

The Future of EPA And The Impact of New Flexibilities on Curriculum

Summer 2025

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WELCOME !



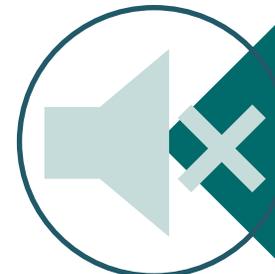
Our session today is being recorded



Slides and recording will be made available after the session



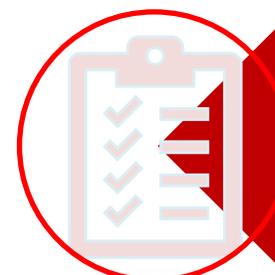
All materials can be accessed from the members portal page - see Resources Slide



All participants will be on mute for the session but can unmute

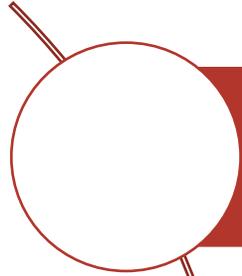


To ask a question just raise your hand or add to the chat

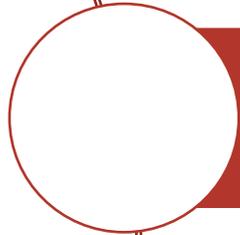


Please stay online for the evaluation survey at the end

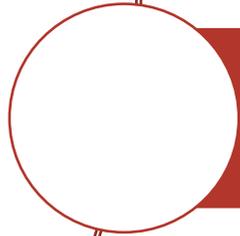
Agenda



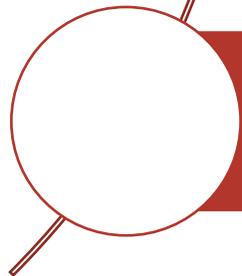
Introduction



EPA Flexibilities



Impact on Design



Resources & Next Steps



EPA Flexibilities

February 2025 Assessment Principles

1. Simplified Assessment Plans:

- Published assessment plans will be streamlined, focusing on high-level information and the Assessment Outcomes apprentices need to demonstrate.

2. Proportional Assessment:

- Assessments will be more closely aligned with the specific competencies being tested, reducing unnecessary duplication.

3. On-Programme Assessment:

- In some cases, assessments may be integrated into the training period, rather than solely at the end.

4. Training Provider Involvement:

- Training providers may be involved in delivering certain assessment elements, with EPAOs retaining responsibility for quality assurance.

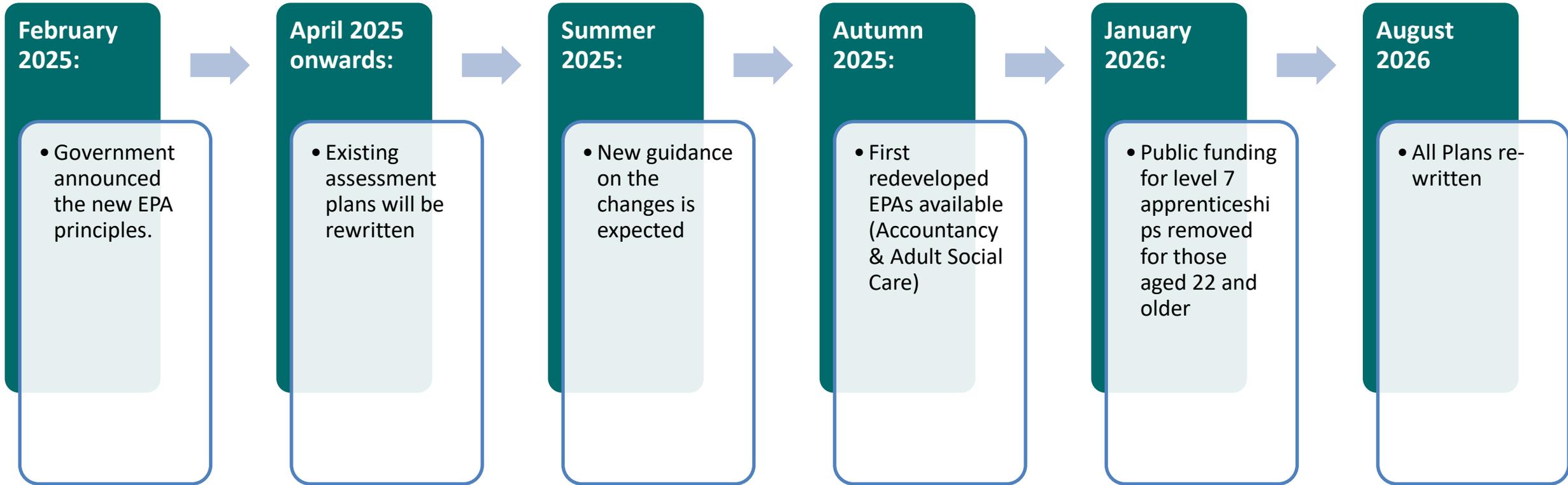
5. Flexibility and Efficiency:

- Overall, the reforms aim to make the EPA process more flexible, efficient, and proportionate, ensuring a high-quality assessment of an apprentice's skills.

6. Name Change:

- From End-Point Assessment to Apprenticeship Assessment
- EPAO to **Assessment Organisations**
- Gateway to Gateway to Completion

Timeline



Skills England is making 'significant adjustments to the apprenticeship EPA process to make it more flexible, efficient, and relevant to the needs of employers and apprentices'

New EPA Plans

What, Who and How

- Identifying where assessment may be undertaken by the EPAO or Provider .
- Exceptions will be necessary for instance where an external body must be involved for regulatory reasons.
- Behaviours will no longer need to be separately assessed by providers or EPAOs, They will focus on assessing essential knowledge and skills

QA Arrangements for Provider Elements

- EPAOs will need to determine how best to quality assure
- where relevant, also in accordance with any regulatory body requirements
- Within the the designated body for that standard.

Plan Size & Scope

- Short (e.g. 2 pages)
- High Level - minimal prescription of assessment required to demonstrate occupational competence, based on the core requirements set out by employers.

Employer / Stakeholder Engagement

- Reflect input from assessment and delivery experts including the designated regulatory body for quality assuring the assessment,
- Plus EPAO and training provider representation, to ensure proportionality, value for money and deliverability
- Employers still 'best placed' to judge competency.

New EPA Plans

Assessment methods

- Specify the minimum number of methods 'for validity'
- How end and on programme assessments will be undertaken

Removing Duplication

- Indicate where duplication is permissible and where not e.g. where a mandatory industry recognised qualification is included that provides a licence to practice as part of the standard

Use of technology and digital tools

- How and where digital tools offer efficient and effective assessment methods

Timing of Assessments

- Outline when assessment will be undertaken



Roles & Responsibilities

Skills England

- Convene a group of employers together with assessment and delivery experts to develop the improved Assessment Plans.
- EPA Plan Approval
- Updated Guidance

EPAOs

- As is currently the case, EPAOs will be responsible for developing all assessment materials in accordance with the Assessment Plans.

OfS/OfQual

- External Quality Assurance will continue to be provided by the designated body with responsibility for regulating the assessment for each standard (Ofqual / OfS / small number of industry regulatory bodies), which should inform any further revisions of the Plan.

Employers

- Employers (still) best placed to confirm apprentices are demonstrating the required behaviours



IMPACT & IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM

New EPA Plans – Wider Flexibilities Impact

Removal of Mandatory English & Maths

- Possibly an increased need to embed elements into curriculum early and for this to be achieved where it is needed due to on-programme assessment
- Improved Initial and On Programme needs Assessments and prompt interventions to prevent withdrawals or performance issues

Change to minimum hours per Standard

- Possible renewed pressures to only achieve the minimum hours when this is insufficient to meet KSB or DAP requirements
- Focus and energy of curriculum team diverted to increasing/ reducing the current programme and materials

Shorter Duration

- Increased focus on RPEL and flexibility in modules to respond



New EPA Plans – Impact

Simplified Plans & Timetable

- Level of detail and specificity – current documents are often over 10 pages
- Likelihood of meeting the August 2026 timeline
- Lots if changes to multiple Standards all at once - needs careful scheduling / planning
- Timetable for reviews needed ASAP

Taking on on-programme assessments

- Staff skills and capacity changes to planning and possibly contract / work loading
- Exam Board timetable and quality assessments
- Impact on QA processes, policies, procedures

Mapping KSBs

Clear mapping of which KSBs are provider-assessed vs employer-confirmed vs AO-assessed is critical—curriculum design must explicitly map knowledge, skills and behaviour coverage across all contributors

New EPA Plans – Wider Changes & Flexibilities

Employer Engagement

- Employers become responsible for behaviour sign-off. Need to work closely with employers to co-define what workplace behaviours look like and how they will be evidenced.
- Greater employer involvement in assessment plan design and review is expected; academics should be part of collaborative panels or employer-provider working groups to ensure relevance and r

Ofsted Framework

- New Framework developed before this was announced -what might the new framework mean when Ofsted do not inspect EPA – timing of inspections ...? content/..? Judgements ..?



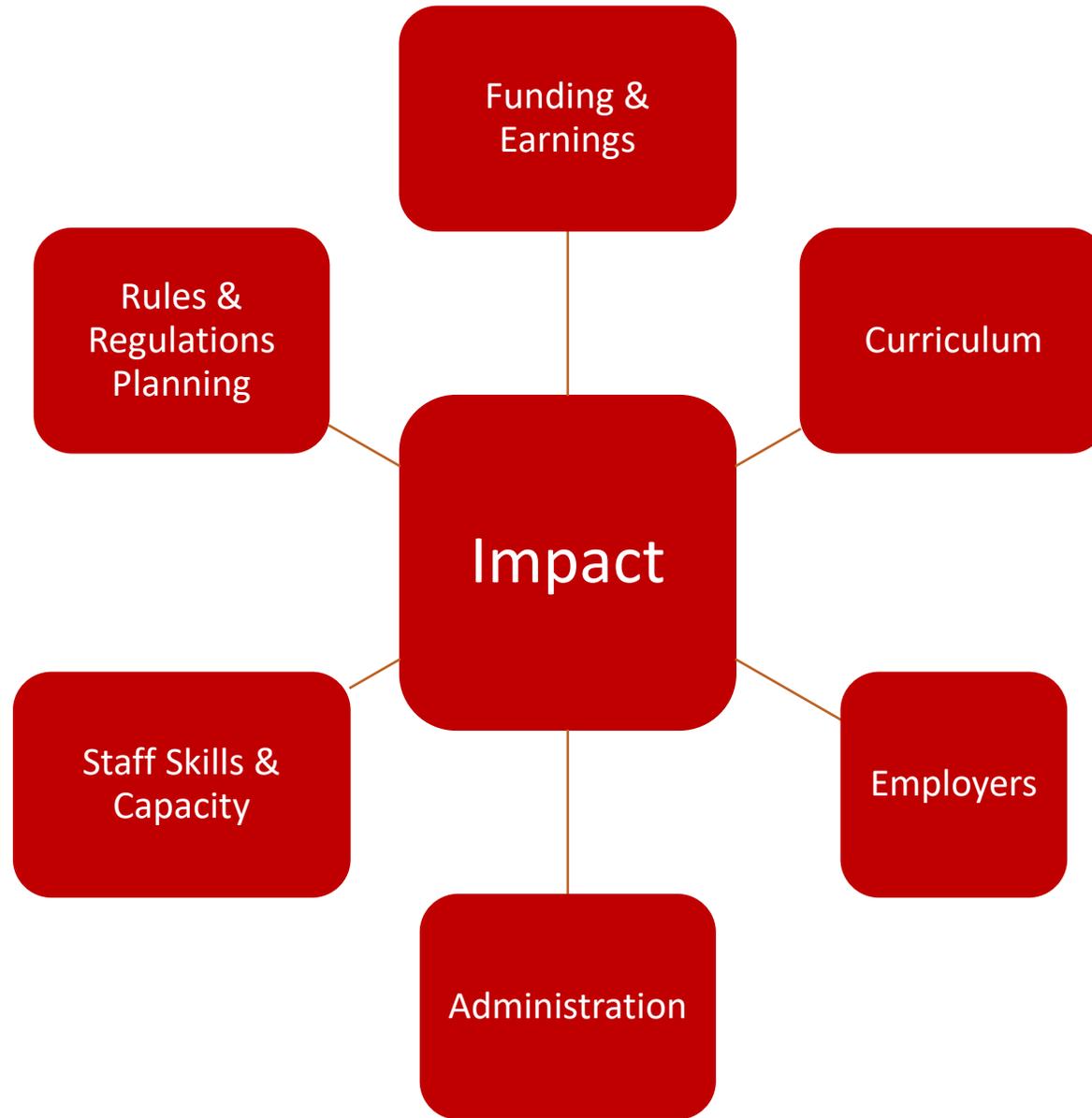
Authentic Assessment

Authentic Assessment

**James Gibson, Policy & Programme Development
Manager, Leeds Beckett University,
Senior Leader Apprentice**

...

Impact



Funding & Payments

Develop your question list:

When do you get paid for an on programme assessment?

What does this mean for the QAR e.g. if the apprentice leaves early but passed one of the on-programme Assessments?

Will the Funding Rate drop as a result of 'efficiencies' ?

Are there going to be additional charges from EPAO/ PSRBs for 'approving marking or people that mark ...?

.....or additional hoops?

When will each Standard be approved ?

What can you do now..?

Get Ready -Develop a Blueprint

- Consider the tasks required
- Breakdown into a project plan and share with teams
- Implement any additional capacity training e.g. marking and standardisation for training teams and assessment teams

New 'Oversight' Arrangements

- Work with EPAOs or PSRBS on what this might mean – early discussions on any plans for on programme assessment
- Review current processes and policies
- Consider the implications on timetables and capacity

Employer Engagement

- Agree how the assessment of Behaviours
- Employer Early communications - what will need to be built into employer requirements and in the Training Plan
- Design relevant assessments to meet
- Ensure that the initial employer discussions confirm the relevance of assessments in this workplace for this role
- Co-develop materials

What Can you Do now ..?

Forensic KSB Review

- Ensure that modules fully meet the KSBs indicated and there is full coverage

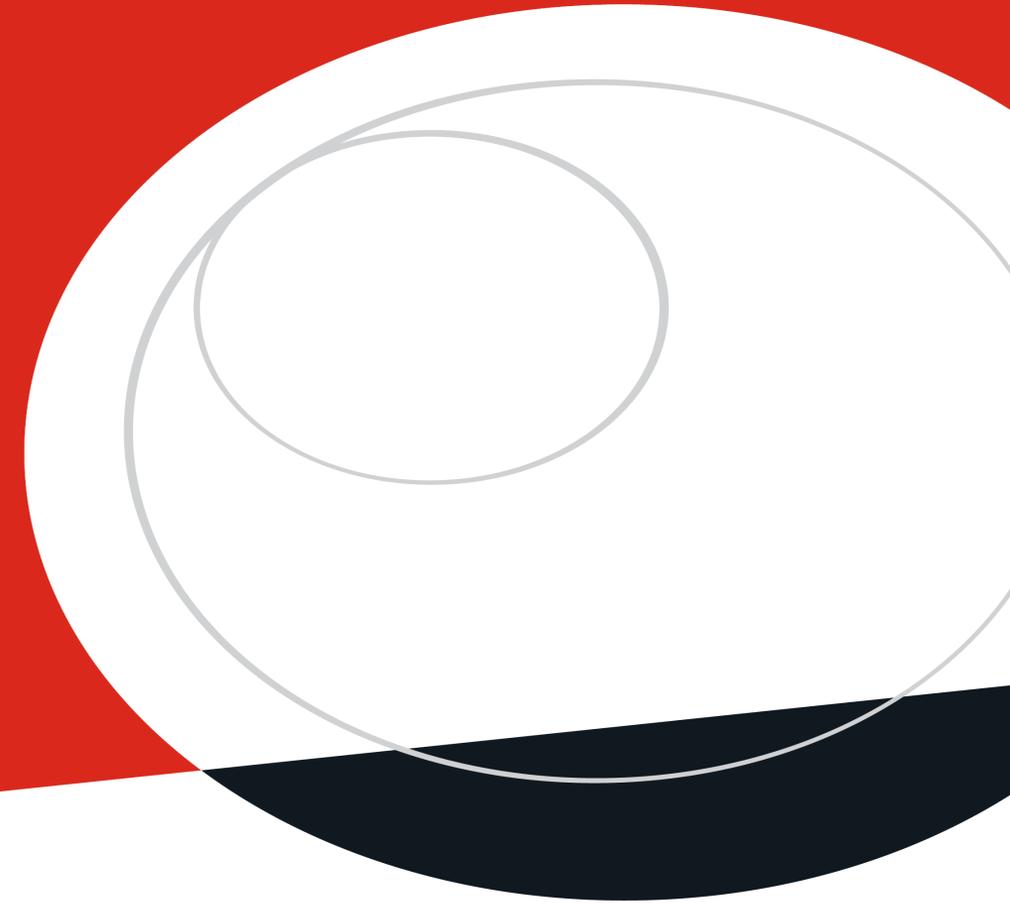
Modular

- How can each module be enhanced to standalone as an assessment of competency ?
- Modules and stackable content are key employer asks and underpin much of the future funding opportunities
- Consider how to create an authentic assessment at the end of modules to sustain relevance.

Authentic Assessment

- Consider how to ensure assessments are relevant and in the real work context
- Develop opportunities for apprentices to design their own assessment
- Work with apprentices to develop their own assessments

Next Steps & Resources



Last Two Sessions 2025 Summer Sessions

9	Lifelong Learning Entitlement	An update on what we know about the LLE and the implications for delivery	<u>Thur 31 July</u> <u>9.30 – 11.00</u>
8.	DfE Funding Rules – Final Changes	<p>Quick Review of changes for the start of the year :</p> <p>We are anticipating a range of reissues of the Funding Rules this year as different aspects of the announced changes to the apprenticeship programme are implemented..... this session is likely to be the first of several short updates over 2025/2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• V2 Funding Rules ...• Templates• EPA Guidance if this is published• Autumn Webinar Programme Early Look	<u>Tue 5 August</u> <u>9.30 – 11.00</u>

Questions & Further Information



Click [HERE](#) for Today's Listen Again Webcast



Resources – Click [HERE](#)
BBX – Click [HERE](#)



Queries and Questions to:
R.Rhodes@bolton.ac.uk



Summer Webinars & Events
Click [HERE](#)

Recording Timestamps	
Introduction – Summarising Current EPA Flexibilities	00:00:00
Impact On Curriculum Design	00:22:56
Understanding the Value of Authentic Assessment – James Gibson, Leeds Beckett University	00:45:35
What Can You Do Now?	00:59:30
Resources & Next Steps	

MEMBERS EVENT PROGRAMME BY DATE

	Topic	Content	Registration Link
1.	Funding Rules - 2025/2026 Impact and Implications	This session is for everyone involved in apprenticeship delivery from onboarding to EPA and those involved in implementing the ESFA Funding Rules in any aspect of their role. This session will set out the changes in the DfE 2025/ 2026 Apprenticeship Funding Rules and explore the implications of these changes on day-to-day practice, policy and procedures.	<u>Wed 21 May 2.00 – 4.00</u>
2.	A Guide to Audit and Risk Governance and Oversight	This deep dive session will set out a framework for apprenticeship audit and risk review over the 12-month cycle of apprenticeship delivery. The framework will consider the schedule activities to be included in risk assessments, the reporting and monitoring to underpin oversight of risk, and how to combine the activities taking place across a university year into a systematic risk assurance process for the apprenticeship programme.	<u>Thur 12 June 9.30 – 11.30</u>
3.	EQA Assessment & the EQA Visit	This session is aimed at teaching and learning, quality and apprenticeship teams involved in the preparation and execution of OfS external quality assurance frameworks and visits. You will hear from member speakers about learning over successive visits including visits from the last few months as we consider how the EQA process has changed policy and practice internally and consider the impact of possible future EPA changes on EQA.	<u>Tue 19 June 9.30 - 11.30</u>
4.	The Skills Coach – Successful models and the Future	This session is aimed at Apprenticeship Teams and Skills Coach leads - this most vital of roles in apprenticeship delivery. These are the people accountable for delivering the tri-partite progress review and evidence of compliance, and for ensuring that apprenticeship momentum, apprentice progression and employer engagement are maintained. This session is for everyone who leads a team of coaches and/or designs or manages the structures in their organisation. We will explore the latest and emerging structures and staffing levels within our delivery teams whether these are centralised, devolved or contracted out. With input from member speakers on effective models and how the coach role enables success we will explore the impact of current challenges in apprenticeships on these critical roles.	<u>Thur 10 July 9.30 – 11.30</u>
5.	Audit Update – Preparing for 2025/2026	This UVAC session explores the themes from 2024/25 audits and the impact of the 2025/2026 Funding Rules on the DfE's approach to future funding audits. Developed and run with Karl Bentley, this session will provide an early insight into possible changes to audit in response to the Funding Rules and will equip members with suggestions for some early adaptations to process, procedures and paperwork ahead of the release of the audit papers later in 2025/early 2026.	<u>Wed 16 July 9.30 – 11.30</u>
6.	Exploring the options for L7	This session will explore how Universities and providers delivering L7 provision are responding to the (by this point we hope final) position on Level 7 Funding. We will explore the latest DfE guidance and hear from guest speakers and members on their plans for 2025/2026.	<u>Tue 22 July 9.30 – 11.30</u>
7.	The future of EPA and the Impact of New Flexibilities on Curriculum	This session is for curriculum designers, quality teams, teaching and learning teams. Pending announcements about how the EPA flexibilities, which we hope will be clear by this point, will be implemented, this session will review of the impact that the flexibilities proposed will mean for apprenticeships, particularly in design, delivery and quality assurance. Hearing from some of our key End-point Assessment Organisations and from members on their plans to use the opportunities presented this session will enable members to prepare for implementation as this is rolled out from September 2025.	<u>Tue 29 Jul 9.30 – 11.30</u>
8.	ESFA Funding Rules – Final Rules	This session is a 'hold the date', pending announcements of any further changes to the Funding Rules ahead of the start of the 2025/26 funding year. We are anticipating a range of reissues of the Funding Rules this year as different aspects of the announced changes to the apprenticeship programme are implemented..... this session is likely to be the first of several short updates over 2025/2026.	<u>Tue 5 August 9.30 – 11.00</u>