

		
ISSUED BY: Caroline Walton Head of EPA	End Point Assessment POLICIES & PROCEDURES	ISSUE DATE: November 2022 REVIEW DATE: November 2023
	Standardisation Policy	ISSUE : V4

Scope and Purpose

This policy sets out Explosive Learning Solutions' (ELS) approach to standardisation when working as an End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

We are committed to ensuring that all our standardisation practices and processes are robust.

This document is applicable for all our regulated End Point Assessment (EPA) products and services.

ELS make every effort to ensure that the detail within this document is consistent and meets the regulatory requirements and Conditions of Recognition.

ELS Standardisation Policy is to be used in conjunction with the ELS Consistency Assurance EPA Strategy.

Definition

Standardisation is a process needed to ensure that the assessment criteria for a qualification (EPA) are applied consistently by independent end point assessors (IEPAs), internal quality assurers (IQAs) and external quality assurers (EQAs).

Standardisation ensures that individual EPA components and Knowledge Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) are being consistently administered, assessed and awarded over time. They must also align with the level and weighting applied to the relevant Apprenticeship Assessment Plan.

Aims

This document is for use by the following:

- ELS EPAO staff
- SME's
- Authors
- Assessors / Independent End-Point Assessors (IEPAs)
- Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)
- Scrutinisers / Peer Reviewers
- Moderators
- External Quality Assurers (EQAs)/Ofqual
- Other ELS Departments

ELS is committed to ensuring that assessment and internal quality assurance (IQA) decisions are accurate and consistent.

ELS will achieve this through the implementation and review of our EPA policies and procedures, which will be reviewed annually by the ELS Executive Team (Directors/Senior Officers), Quality Assurance Manager, Head of EPA, IQA's, and scrutinised by the ELS Board of Governors.

Our assessment and Standardisation processes have been designed and developed to ensure that our staff, employers, training providers, apprentices and regulators can be content about the validity, consistency, reliability and manageability of our assessments and certificates achieved through ELS.

ELS have developed a robust training and standardisation process and plan. This is applied within our own EPAO and nationally with our IEPAs and IQAs.

ELS ensures assessment standards and judgements are consistent across all areas of EPA delivery by:

- ensuring all ELS staff are following our robust Internal Quality Assurance processes and procedures
- ensuring our standardisation planner is communicated and followed
- ensuring on-going monitoring takes place
- developing compensatory assessment for learners with special requirements to allow reasonable adjustments to be made while ensuring that judgements are not compromised
- ensuring IEPAs receive training on conducting EPAs , using marking schemes and grading
- ensuring IEPAs and IQA's undertake regular mandatory training, up-skilling activities and standardisation to ensure assessment is Valid, Authentic, Current, Sufficient, Reliable (VACSR) and manageable.
- ensuring all regulatory documentation is in place and reviewed regularly, as

part of our robust continuous quality improvement processes and policy

- conducting formal audits and self-assessment reports (SARs) annually
- analysing all customer feedback from learners, apprentices, employers, training providers and discussing, on an on-going basis, as part of our EPA Life Cycle Process
- holding quarterly standardisation meetings to ensure consistency of application of the guidance, provide updates and share good practice
- carrying out regular moderation and internal quality assurance of assessments
- working closely with the Quality Team (Quality Assurance Manager and IQA's to ensure quality assurance standards are consistently monitored and upheld
- identifying and sharing best practice

Responsibilities

Independent End Point Assessors (IEPAs) will:

- Take part in standardisation activities as part of their continuing professional development (CPD). ELS run standardisation every quarter, per apprenticeship standard within our end-point assessment organisation (EPAO). This is a mandatory requirement. All IEPA's who work for or on behalf of the ELS EPAO must attend mandatory standardisation if they wish to continue assessing for ELS
- Complete mandatory training

Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)

will:

- Facilitate opportunities for IEPAs to engage in standardisation and CPD activities
- Record and provide evidence of internal standardisation activities for EQA/Ofqual audits and monitoring visits
- Assist with any complaints and appeals.
- Take part in CPD activities.
- Support and mentor IEPAs

Head of End Point Assessment (EPA) (Responsible Officer to Ofqual) will:

- Act in accordance with this policy
- Follow and adhere to all responsibilities, under the role of Responsible Officer and as an authoritative point of contact for Ofqual, in relation to all activities undertaken by the ELS EPAO (Awarding Organisation).

Principles

ELS has procedures in place to ensure its own staff and its associates are competent and have access to appropriate training and guidance to ensure quality and consistency of standards across our work and over time.

Procedure

Three inter-related features of standardisation activity underpin the achievement of quality and consistency:

1. ELS Standardisation - where there is more than one IEPA delivering the same EPAs or similar EPAs and making assessment decisions and recommendations for certification of learners, it is essential that the Internal Quality Assurance process includes an opportunity for the standardisation of their practice.

The Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) and Lead IEPA for the relevant Apprenticeship Standard is responsible for arranging and facilitating standardisation opportunities. The Head of EPA will support with the facilitation of standardisation.

A typical internal standardisation meeting includes the following activities:

- IEPA's sample apprentices evidence and complete assessment activities together.
- the group works their way through the learner evidence, checking to see if the assessment judgements are valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable, and they agree with the assessment decision/judgement
- pass, merit and distinction criteria will be discussed
- the group will comment on feedback given to the apprentice
- the group offer supportive recommendations how IEPAs might improve their assessment practice
- the group agree what action(s) is needed to ensure that everyone assesses to the same consistent standard going forward

- any changes to assessment decisions are agreed and recorded
 - Updates to standards and end point assessment plans will be discussed
 - Environments and conditions to conduct EPAs will be discussed
 - Challenges, issues and risks may be discussed
 - Any conflicts of interest
 - EPA support materials will be discussed
 - EPA assessment tools will be discussed
 - Minutes will be taken and actions arising from the standardization session will be followed up and monitored by the Quality Assurance Manager, Head of EPA, Lead IEPAs and IQAs
2. ELS are subject to External Quality Assurance/Regulator (Ofqual) monitoring
 3. Where possible ELS IQAs and IEPAs attend national standardisation events run by other EPAOs, Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB), IfATE, or any other supporting related organisation

Our contributions would include contributing sanitised/anonymised sample materials to the event, and or by sending an ELS representative to participate

Internal Quality Assurance sampling for Independent End-Point Assessors (IEPAs)

ELS monitor and quality assure all aspects of the EPA Life Cycle and the processes contained within each stage of the EPA Life cycle.

We provide quality assurance on all EPA processes, providing guidance and support to our teams.

IEPAs make Valid, Authentic, Current, Sufficient and Reliable assessment judgements. Decisions are moderated, audited and sampled by IQAs and the Head of EPA.

IEPAs are RAG-rated, following a 'traffic light' system.

New IEPAs within their probationary period and IEPAs in training e.g. working towards their CAVA qualification (Red IEPAs) have their work and assessment

decisions sampled 100% by one of our IQAs.

As compliance and the reliability of IEPAs assessment decisions improve their RAG rating is then improved to Amber and 50% of their work is sampled by an IQA.

For experienced IEPAs with no compliance issues (RAG rated Green IEPAs), IQA's will sample 20% of their work and assessment decisions.

IEPAs receive training and CPD activities to ensure skills and knowledge are maintained.

Documentation is reviewed regularly to check end-point assessment feedback, to check and sample assessment judgements, ensure applications for reasonable adjustments and / or special considerations are processed and responded to accordingly and any conflicts of interests are recorded and checked.

Regular standardisation meetings ensure consistency of application, provide guidance on assessment decisions, and share good practice.

Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Manager and Head of EPA annually. It will be scrutinised and signed off by the Board of Governors.