

APPRENTICESHIP WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Improving EPA Outcomes – Collaborative Project

**Kid's Planet Day Nurseries,
Professional Apprenticeships,
College. But Different,
Seren Skills Network Ltd**

CREATED BY



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End Point Assessment Hints & Tips for Tutors, Learners, and Employers

This is a guide to help support preparation for the End Point Assessment (EPA). There are hints and tips for Tutors (**T**), Learners (**L**) and Employers (**E**). These have been written as a result of a research project carried out between March and October 2023 for the Education and Training Foundation's Apprenticeship Workforce Development (AWD) Programme.

In creating this guide, we conducted primary research with tutors, apprentices (past and present) and employers related to three Independent Training Providers across a wide variety of curriculum subjects and levels.

Start preparing from Day 1

It is never too soon to start preparing learners for the EPA. In fact, we recommend that the EPA is thoroughly understood by everyone right at the start of learning.

(T) Make sure you are fully aware of the requirements of the EPA (e.g., professional discussion, portfolio, multiple choice questions etc.) and that your assessment design accurately reflects this. Think about what skills the learners are going to have to demonstrate other than curriculum knowledge, which could include skills such as: -

- Speaking clearly and confidently.
- Being able to talk to someone they do not know with confidence.
- Fully comprehend multiple choice questions and how to tackle them.
- Be able to create a suitable and engaging presentation and be able to talk around it rather than read off the slides.
- How to take notes.
- How to control nerves.

All of these skills can be brought into learning and discussed with learners as part of your learning plan and assessment design.

You could plan to work with a colleague and 'swap' professional discussions so that learners become used to talking to another person.

(L) With your tutor, do soft skills check to identify areas that you feel confident with and areas where you feel less confident. Maybe speaking in public is something you do not

find comfortable doing, or maybe you don't like doing this under test conditions. Identifying these at an early stage will give you time to develop strategies to help overcome these barriers.

(E) Help by using different members of the team when students are preparing for EPAs, presentations, professional discussions etc. and ensure you are familiar with the EPA requirements.

Use of language

(L), (T), (E) During our research we found that language and terminology were important aspects. We found, perhaps not surprisingly, that many learners did not find taking tests and assessments the most appealing part of the process and this often reflected poor or uncomfortable experiences with tests and exams in the past. All three providers were using the word '**mock**' when preparing for tests (i.e., next week we are going to do a 'mock EPA test').

Our research showed that this gave the impression that learners were expecting that it has to be as good as possible (i.e., added pressure) whereas the real purpose of the 'mock' was to identify any areas for development etc. We decided that a change of name to something that seemed less threatening (and also did not have any connotations of mocks at school) and generally more positive.

We decided to use the word '**rehearsal**' which (a) would be understood by everyone as being some form of dry-run and also (b) things often go wrong during rehearsals (which is precisely the point of them) and (c) 'mock' gave the impression that it was only going to happen once, whereas 'rehearsals' gave the impression that a few might needed to get everything right.

The impact was impressive with learners engaging (and performing) better in a 'rehearsal' than a 'mock.'

Learners responded very positively to the change, and we believe this is one factor that increased success rates in each of the providers.

Different types of EPA evidence

Portfolio Discussion/Interview

(L)

- Review your portfolio.
- Learn your assessment criteria and use your mapping grid.
- Print your mapping grid for the discussion/interview.
- When setting out your portfolio find a way that you are most comfortable, such as labelling or if you use multiple documents or put them into a single document. It's important you are able to navigate quickly around the portfolio.
- Practice answering from the EPA bank of questions.
- Practice talking about "I" and not we, during EPA is a time to show off your work and contribution at work.
- Have your portfolio open and ready to share.

(T) - Ensure there is sufficient time in your learning plan for these activities and that you have not assumed that learners already have good portfolio building skills.

- Encourage confident speaking skills using 'I' in reviews and sessions. Encourage these habits right from the start of the programme.

(E) Encourage confident speaking skills using 'I' when talking to learners. Encourage these habits right from the start of the programme in the workplace. Personal reflection with a diary (which could easily be a verbal diary e.g., a voice notes using a mobile phone).

Presentation

(L)

- Review your presentation or show to someone else for feedback.
- If your presentation is timed practice speaking at different speeds so that you make sure you finish within the time frame.
- Practice talking about "I" and not we, during EPA is a time to show off your work and contribution at work.
- Print off your mapping grid for the interview/discussion.
- Try not to read off the slides. Keep the information on the slides to the key points you wish to make.

- Have 'crib notes' to hand to that you can give extra information during the presentation. Your audience will be more engaged if they realise, they have to listen to you as well as looking at the slides.

(T) - Take time in your delivery to explain how to create a good presentation, maybe using some examples of good and bad ones so that learners can identify for themselves good practice.

Encourage learners to speak about a topic in a certain time-frame – “I'd like you to talk to be about X for one minute please” (pre-warn them of course so they have time to prepare and practice. It makes a fun group activity, and they can compare what each other has said.

(E) This is also an activity that you can do with learners in the workplace, in liaison with the tutor. Maybe ask the learner to talk to you about a topic or workplace activity within a strict timeframe.

Project

(L)

- Plan your project, if your project is over a few days, plan what you will be doing on each day.
- Ensure you have read the project brief several times.
- Ensure you have met the requirements of the task and criteria.
- Be clear with your recommendations.

(T) Do not assume that learners have time management skills and abilities. Take time during the course to reinforce good planning techniques, diary management, goal setting and effective SMART targets.

(E) You have a part to play here in ensuring there is enough flexibility to allow the learner to complete the project. Also, play a part in creating the project which could have useful insight into your workplace / employment setting.

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) (T) Knowledge Test

(L)

- Ensure you are in a quiet comfortable room.

- Ensure you have a stable internet connection.
- Test you can access the exam link.
- Always read the questions and the possible answers carefully and avoid 'snap' decisions if possible.
- Take your time (within any official time allowance).

(T) Take time to create a large bank of MCQ(T)s for learners and get learners to create MCQ(T)'s for each other. Remember that an MCQ(T) is as much about testing for inaccurate knowledge as it is about testing for correct knowledge. They can take a while to create but regenerative AI will give you a good starting point (but always check to ensure the answers are correct).

(E) Help by providing the right environment for the learner to take the MCQ(T) ensuring there is a space for them to complete under exam conditions (i.e., in a quiet room without distractions)

General Tips

(L)

- In this section EPA stands for either End Point Assessor or End Point Assessment.
- Try and have an early night prior to your EPA.
- Have a soft drink to hand, or tea/coffee/water.
- Do not eat.
- If you are at home, ensure that pets and/or other family members are not going to interrupt you.
- Be in a quiet environment, if possible, to avoid other distractions
- Dress comfortably but smartly.
- Be confident and smile at the start of the EPA.
- Test your camera, microphone, and speakers/headphones in advance to ensure they work properly.
- Familiarise yourself with Teams to avoid technical issues during the meeting.
- Ensure that your background is tidy and professional or consider using a virtual background if available.
- Log in early before the scheduled start time to test your setup and be ready when the meeting begins.
- Have any notes ready in case you wish to refer to them.
- Punctuality demonstrates professionalism and respect for the EPA's time.
- Look directly into the camera to create the impression of eye contact.
- Sit up straight with good posture to convey confidence and engagement.

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- Turn off notifications on your computer and phone to avoid interruptions.
- Close unnecessary applications or browser tabs on your computer.
- Listen attentively to the EPA and avoid interrupting.
- Use non-verbal cues like nodding and smiling to show you are engaged.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace and pause to allow the EPA to speak.
- Remember, all the work you are using for your EPA must be your own!
- You can ask the EPA to repeat the question if you are unsure, but do not do this too often.

(T) / (E) Help learners develop these skills by setting up short meetings and recording them so learners get used to seeing themselves on camera and letting them watch them back. It is a useful way to identify facial expressions, hand and body gestures, pauses and gaps in speech etc. Also, this is great good practice to instill from the outset of the programme in all meetings.

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