		
ISSUED BY: AO Director Caroline Walton	Awarding Organisation Policies and Procedures	**ISSUE DATE:** September 2026 **REVIEW DATE:** March 2027
	Assessment Strategy	**ISSUE:** V8

Scope and Purpose

This document provides the strategy for all Apprenticeship Assessment undertaken by the ELS Awarding Organisation (AO). It provides information and guidance for our apprentices, training providers, ELS Independent Apprenticeship Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs).

Apprenticeship Assessment is final phase of an apprentices' apprenticeship programme. Apprenticeship Assessment are conducted in accordance with ELS Apprenticeship Assessment policies and procedures and the Apprenticeship Assessment Life Cycle Handbook.

This strategy applies to all Apprentice Assessments delivered by ELS Awarding Organisation, including apprentices, employers, training providers, assessors, IQAs, contractors and AO staff involved in the design, delivery, quality assurance and award of assessment services. The strategy supports compliance with Ofqual Conditions of Recognition, apprenticeship assessment plans, applicable legislation and ELS policies and procedures.

ELS is currently designing and developing assessment strategies and delivery models in line with the new apprenticeship reforms. ELS is prioritising standards in date order. Our customers are being consulted and being kept up to date with the changes. This strategy will be reviewed in six months' time. ELS anticipates first assessment strategies and assessment models to go live in 2027.

Aims

The purpose of this document is to provide information on our assessment strategy and practices to our ELS Apprenticeship Assessment staff, apprentices, employers, and training providers.

ELS delivers regulated Apprenticeship Assessment in accordance with approved Apprenticeship Standards and Apprenticeship Assessment Plans. As an approved assessment organisation, ELS is recognised by the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and Ofqual to deliver assessments that meet national regulatory and quality requirements. ELS delivers assessment services strictly within the scope of its approvals, covering only those apprenticeship standards, assessment plans and associated materials for which approval has been granted.

ELS deliver a robust Apprenticeship Assessment service that is built upon trust, strong support, sound expertise, current occupational competence and experience, integrity and with high-quality products and materials. Our team of Apprenticeship Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers ensures that our assessment practices consistently meet ELS's standards.

ELS is committed to ensuring that all assessment decisions, judgements, weightings, grades and feedback are fair, consistent and reliable, and that assessments are manageable for apprentices.

ELS is committed to providing accessible and inclusive assessments. We do not discriminate against, victimise or harass anyone accessing our assessment services or products. We aim to ensure that no apprentice is disadvantaged due to a disability, learning difficulty, medical condition or other recognised need. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments and special considerations will be implemented to support fair access to assessment while maintaining its validity, reliability, integrity and comparability.

All requests for assessment arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis, balancing the individual needs of apprentices with the requirements of the assessment and the need to maintain public confidence in assessment outcomes.

ELS see the Apprenticeship Assessment life cycle as four key stages:

1. Design & Develop
2. Deliver & Award
3. Review & Evaluate
4. Quality & Continuous Improvement

The ELS Apprenticeship Assessment Lifecycle Handbook has been developed to provide ELS staff with a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the organisation's apprenticeship assessment activities. All personnel involved in the assessment lifecycle, including Apprenticeship Assessment team members, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), authors, and other contributors, must familiarise themselves with the contents of the Handbook.

The Handbook sets out the principles, processes, and responsibilities governing the design, development, delivery, review and quality assurance of Apprenticeship Assessment, supporting compliance with regulatory, awarding organisation, and quality assurance requirements.

Our Apprenticeship Assessment products and services are solely about assessments. We use the expertise of occupationally competent authors, SMEs, scrutineers, peer reviewers, Independent Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs), alongside industry consultation and relevant standards, to develop high-quality assessment materials and experiences for apprentices.

Our assessment materials, tools and decisions are subject to regulatory scrutiny and audit to support the quality, integrity and compliance of our assessment services.

Assessment Methods

ELS uses a variety of assessment methods and tools to assess our apprentice's, Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours:

- Written projects & assignments
- Professional discussions
- Knowledge tests – multiple choice and scenario based
- Interviews
- Q&A sessions
- Portfolio of evidence
- Presentations
- Practical demonstrations

Each apprenticeship standard has its own Apprenticeship Assessment Plan, which determines the assessment methods and requirements. ELS ensures that all assessments comply with the relevant plan and regularly reviews assessment methods to maintain their validity, reliability, fairness and comparability.

ELS delivers Apprenticeship Assessment through a range of methods, including face-to-face and online assessment, in accordance with the requirements and permitted flexibilities set out within the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan. For knowledge tests, ELS may utilise online, offline, and paper-based delivery methods where appropriate. The use of diverse assessment methods enables ELS to obtain a comprehensive and balanced evaluation of an apprentice's Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs), ensuring robust and equitable assessment outcomes.

Assessment Criteria

Each Apprenticeship Assessment Plan details clear assessment criteria and grading our ELS Independent Apprenticeship Assessors assess against.

ELS AO designs all Apprenticeship Assessment materials and assessments, including assessment recording templates, scoring rubrics, Knowledge Test answer booklets, example answers and scoring guides for scenario questions, feedback templates, etc. The detailed rubric and scoring guides define different levels of achievement as stated in the Assessment Plan. For example, some Apprenticeship Assessment are scored Pass, or Fail, whereas others may be scored a Merit or Distinction.

Assessment materials are subject to scrutiny, peer review, trialling where appropriate and ongoing evaluation to ensure consistency and fitness for purpose. Assessors undertake standardisation activities to promote consistency in assessment decisions.

Assessment Schedules

Every Apprenticeship Assessment Plan has its own unique Apprenticeship Assessment period. This may be one month, three months, six months or even nine months plus, etc. Every Assessment Plan is different depending on the standard.

Some Assessment Plans stipulate strict timeframes between each Apprenticeship Assessment component, for example the Intelligence Analyst Apprenticeship Assessment Plan stipulates that a Project Meeting must take place within two weeks of ‘Gateway to Completion’ (GoC) being approved.

Each Apprenticeship Assessment has its own structure, format and timings and each chosen method has been designed to assess the appropriate Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.

Booking and Scheduling Assessments

Our team of Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinators work closely with our assessors, apprentices and employers to ensure Apprenticeship Assessments are scheduled on a date and time convenient for all involved, and in line with the Assessment Plan. We have dedicated Coordinators for individual contracts and employers/training providers which helps to build trusting relationships between ELS and our customers.

Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinators provide information about the ‘Gateway to Completion’ process, supporting apprentices when they move from their on-programme period with their training provider, through GoC, over to ELS as their Awarding Organisation (AO). They will provide Mock Assessments, including Moodle logins to help apprentices prepare for their assessments, and will guide them through the entire Apprenticeship Assessment process. All assessor and IQA feedback are also passed back to the apprentice through their designated Coordinator.

Once the Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinator has agreed the assessment date and time with the apprentice, employer and assessor, the booking is confirmed.

Face-to-face Assessment at an apprentices' workplace.
On the day of the assessment the assessor will arrive early prior to the assessment visit. Any security arrangements will have been confirmed beforehand and the necessary security procedures will be followed.
The assessor will explain the format and timings of the assessment, providing both written and verbal instructions to the apprentice. Any timed breaks in the assessment will be explained. The assessor will conduct ID checks and conduct a scan of the room to ensure the environment is acceptable for the assessment.
The assessor will record their assessment judgements and notes on assessment recording forms. This will typically be in the format of note taking and completed check sheets. Once the assessment has been completed the assessor will thank the apprentice for their time.
The apprentice's formal feedback along with a grade will not be provided at this time. The assessor will explain to the apprentice that their formal feedback and grade will be provided in line with ELS' 10 working days feedback turnaround, this allows for the evidence to go through ELS's Internal Quality Assurance process.

Online Assessment
Online face-to-face assessments include Professional Discussions, Project Presentations, Question and Answer sessions.
Prior to the assessment day the assessor will email the apprentice and provide a link to join the online assessment. When the assessment begins the assessor will explain the structure and timings of the assessment and will confirm the apprentice is happy to be recorded. The assessor will conduct ID checks and a 360 scan of the room to ensure the environment is acceptable for the assessment. The assessment will be conducted as per the timings and format as detailed in the Assessment Plan. At the end of the assessment, the assessor will explain the ELS timeframes for the apprentice to receive their formal feedback and grade.

Assessor Grading and Feedback
Assessors must complete their assessment decisions, grading and feedback within four working days of the assessment. All decisions, grades and feedback must be recorded on the relevant ELS Apprenticeship Assessment feedback form for each assessment component.

The overall grading, feedback and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process must be completed within 10 working days of the assessment. This timeframe applies to all apprenticeship assessment components across all standards. Once the process is complete, the Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinator will communicate the grades and feedback to the apprentice.

Quality Assurance

ELS operates a risk-based Internal Quality Assurance strategy that includes assessment sampling, observation, standardisation, feedback reviews and monitoring of assessment decisions. Once the assessor has given a grade and feedback has been recorded, an Internal Quality Assurer will check the evidence, assessment decisions, grade and feedback to ensure the correct assessment procedures have been followed, and the grade and feedback are correct, fair and consistent. The IQA will confirm and sign off the feedback and grade.

Appeals

If an apprentice is unhappy with a grade and they feel the grade is incorrect, they may follow our Appeals Policy. Their Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinator will support them through the Appeals process. Please see AO Appeals Policy for more information the appeals process.

Certification

Once the final Apprenticeship Assessment component has been assessed and the evidence, feedback and grade have been confirmed by the IQA, the final grade is communicated to the apprentice. At this point, the Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinator will request the apprentice's certificate directly from Skills England. Certification requests will be submitted promptly following confirmation of the final grade. Processing times are dependent on the relevant certification authority.

Documentation and Record Keeping

ELS uses a live Learner Management System called ACE360. Apprenticeship Assessment evidence, grades and feedback are safely and securely uploaded and stored on this system. We also have additional storage folders where we monitor, track and store learner documentation. Records are retained, managed and securely destroyed in accordance with ELS Data Protection and Records Management policies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Team

The ELS Executive Team (ELS Directors) are our Senior Officers.

AO Director

The Director of Awarding Organisation is ELS's Responsible Officer to Ofqual and will be the authoritative point of contact for Ofqual. As Responsible Officer, the AO Director will fulfil all responsibilities under this role according to the Conditions of Recognition.

AO Advisory Board

The ELS AO Advisory Board is a small sub-committee, made up of four

independent members. Each independent member covers a different area;

- Quality & Compliance
- Policy, Processes & Procedures
- Business Planning & Finance
- Systems

The AO Advisory Board acts only in an advisory capacity for the ELS AO department and for this department only. The AO Advisory Board can give advice, support and make proposals and recommendations to the ELS AO.

Internal Quality Assurers

ELS use full-time and part-time IQAs and have a blended model of both core staff and associate IQAs. Our IQAs conduct Internal Quality Assurance activities across the full Apprenticeship Assessment life cycle. IQAs complete quality assurance checks, sampling, monitoring, and mentoring of IEPAs. They manage and coordinate standardisation sessions and ensure assessors are trained.

Independent Assessors

ELS use full-time and part-time Independent Assessors, including core staff and associates. Our Independent Assessors have been through a robust screening and recruitment process. All assessors either have Workplace Assessors qualifications, such as the Certificate in Vocational Achievement (CAVA) or are working towards them, supported by ELS.

All Independent Assessors undergo onboarding and undertake mandatory training and standardisation activities on a regular basis. All ELS core staff Assessors hold a security clearance, and all associates go through a BPSS check (as a minimum).

Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinators

ELS has a full-time team of Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinators based in our Head Office in Oxfordshire. They play a crucial role in the Apprenticeship Assessment process. These Coordinators provide customer service to internal and external customers and stakeholders and provide administrative support to the Assessment Delivery Managers and AO Director.

Apprenticeship Assessment Coordinators are responsible for booking and scheduling all Apprenticeship Assessment with our assessors, apprentices, and employers, as well as answering day to day Apprenticeship Assessment queries.

Apprenticeship Assessment Team

Apprenticeship Assessment staff ensure all induction activities are completed when they join ELS and attend mandatory training and standardisation, as well as understand their responsibilities for their role. Apprenticeship Assessment staff adhere to all ELS Apprenticeship Assessment policies, processes, and procedures

always, and ensure any Conflicts of Interest are reported promptly. Within ELS, we promote a culture of respect towards all ELS staff, as well as our customers, stakeholders and suppliers.

Assessment Procedures for Customers

Apprentices must:

- Produce and show photo identification (ID) prior to an Apprenticeship Assessment e.g. a Passport, Driving Licence or ID Card.
- Be present at least 15 minutes prior to the assessment start time.
- Be courteous and respectful towards their Assessor or Invigilator.
- Apprentices who feel there may be grounds for an appeal should follow the ELS Apprenticeship Assessment Appeals Policy.

Training Providers must:

- Ensure all learners are ready for 'Gateway to Completion'.
- Register Learners onto ACE360 6 months prior to Gateway to Completion.
- Inform ELS of any Reasonable Adjustments or Learning requirements.
- Inform ELS of any Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity or Safeguarding concerns.
- Communicate to ELS any changes to the learners' circumstances.

Employers must:

- Ensure to support the learner with their apprenticeship.
- Communicate any safeguarding, accessibility or learning difficulties to the Training Provider.
- Provide a true reflection of the number of learners going through Apprenticeship Assessment
- Fulfil contractual obligations.

Continuous Improvement

ELS is committed to the continual improvement of its Apprentice Assessments services to ensure that assessments remain fair, valid, reliable and responsive to the needs of apprentices, employers, training providers and regulatory bodies. Performance and quality data are regularly monitored and evaluated, including assessment outcomes, apprentice and employer feedback, complaints, appeals, internal quality assurance findings, standardisation activities and external quality assurance reports. The information gathered is analysed to identify trends, areas for development and opportunities to enhance the effectiveness and consistency of assessment delivery.

Improvement actions are incorporated into quality improvement plans and are monitored through the organisation's governance and quality assurance processes. ELS will review assessment materials, policies, procedures and operational practices

on a regular basis to ensure continued compliance with assessment plan requirements, regulatory expectations and organisational objectives. Lessons learned from audits, quality reviews, stakeholder feedback and assessment delivery activities are used to drive continuous improvement, support innovation and ensure the ongoing integrity and credibility of the assessment process.

Contact Information

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Review and Version Control

ELS is committed to ensuring all policy documentation is subject to document control and reviewed bi-annually.

RELATED DOCUMENTS: -	**APPROVED BY: -**
001AO Equality and Diversity Policy 002AO Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy 003AO Conflicts of Interest 004AO Appeals Policy 009AO Malpractice and Maladministration Policy 010AO Remote Invigilation Policy	Caroline Walton, AO Director