
ILM briefing

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Showcasing a portfolio of evidence through end-point assessment (EPA) – planning for success

For many universities, training providers and employers the new apprenticeship standards now being successfully delivered across England have presented some exciting opportunities. Apprenticeship providers have also identified the need to review traditional apprenticeship delivery models to meet the expectations of new standards. For example, new standards may or may not include an on-programme mandatory qualification, a minimum 20% off the job training is required, maths and English must be achieved pre-EPA gateway and the apprentice will be graded for their apprenticeship via an independent end-point assessment organisation (EPAO).

Approved EPAOs are now externally endorsing apprentice achievements via appointed independent end-point assessors using a range of summative assessment methods. Depending on the apprenticeship standard and the EPA assessment plan, these methods can include observation of practice, knowledge testing, professional discussion/panel interview, and workplace evidence collated through portfolios or work based projects.

This briefing aims to highlight some key considerations to employers, apprentices and those delivering new apprenticeship standards in higher education (HE) where a portfolio of evidence is required as part of the apprentices EPA.


A collective responsibility from day one

- At the start of any degree apprenticeship, it is vital that the employer, apprentice and HE provider fully understand all specific details and requirements of the published apprenticeship standard and associated assessment plan. An initial meeting to clarify apprenticeship delivery timescales, how the (minimum) 20% off-the-job training will be achieved and evidenced, the teaching and learning plans and all assessment expectations is highly recommended. This meeting should take place as early as possible to avoid any confusion and misunderstandings further down the line.
- The employer themselves should support their apprentice develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required through work-based activities.
- For reference purposes, it is recommended that all parties have copies/access to the apprenticeship standard and associated EPA requirements. This should always form the basis of progress review meetings held with the apprentice, employer and HE provider to ensure the apprentice is on track in meeting the required on-programme learning, e.g. development of work practice skills, knowledge and behaviours stipulated by their apprenticeship standard.
- Understanding all guidance available for the EPA portfolio requirements is crucial to enable the apprentice to be clear on what a portfolio is, what should be conveyed within it and how on completion this will enable the apprentice to 'showcase' their practice to the highest of their ability based on their apprenticeship journey. This would be clearly laid down in the published apprenticeship assessment plan and additional guidance provided by the employer's chosen EPAO.
- For apprentices operating at HE level it should be reasonable to expect that the apprentice themselves takes a high level of ownership of their portfolio evidence so please ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibility and what is required from the start. Some may require more support than others here.
- Any evidence contained in a portfolio must comply with all confidentiality and data protection requirements and this should be explained to the apprentice at the start of their apprenticeship. Providing the evidence still showcases the required S/K/B and is still authentic, then redaction of evidence is suitable.



20%

A minimum 20% off the job training is required



At Zurich Insurance we support our apprentices with meeting elements of the standards that are not part of their normal role through cross-functional webinars delivered by internal teams. We then follow up with a brief test to evidence this knowledge.

Jude Pilcher, UK Apprenticeship Manager at Zurich Insurance Ltd

Covering the whole standard

- A portfolio of evidence in many cases starts with the apprentice aligning portfolio requirements to evidence that can potentially be generated from their learning and practice. Creating a draft plan as to what evidence potentially could be included is always useful. This should be supported with ideas from their employer and HE provider as to the types of evidence that could be generated through their apprenticeship journey. It would also enable the employer to plan work-based learning opportunities for their apprentice too.
- Where a skill / knowledge / behaviour (S/K/B) within the standard is not 'naturally occurring' within either the workplace role or academic programme an innovative approach may be required to expose the apprentice to this area. Consider what projects, meetings, workplace shadowing the apprentice could get involved with to generate evidence for the 'harder to reach' outcomes.

Types of evidence

- The apprentice needs to be clear on the types of evidence that they can and cannot include in their portfolio. In most cases very clear written guidance/criteria is available to support this via the apprenticeship assessment plan and additional guidance provided by the EPAO.
 - Portfolio evidence can in many cases, include work-based reports, project plans, reflective journals, presentations, assignments, photographs and videos.
 - The key message is not about quantity of evidence but about quality and ensuring the evidence meets set criteria.
 - Portfolio evidence should aim to 'showcase' the apprentices' achievements, including expected behaviours in how they are working with others and in teams.
- Remember that the independent end-point assessor (IEPA) will not be familiar with the apprentice or the specifics of their work environment so evidence must be clear and unambiguous in its presentation. Supporting 'context statements' are recommended to support evidence that could be open to misinterpretation.
 - If using audio or video evidence it is recommended, where feasible that the IEPA can clearly and easily identify the key pertinent points within the recording where an apprenticeship outcome is being met. Please be mindful and check of any file size restrictions applied by the EPAO for this type of evidence.

Referencing a portfolio

- Normally this would be completed in an electronic format (through an e-portfolio such as Learning Assistant) to enable uploading onto the EPAO assessment platform.
- Apprenticeship progress reviews with employers and HE providers are an excellent way to review how the apprentice is capturing and collating their portfolio evidence and to check that it is meeting all requirements of the apprenticeship and EPA.
- Before submission, the apprentice should double check all their portfolio evidence to ensure its **validity, currency, sufficiency and reliability** and that their completed portfolio meets the set criteria outlined within any EPA plan/any additional guidance provided by the EPAO.
- Avoid duplication of evidence – a range of different evidence should always be considered where possible.



- Make sure evidence is clear to those assessing it, e.g. any photographs scanned in electronically must be of good quality, so they can be clearly seen by the independent end point assessor (IEPA). Remember that visual clarity applies to all submitted evidence to enable external assessment to take place.
- Where possible, use any portfolio matrix or other documentation provided by the EPAO to reference portfolio evidence. A good e-portfolio such as Learning Assistant will also provide this matrix tool to cross-reference evidence.
- In some cases, the apprentice's portfolio may also be used as the basis for professional discussion or a panel interview as part of the external EPA assessment process – always check what the EPA plan stipulates in relation to this.
- Once finally completed, make sure the content of the portfolio reflects the apprentice's best work before submission to the EPAO.

The tools for the job

- Make sure that the apprentice has access to the tools they need to capture evidence in the workplace and are confident in using them.
- Mobile phones are a great tool for capturing audio, photo and video evidence and uploading into a portfolio – most good e-portfolios will have a mobile app to make this process straightforward.

Portfolio grading

- The apprentice should be clear on how their portfolio will be graded in-line with other EPA summative assessment components.
- They should be made aware by their HE provider what steps can then be taken for resubmission should they fail any component of their EPA. The employer would also need to be aware of any additional involvement for reassessment.



In summary, we would stress the vital importance of:

- Clear communication and ownership between the HE provider, employer and apprentice.
- Reading and understanding the apprenticeship standards, assessment plans and EPAO guidance prior to commencement.

We hope that this briefing provides some useful guidance for the successful showcasing skills for an EPA portfolio. We wish you and your apprentices every success.

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If you have any questions or support needs that City & Guilds and ILM can help with, or would like to know more about our **EPA offer** and **Learning Assistant e-Portfolio** please contact **Joe.Bell@cityandguilds.com**

About ILM

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Over one million people hold an ILM qualification and the organisation is dedicated to continuously improving leadership, management and coaching skills – both in the UK and internationally – ensuring businesses and individuals are equipped for the working world now and in the future.

ILM develops qualifications, accredits and assesses training, and provides quality training materials to ensure continual learning development. ILM is a City & Guilds Group Business. All ILM qualifications are awarded by The City and Guilds of London Institute, which was founded in 1878 and is incorporated by Royal Charter.

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