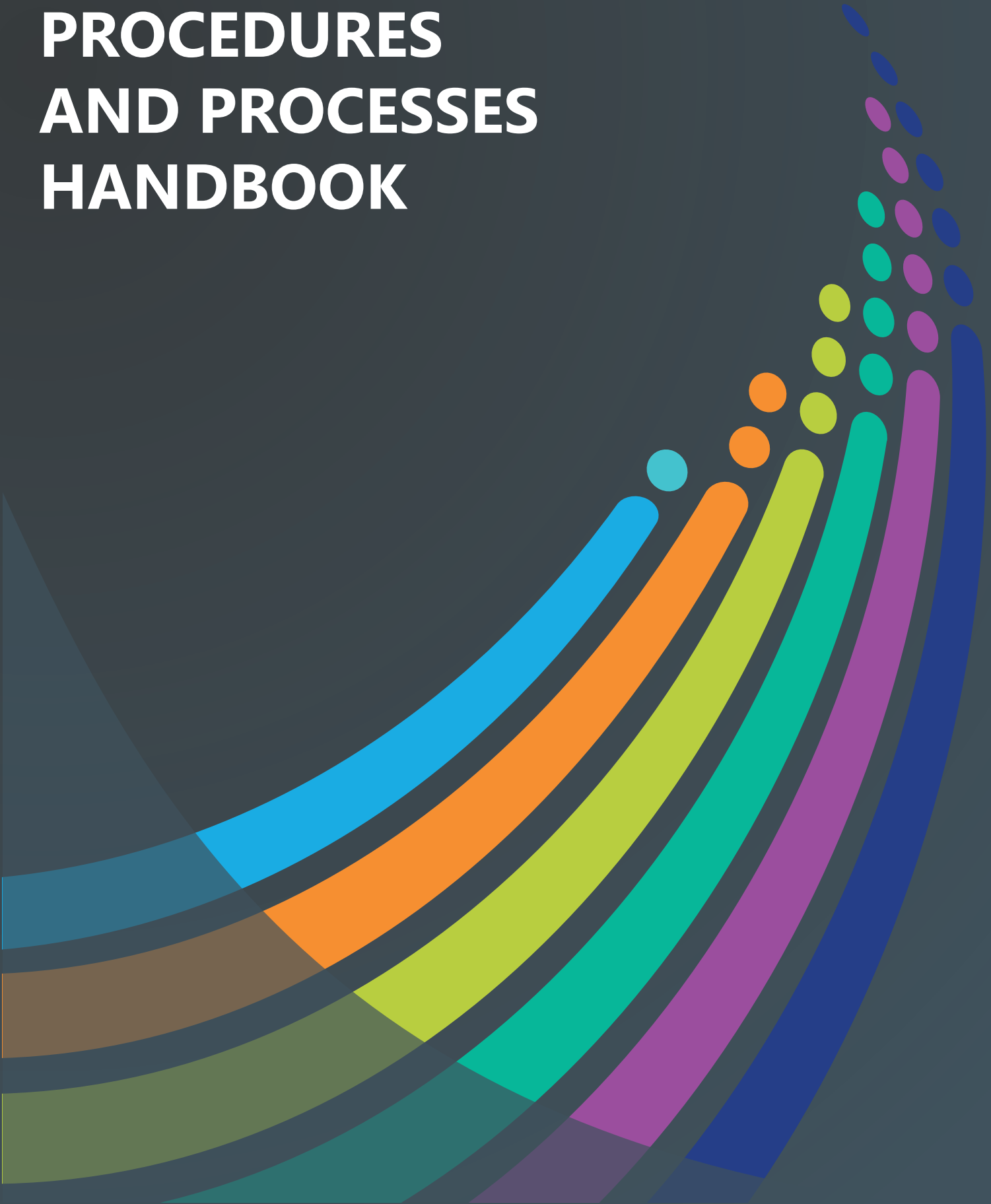


# **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES HANDBOOK**



# Content

1	Principles of the L4 SBPA EPA processes	3
2	EPA Organisation responsibilities	3
3	Recruiting and training independent assessors	4
	3.1 Recruitment.....	4
	3.2 Training.....	5
4	The EPA process	6
	4.1 Registration.....	6
	4.2 EPA preparation.....	6
	4.3 The EPA process .....	6
	4.4 Reasonable adjustments.....	9
	4.5 Cancellation of EPA .....	9
	4.6 Results.....	9
	4.7 Post-results .....	10
5	Quality assurance	10
	5.1 Monitoring the quality of our assessment team.....	10
	5.2 Monitoring the quality of the assessment judgement: moderation and standardisation .....	11
	5.3 Stakeholder feedback.....	11
	5.4 Acting on QA processes/feedback outcome .....	12
	5.5 Data and audit trail.....	12

# 1 Principles of the L4 SBPA EPA processes

This EPA Assessment Processes Handbook is underpinned by the End Point Assessment Plan for the Level 4 School Business Apprenticeship approved for delivery on 5 February 2018 (<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/school-business-professional/>) and is therefore based on the following principles:

1. The EPA process will start once an employer is satisfied that their apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the standards, that the prerequisite EPA gateway requirements for EPA have been met and that they be evidenced to an EPA Organisation.
2. The EPA will test the apprentice against the entire L4 SBPA standard.
3. The EPA will consist of 2 assessment methods:
  - a. **A simulated task:** the apprentices will be given a scenario situation and, in timed controlled conditions, asked to write a short report and make a presentation that will be followed by questions
  - b. **A project report & presentation with questions and answers:** The apprentice will write a formal, detailed structured report on the on-programme workplace project they have completed. Both the project and project report must be verified as the apprentice's own work along with confirmation that the project report was completed post-gateway. The presentation will be followed by questions.
4. To pass the EPA, apprentices will need to demonstrate that they have achieved the standard (knowledge, skills and behaviours). Performance in the EPA will determine the apprenticeship grade of fail, pass or distinction.
5. The EPA will typically be completed within an 8-week period after the apprentice has passed the EPA gateway.
6. External quality assurance of the EPA processes will be carried out by the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education.
7. The EPA will be delivered through a mixture of assessment methods, and where possible online solutions will be encouraged.
8. The cost of the EPA represents no more than 15% of the apprenticeship funding band of £6,000.00.

## 2 EPA Organisation responsibilities

The partnership led by ISBL with Serco Education recognises the following as the responsibilities of the EPA Organisation:

1. To appoint appropriately qualified independent assessors (*see section 3*)
2. To appoint invigilators for the simulated task short written report (there are no specific qualification or experience requirements, but invigilators should be independent of the apprentice, their employer and training provider)

3. To assess and grade each assessment activity separately, combining the results to determine the EPA and apprenticeship grade
4. To ensure the rigorous internal quality assurance of the EPA process
5. To undertake any reporting requirements and provision of information relating to performance and outcomes, including reporting on any concerns identified as to the quality of any on-programme training or assessment practices

## 3 Recruiting and training independent assessors

### 3.1 Recruitment

The role of the independent end point assessor is to provide independent, fair, reliable and consistent assessment services. Assessors are required to use assessment experience with robust industry knowledge to form judgements and grading decisions.

As per the SBPA End-Point Assessment Plan, all assessors recruited by ISBL will:

- be independent of the apprentice, their employer and training, i.e. there must be no conflict of interest (please refer to our *EPA Conflict of Interest draft policy*)
- have a minimum of 5 years' experience of working in leadership and management in an educational organisational setting and/or hold a leadership and management qualification, at a minimum level 5 and/or a qualification in School Business Management, at a minimum of Level 5 (or equivalent)
- hold a recognised assessment qualification or have been trained in assessment practice by their EPAO
- if possible, have membership of a professional institute or association appropriate to the level and subject area of the qualification.

To the requirements above, ISBL will, when recruiting, add the following key points to the personal specification / job description:

All end point assessors will:

- deliver outstanding end point assessment services to assigned apprentices and employers
- have experience of carrying out workplace performance evidence-based assessments, using a range of assessment methods
- have experience of producing clear, accurate and concise written reports
- undertake EPA activities with integrity and impartiality to offer a fair, reliable and consistent assessment experience for all apprentices
- maintain an excellent working knowledge of the SBPA apprenticeship standards and assessment plans
- produce accurate and well-informed assessment feedback and written reports to validate assessment grading decisions

- provide detailed and appropriate feedback to support apprentice development
- complete and maintain all required assessment paperwork
- submit, as and when required, evidence of work for internal and external quality assurance
- actively participate in moderation, standardisation and development activities and meetings as and when required to ensure a consistent approach to end-point assessment
- maintain a thorough knowledge of ISBL's EPA policies and procedures
- be responsible for maintaining their own ongoing CPD to both assessment practice and school business management
- have sound IT and digital literacy
- have analytical, critical thinking skills
- have excellent written and verbal communication skills with substantive experience of providing supportive, concise feedback
- have organisational skills and the ability to prioritise effectively
- have the ability to work independently as well as within a team

All candidates will undertake a rigorous selection process, including an interview to establish knowledge and understanding judged against clearly identified assessor competencies. An assessment day will ensure applicants' abilities and experience match our assessor role specification.

## 3.2 Training

The partnership is committed to providing high-quality assessors with capacity and credibility. Assessor appointments will therefore only be confirmed upon completion of a comprehensive training programme.

All new assessors will be required to complete a development event to familiarise themselves with the SBPA Standards, the SBPA End-Point Assessment Plan, the assessment process and the moderation and standardisation procedures.

During the first set of training and development activities, assessors will be given sample EPA tasks to mark and conduct interviews with volunteers who have recently completed the Level 4 Diploma in SBM. Feedback will be provided, and assessors will then attend a standardisation meeting to ensure that they fully understand the assessment process. Should there be any cause for concern, the assessor will be invited to complete further training before they are given the opportunity to conduct an end-point assessment with an apprentice.

Assessors will receive feedback from assessment monitoring and quality assurance throughout the process.

## 4 The EPA process

The partnership's EPA service aims to provide excellent customer services and quality support to apprentices through rigorous processes and practice.

### 4.1 Registration

Training providers will register their apprentice for end-point assessment online via our Moodle site. This application process will enable them to provide the name of the apprentice and employer and expected date for Gateway and EPA.

Upon receipt of the application, our admin team will issue a contract to the training provider including each apprentice and their respective employer. This will confirm that we will provide the end-point assessment service with a provision date for Gateway. Training providers will be encouraged to register apprentices approximately six months before they are due to reach the Gateway.

Once the apprentice has successfully completed their Gateway, the training provider will confirm this using our Moodle site. At this point, we will require the training provider to provide evidence that the apprentice has valid level 2 qualifications in mathematics and English and that they have completed their portfolio of evidence and a work-based project. We will also require the training provider to provide confirmation from the employer that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level of the SBPA standard.

### 4.2 EPA preparation

To assist apprentices in preparing for the end-point assessment, training providers will receive an EPA pack that they can use with their learners. This will include a Gateway checklist along with a selection of tasks, examples of potential work-based projects that are clearly lined to the SBPA Standard and examples of questions that could be asked at end-point assessment. Guidance will also be provided on conducting a mock interview.

### 4.3 The EPA process

The EPA process will take place in several stages:

#### Stage 1: Gateway submission

Our partnership admin team will ensure that all Gateway Checklists have been completed by the training provider with evidence from the employer that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the required level and that:

- a completed portfolio of learning against the SBPA standards has been completed, which provides evidence demonstrating the KSBs

- a work-based project has been completed (based on two of the following areas of the SBPA standards: Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Managing Support Services, Marketing and Infrastructure)
- the apprentice has Level 2 equivalent in English and mathematics

### Stage 2: Preparation

- The EPA will typically be completed within an 8-week period after the apprentice has passed the EPA Gateway.
- Apprentices will receive notice of their EPA test day(s) within two working days of submitting their workplace project report and portfolio of learning.
- Apprentices will be given a minimum of 10 days' notice of the date of their EPA test day(s).
- The EPA activities may be face-to-face with the independent assessor or via live media.
- Assessment activities will take place in a suitably controlled environment.

### Stage 3: Remote assessment of work-based project report and of portfolio of learning

In preparation for the actual EPA events, independent assessors will:

- review the project report provided by the apprentice
- review the apprentice's portfolio of learning and prepare areas for questioning as part of EPA activity 2.

### Stage 4: EPA activities

#### **Activity 1 – Simulated task**

<b>Purpose</b>	To simulate a situation in which a school business professional may be required to gather and present information within a tight schedule to school governors
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report preparation: 1.5 hrs</li> <li>• Verbal presentation: 10 minutes</li> <li>• Q&amp;A: 10–12 minutes</li> </ul>
<b>The task</b>	<p>The apprentice will be given a scenario situation and, in timed controlled conditions, will be asked to complete a written task in the form of a report to governors and make a presentation that will be followed by questions.</p> <p>There is no limit to the word count for the report – apprentices may write as little or as much as they consider appropriate in the time available.</p>
<b>Guidelines for independent assessors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our partnership will develop a task bank of sufficient size to prevent predictability and review these tasks termly at first and then biannually.</li> <li>• Tasks will be allocated to apprentices at random but based on areas of the Standard that they have not covered in the work-based project.</li> <li>• The simulated task will be submitted electronically and will be prepared under examination conditions with an invigilator present.</li> <li>• Upon completion of the report, the independent assessor will be given 15 minutes to read the report prior to the apprentice presenting the</li> </ul>

	<p>report to the assessor orally, as if the independent assessor was a governor in an educational setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA evidence will be recorded (using written, audio or video recording), and a copy of the report of any presentation material must be retained for quality assurance purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Grading</b>	<p>Fail / Pass / Distinction</p> <p>The Independent Assessor will use the Grading criteria as detailed in Annex 3 of the EPA Assessment Plan (February 2018).</p>

## Activity 2 – Project report & presentation with questions & answers

<b>Purpose</b>	To present the work-based project to the independent assessor
<b>Duration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation: 10–12 minutes</li> <li>Q&amp;A: 20–22 minutes</li> </ul>
<b>The task</b>	<p>The apprentice will submit a formal, detailed structured report on the work-based project they have completed. This must be completed post-Gateway and no later than 2 weeks after the date of the Gateway. This report should include an executive summary, methodology, review of findings and next steps. The report may include evidence from their workplace project, graphs, tables and photographs but should not exceed 2,000 words (+/- 10%). This word count does not include any appendices, but the total appendices should not exceed the total word count for the report.</p> <p>The presentation will be followed by questions from the independent assessor relating to the project report and the presentation.</p> <p>This questioning session will then be followed by questions on other areas of the standard not covered by the workplace project and presentation. These areas should, however, have been covered by the portfolio of learning.</p>
<b>Guidelines for independent assessors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the project and the project report must be verified as the apprentice’s own work along with confirmation that the project report was completed post-gateway.</li> <li>EPA evidence must be recorded (using written, audio or video recording) and a copy of the report of any presentation material must be retained for quality assurance purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Grading</b>	<p>Fail / Pass / Distinction</p> <p>The Independent Assessor will use the Grading criteria as detailed in Annex 3 of the EPA Assessment Plan (February 2018).</p>

## Resits

Apprentices who fail one or more of the assessment methods are allowed to resit/retake. A resit does not require further learning, whereas a retake does. Apprentices will be required to wait for



one month before retaking to allow the development of the knowledge and skills that were found to be lacking at the EPA.

Apprentices who pass the EPA cannot resit/retake it simply to achieve a higher grade unless the retake is due to extenuating circumstance.

#### 4.4 Reasonable adjustments

Our partnership is committed to the equal and fair assessment of all apprentices. As part of this, we will give special considerations to those in need of enhanced access during assessments and make any reasonable adjustment we can, within the constraints of budgets and practical feasibility.

Please refer to our *Reasonable Adjustments Policy*.

#### 4.5 Cancellation of EPA

We recognise that there are circumstances outside the control of the training provider and/or the apprentice, which could result in an EPA cancellation. In such circumstances, we will liaise with the training provider and/or apprentice to discuss the re-scheduling of the assessment day.

The independent assessor may also cancel or ask to reschedule the assessment if they feel that there is a safety or security issue, and/or:

- there is a problem with accessing systems
- there is a concern over the identity of the apprentice
- the apprentice is unable to complete the assessment
- there is a concern regarding malpractice.

Please refer to our *Malpractice and Maladministration Policy*.

#### 4.6 Results

Once apprentices have completed their end-point assessment, a moderation event will take place. During the first two terms, moderation will cover 100% of apprentice's assessment. This will reduce in term three to 50% and by term six will be 10% of each independent assessor's assessments sampled, rising where there are potential standardisation issues around consistency.

Moderation will confirm the apprentice's overall grade, which will be forwarded to the apprentice in a feedback report. The grade will also be submitted to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), who will issue an apprenticeship certificate. The certificate from ESFA will confirm that the apprentice has successfully completed their apprenticeship programme and also provide them with their overall grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction. Certificates will be forwarded to the apprentices within two days of receipt.

## 4.7 Post-results

On successful completion, apprentices may choose to register as members with the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL).

### Appeals

Our partnership recognises that apprentices should have access to fair and reliable assessment and should therefore have a right to appeal against end point assessment decisions which are unclear or seem unfair. An apprentice may appeal against the outcome of the EPA, that should be addressed to the EPA Programme Manager, clearly stating the grounds for appeals.

Please refer to our Complaints and Appeals Policy.

# 5 Quality assurance

Our reputation depends on our ability to provide services that are of a consistent, reliable and high quality, meeting or exceeding learners' needs.

We aim to:

- ensure our assessors have appropriate training and meet our person specifications for the role
- measure and report on our performance in managing and delivering EPA assessment
- ensure all assessment and moderation requirements are undertaken
- use the outcomes of independent reviews to help us to improve and meet apprentices' needs
- request feedback from independent assessors and other stakeholders on how to improve the quality of our services.

## 5.1 Monitoring the quality of our assessment team

- As detailed in section 3.2, our assessors will complete a rigorous training programme to ensure consistency and a high level of assessment based on the SBPA standards and other relevant regulatory requirements.
- All of our assessors will receive ongoing feedback, support and development via regular team meetings and one-to-one conversations as well as through the moderation and standardisation process.
- Assessors will receive copies of the EPA policies and will also have electronic access.
- Assessors will receive regular communications (via emails, team meetings and one-to-one conversations) to enable the dissemination of timely and up-to-date information, which is key to quality and efficacy.

- Assessors will be required to complete confidentiality and conflict of interest declarations each time that they are allocated an apprentice to assess. Please refer to our Conflict of Interest Policy.
- All assessors will be risk-assessed and audited to ensure compliance and high-quality delivery and to support standardization.
- We will require apprentices and employers to complete an evaluation after the EPA as part of our quality management process.

## 5.2 Monitoring the quality of the assessment judgement: moderation and standardisation

Led by our QA Manager, we will complete moderation events after each end-point assessment window. During the first two terms, we will moderate 100% of the assessment to ensure the rigour of each assessor's decision. By term three, we will moderate 50% of the assessment, but this will increase for any assessor where there are potential standardisation issues around consistency.

Each assessor will receive a comprehensive moderation report with relevant action points, which they will be asked to comment on and agree to action. Further training will be provided on request or if there are potential standardisation issues around consistency.

We will undertake a statistical analysis of preliminary and final grade awards per term and by assessor as part of standardisation activities. All assessors will be required to attend two standardisation meetings per annum where good practice is shared. If an assessor is identified through moderation to be inconsistent in their assessment practice, they will be required to attend each standardisation event (delivered termly) until they are no longer a cause for concern. Should any assessor be cause for concern around consistency over two terms, they will be required to undertake additional training in assessment and to complete the Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement before they are allowed to assess again.

We will carry out evaluation throughout each end-point assessment and on a biannual basis.

## 5.3 Stakeholder feedback

Central to measuring the quality of our provision is the gathering of feedback from internal and external stakeholders.

Feedback mechanisms that will be made available to apprentices and their employers will include:

- A dedicated helpline for verbal feedback and/or enquiries
- A dedicated email address for written feedback and/or enquiries
- Clear complaints and appeals procedures (please refer to our Complaints and Appeals policy)
- The submission of an online evaluation questionnaire at the end of the EPA process

Assessors will be required to provide feedback at the end of each round of EPA.

## 5.4 Acting on QA processes/feedback outcome

Key to our quality expectations is the determination to implement the conclusions that arise from the feedback and review opportunities. Evidence from monitoring of performance will inform our training, development and guidance statements and will impact on all aspects of provision. This will also enable us to identify trends, early indications of strengths to expand, and challenges to address.

## 5.5 Data and audit trail

We will ensure a secure and accessible audit trail for employer selection, apprentice registration, EPA documentation, audits and final grading decisions.

All documentation will be stored securely and all apprenticeship data spreadsheets will have additional password protection;

We will hold the following information on file to enable a full audit trail from registration to certification:

- Registration details
- Records of team meetings
- Records of moderation and standardisation meetings
- Assessor feedback and action points
- EPA training records
- Apprentices' and employers' feedback surveys
- Final grading decisions
- Complaints records and appeals records

All records will be held securely and appropriately, in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Policy.