentice take EPA before the suggested duration of a standard?

No, unless the apprentice has prior learning, which is taken into account and this shortens the duration of the apprenticeship. The provider must have the evidence of prior learning and knowledge to prove that the full duration is not required. E.g. certificates of previous qualifications etc.

If a learner fails EPA, and re-sits how is the 'timely success rate' worked out?

Please refer to the ILR guidance [here](#), for information on how to return this data.

I've always understood the 20% off-the-job split as between on-the-job and off-the-job training, whereas the calculation on slide seven seemed to talk about normal on-the-job hours, not just training? Please can you clarify.

Off-the-job training is time when the apprentice is **not** doing their job but learning new skills and knowledge laid out in the standard or framework. The apprenticeship funding rules list what can and cannot be counted as off-the-job. On-the-job learning does **not** count toward the off-the-job calculation and hours.