

EPA fees and cancellation policy

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Section 1 | Overview and scope of the policy

1.1 Scope of the policy

This policy covers the delivery of Progress Minded End-Point Assessments (EPA) which are subject to internal and external quality assurance.

The policy forms part of a suite of Progress Minded policies, all of which are designed to:

- protect apprentices who are registered with us;
- minimise the risk of an Adverse Effect occurring;
- help support us and all other partners involved in risk management and risk minimisation;
- help ensure we and all partners comply with all relevant legislation and guidance; and
- help improve and refine our products and services.

For our partners, this policy supports the compliance with the Contract. It does not replace any of the requirements contained within that Contract. Non-adherence to our Progress Minded EPA policies may constitute Maladministration, Malpractice and / or a breach of the Contract. Please ensure all policies are read and implemented carefully.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following documents, which are available on our website or from our EPA Team:

- Agreement for Provision of Services relating to End-Point Assessment
- Contract
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Complaints Policy

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy?

This policy is aimed at our partners and apprentices who are using Progress Minded services where there is a fee to be paid for access and utilisation of these products and services. In addition, the policy details the impact of cancellations on agreed assessments and the effects on timely completion, further fees and certification.

The purpose of this policy is to outline:

- the fee structure for EPA standards; and
- the cancellation policy and timescales

This document must be used in conjunction with the ESFA's 'Conditions for organisations on the register of End-Point Assessment Organisations' (EPAO).

1.3 Who needs to know about the policy?

Partners must make the apprentices and staff (including, site, sub site or contractual staff) who are involved in the design, delivery, management, assessment and quality assurance of End-Point Assessment (EPA) aware of, and familiar with, the contents of the policy.

1.4 Obtaining copies of the policy and fees structure

Partners can download copies of the policy and fees structure from our website or request copies from our EPA Team.

1.5 Reviewing the policy

We will review this policy regularly and where otherwise necessary and may revise it as required in response to the findings of any review.

1.6 Complaints

Partners have the right to express their dissatisfaction regarding our actions, products or services. Our complaints policy in particular outlines when we will and will not accept a complaint, and when our decisions are final. Please see our complaints policy for more information.

Section 2 | Definitions

2.1 Overview

The transition from frameworks to standards has created the requirement for an independent body to be responsible for EPA of the partners' choosing. The EPAO must be registered and have successfully made an application for the Standard that they wish to End-Point Assess.

Each partner who has apprentices on a standard must choose an EPAO that their training partner will work with to ensure that when the apprentice is ready to pass through Gateway. The chosen EPAO will be ready to accept them and start work to get their respective assessments arranged and completed.

Once an apprentice has successfully completed all of the elements that make up their apprenticeship and is endorsed as such by their employer/training partner, they can enter the Gateway. At that point the partner will incur the fees as detailed in the price list for each standard.

2.2 Definition of fees

Each apprenticeship standard has an associated financial banding. In the associated assessment plan that details the methodologies and components that make up that particular standard, it has a recommendation on what the EPA fee should be. In some cases, it's a very specific banding of what the range of fees could be based on the standards total banding.

In certain standards the assessment plan is specific to exactly what percentage the EPA fee should be based on the standards total banding.

The fee is payable once the apprentice has been confirmed as ready to enter Gateway and enters the Progress Minded EPA system.

2.3 Definition of cancellation

Each standard has multiple assessment methodologies. These are arranged once the apprentice has entered Gateway and has been confirmed and endorsed as being ready to take the associated assessments for their standard.

The assessments are booked with the partners and apprentice to ensure that the assessment can take place in a timely, secure and productive manner. Once an assessment has been booked and agreed, any changes to date, time, location and/or apprentice within 24 hours of the EPA activity is deemed as a cancellation of the original booking and subject to the retake fees for any and all of the individual methodologies depending on how many were cancelled.

The detail of the fees for the retakes will be included in the Service Level Agreement with the partner.

2.4 Definition of 'no show'

Should our EPA Team allocate Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA) resources to conduct an assessment and the apprentice does not participate in that assessment without prior notice, this will be deemed as a 'no show'. In this situation, Progress Minded will charge the full assessment cost and additional expense incurred in setting up the assessment in full.

Additional costs may include travel, accommodation, subsistence, mileage, materials and rescheduling activities and admin. The rebooking of the assessment will be in line with the retake fees for each methodology of a given standard.

Section 3 | Fees

The EPA should not normally exceed 20% of the maximum funding band. Where the total costs are higher than the funding band maximum, the partner must pay the difference. The partner must have a contract agreed and in place as soon as possible once Progress Minded has been chosen as the EPAO.

The fees Progress Minded charge for EPA are transparent and compliant with the pricing structures within each standard's assessment plan.

Our fees are developed with the consideration of the following:

- costs associated with the administration, registration and examination of EPA as set out in the standard/s and assessment plan/s we are registered to assess against
- costs associated with providing guidance and support and the materials (non-capital items) used in the delivery of EPA (equipment or supplies necessary to enable the EPA to take place)
- costs associated with the development and maintenance of EPA instruments and tools
- costs to support any special arrangements you may need to put in place to ensure any apprentices with special educational needs, disabilities or with another temporary or permanent debilitating condition can fairly access EPA
- costs associated with any further EPA required by the apprentice to achieve EPA (for instance retakes or re sits)
- costs associated with ensuring consistent and robust internal quality assurance (for instance moderation and standardisation of EPA instruments and tools, IEPAs and EPA decisions)
- costs to take account of any EQA charges you may incur (please refer to paragraphs 61 to 64 of Conditions for organisations on the register of end-point assessment organisations v2.1)

Our fees do not include costs associated with:

- partner approval processes
- recruitment, training and continuing professional development of our IEPAs
- any mentoring and/or assessor training of partners who may have a role in EPA
- promotional activity and/or materials
- any on-programme activity we may offer

Section 4 | Cancellations

Progress Minded will allocate the appropriate resource for each assessment component for each apprentice based on a convenient time, date, location and with a digital/online based approach as the default position. There will be a variety of timescales from booking the assessment, to the apprentice taking the assessment dependent on their circumstances and availability.

Should a partner or apprentice cancel an assessment session within 24 hours of the EPA activity then there will be a retake fee to be paid on top of the original fee paid at Gateway.

We recognise that there will be situations that present themselves where an assessment cannot take place at an agreed time and date and reasonable consideration will be given to each case.

Section 5 | Withdrawal and Transfers

Should a partner or apprentice wish to remove themselves from the EPA process after they have gone through Gateway, Progress Minded will provide a refund proportional to the amount of assessment activities carried out. Individual elements that have been completed cannot be certificated in isolation. However, we could provide evidence of achievement should the partner or apprentice request it.

We will accept transfers into our system should the partner and apprentice provide evidence of achievement from another registered and regulated EPAO. All EPA evidence will go through the usual rigorous and robust grading structure already in place for EPA. Costs of the transfer will be discussed and agreed on an individual basis.

Section 6 | Mandatory disclosure and confidentiality

6.1 Mandatory disclosures

It is imperative that the integrity of our assessments is maintained. We are aware that partner organisations often work with more than one End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), and that therefore more than one EPAO may be at risk when things go wrong.

Our regulators have outlined some specific conditions that we must meet to protect the integrity across the sector. This includes the requirement that where certain things are identified (such as malpractice), or certain actions taken (such as when sanctions are applied) the regulators and other relevant EPAOs who may be affected must be informed.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, we may be required to declare to our regulators (e.g. Ofqual) that we are no longer compliant due to an act or omission by partners which has put us in breach. In this event, we may have regulatory action directed against us, such as Monetary Penalties. In accordance with the Agreement for provision of Services Relating to End-Point Assessment, we reserve the right to direct such financial penalties against partners, should they be as a result of the act or omission.

6.2 Confidentiality

We may need to access confidential information. We will ensure that such information is kept secure and only used for the purposes of the investigation and in line with relevant data protection legislation. We will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so, e.g. to our regulators and / or the Police or other relevant and / or Statutory Bodies.

Section 7 | Termination for convenience

Where possible, we will always try to work with partners in resolving issues. However, nothing within this policy precludes us from invoking our right under the Agreement for Provision of Services Relating to End-Point Assessment to terminate our relationship with a partner.

Section 8 | Contact information

Your contact for this policy

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the EPAO Director:

Email: Cherie.heaven@progressminded.co.uk

Telephone: 020 3869 0245

Post: Progress Minded, Unit G01, Ground Floor
Metroline House
118-122 College Road
Harrow
Middlesex HA1 1BQ

Appendix A | Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation or Term	Meaning
Contract	A contract may be a service level agreement (SLA), partnership agreement, contract for goods/services or any other signed agreement in place with our partners.
EPA	End-Point Assessment: An EPA is a collection of assessments that offers confirmation of knowledge, skills and behaviours (known as KSBs) for a particular role. It takes place once the apprenticeship training has been completed, and the apprentice is deemed ready to enter the Gateway for EPA. The EPA must be achieved before an apprenticeship certificate can be issued. The structure of an EPA is designed to ensure that those making a decision on the competency of an apprentice are totally unbiased. This means that an assessment must either be conducted by an independent third party, or in a way that ensures no party involved in the management or training of the apprentice can make the sole decision on competence and passing the EPA – via a panel of experts, for example.
EPAO	End-Point Assessment Organisation: an organisation providing EPA.
Gateway	When an apprentice reaches the end of their training, the employer (supported by the Independent Training Provider) will make the decision on whether or not the apprentice is ready to take the EPA – this decision process or stage is known as the “Gateway”.
ITP	Independent Training Provider: a person who delivers training to an apprentice to enable the apprentice to reach Gateway in conjunction with employers.
IEPA	Independent End-Point Assessor: a person who facilitates an unbiased assessment of an apprentice’s competencies against the KSBs of the standard.
LIEPA	Lead Independent End-Point Assessor: a person responsible for internal quality assurance and standardisation of all assessment practice within EPA and is the sector expert.
Ofqual	Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation: a government body regulating examinations, assessments, and qualifications in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.
Partner	This can be apprentices, employees, employers, external quality assessors, Independent Training Providers and workers.