ASET Good Practice Guide to Successful Work Based Learning for Apprenticeships in Higher Education
ASET has been involved in promoting ‘Good Practice’ around placements since 1982, the terminology then was sandwich education, and limited to the year students would spend in the workplace as part of their university education, but now the broader term work based and placement learning (WBPL) is used to fully encompass the breadth of opportunities available to students, irrespective of their level or mode of study. ASET’s goal remains the same; to advance the prevalence, effectiveness and quality of work based and placement learning in Higher Education.

Thanks must go to all those in the ASET community for their contributions for this ‘Good Practice’ Guide, both directly and indirectly.

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Introduction

The focus in this Guide is on Apprenticeships that include a programme of study at a Higher Education Provider (HEP). It is intended to be useful to practitioners irrespective of the academic subject. This Guide has been written to support the development of ‘Good Practice’ but is neither prescriptive nor regulatory.

Apprenticeships are part of a growing offer of Work Based and Placement Learning (WBPL), it is important in that it helps to bring together academic theory and workplace practice, integrating the working with the learning. It might be about increasing a student’s employability but may also be a defining characteristic of a qualification and therefore must be considered in the same manner as other forms of learning, teaching and assessment when it comes to quality and standards in Higher Education.

Who is this Guide for?

All practitioners in Higher Education associated with WBPL; this includes but is not limited to:

- Professional and administrative staff
- Academic tutors
- Careers Services
- Resource Managers

Specific sections may be usefully shared by practitioners with their students and employers who are developing or delivering Apprenticeships.

Purpose of this Guide

This guide has been designed to provide assistance to those who have developed, already run, or are considering developing new Apprenticeships and are seeking advice and support. The guide is not prescriptive, it aims to share and develop good practice in work based learning.
Scope and Definitions

This guide focusses on the difference between work based and placement learning (WBPL) through an Apprenticeship, and WBPL through a standard degree. It should be noted that:

Apprenticeships are a devolved policy. This means that authorities in each of the UK nations manage their own apprenticeship programmes, including how funding is spent on apprenticeship training.

ESFA (2019)

Work Based and Placement Learning

The objective of any work based or placement learning experience, regardless of length, is to consolidate and complement the academic learning, knowledge and skills with experience.

Apprenticeships have work based learning at their core. An apprentice would be considered as employee first, and student second i.e. they come to their Higher Education experience by virtue of their employment or employer.

Apprenticeships integrate learning with employment in which the apprentices:

- Work alongside experienced staff
- Gain job-specific skills
- Earn a wage and get holiday pay
- Get time for study related to their role

Relationships are likely to include those between:

- Apprentice and employer: this would be a formal legal contract of employment, with all the implied entitlements and responsibilities. If the individual is joining the employer for an Apprenticeship this may be a new contract. For someone embarking on an Apprenticeship with their existing employer, this may require a variation in contract or working terms

- Apprentice and HEP: the formal contract implicit in acceptance of an Apprentice on an Apprenticeship is evidenced by the signing of a Commitment Statement

- HEP and employer: standard practice is a formal contract

In Higher Education, Apprenticeships are referred to as Higher or Degree Apprenticeships. A Higher Apprenticeship is at level 4-7 and may contain a Foundation Degree where as a Degree Apprenticeship requires a prescribed Bachelor’s or Master’s degree. The guidance herein applies equally to work based learning in both Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, so for simplicity this guide will refer to Apprenticeships and Apprentices throughout.
In its 2015 publication English Apprenticeships: a 2020 Vision, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) highlighted a vision for the future of work based learning in which:

- Employers are in the driving seat
- 3m new Apprenticeships would be created by 2020
- The existing workforce as well as new recruits could benefit
- Students already holding another degree or Apprenticeship can take part
- There would be no cost to Apprentices for this training - a no-fee route
- There would be strong focus on a specific occupation.

From 6th April 2017 employers with a pay bill of £3m+ must pay the Apprenticeship Levy. Levied employers pay the full “Cost of Apprenticeship” fee via their Apprenticeship Service account. Employers who don’t pay the Apprenticeship Levy pay 5-10% of the cost, and the Government pays the remainder. Providers of Apprenticeships can only work with these employers if they have been allocated places, because of limits to Government funding. HEPs can also work with non-levy payers who have received a transfer from another levied employer. Companies with fewer than 50 staff may be eligible for 100% funding if they recruit a 19-24 year-old with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or with a Leaving Care (LAC) plan.

At the time of writing, the funding landscape is in constant flux. To ensure access to the latest information, please access gov.uk ‘Apprenticeship funding: How it Works’ (See References).

It is important to note that employers are the client, not the Apprentice, so they should have more influence over the curriculum content, delivery and assessment choices.

How do Apprenticeships differ to typical provision?

- Apprenticeships combine university study and workplace learning to enable Apprentices usually to gain either an undergraduate or postgraduate degree; the Apprentices - are typically, but not exclusively employed on a full time basis and are released for a minimum of 20% of employed time across the duration of the Apprenticeship in order to study. This is referred to as off the job (OTJ) training

- Apprenticeships often have atypical attendance models such as day release, block teaching or online and distance learning (although not pure distance learning)

- In order for an HEP to deliver an Apprenticeship they must have an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding agreement. Apprentices do not pay for training costs or student fees and are not eligible for student loans
• When an HEP offers a degree, the design of the curriculum is very open, providing the sector benchmarks are met:
  - UK Quality Code for Higher Education
  - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
  - Subject benchmark statements
  - SEEC Credit Level Descriptors

• Many HEP programmes will be recognised or accredited by a Professional or Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) and therefore the design of the curriculum will need to be aligned with the PSRB requirements. This also applies to Apprenticeships.

• Apprenticeships have a further set of reference points which provide a non-negotiable framework within which HEPs must work; these are the Apprenticeship Standard, the Assessment Plan and the End Point Assessment (EPA).

• Apprenticeships are co-designed by groups of employers, professional bodies and HEPs, collectively known as Trailblazers. Trailblazers propose the Apprenticeship Standard, the Assessment Plan and the EPA.

• This Trailblazer approach results in a fully bespoke programme specifically for Apprentices, which delivers and tests both academic learning and on-the-job training.

• A Degree Apprenticeship cannot run until the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) fully approves the Standard, the Assessment Plan, the EPA arrangements and until the funding band is confirmed.

Funding for each Apprenticeship is set through Funding Bands

*Each apprenticeship is allocated to one of 30 funding bands, which range from £1,500 to £27,000. The upper limit of each funding band caps the maximum amount of digital funds an employer who pays the levy can use towards an individual apprenticeship. The upper limit of the funding band also sets the maximum price that government will ‘co-invest’ towards an individual apprenticeship, where an employer does not pay the levy or has insufficient digital funds and is eligible for extra government support.*

*IfATE (2019)*

The Standard

• The purpose of the Apprenticeship Standard is to describe typical roles of a completer of the Apprenticeship, and to define the knowledge, skills and behaviours developed. It is not dissimilar to a job description and person specification.

• The Assessment Plan covers arrangements for both academic learning and workplace competency, which can be quite detailed, or very open.
• Requirements for EPA vary widely; sometimes the responsibility sits with the HEP; this is called an integrated Apprenticeship and the EPA is part of the programme.

• In a non-integrated Apprenticeship an external End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) will run the EPA, which will be taken on completion of the on programme learning.

• All Apprentices must be assessed at the end of their training to confirm they have achieved occupational competence.

• The HEP should work closely with the Apprentice and the employer to ensure successful completion of the EPA.
Developing Apprenticeships: the curriculum challenges

Employer-Led

Apprenticeships are employer-led and designed, combining study at an HEP with practical employment experience to develop the wider skills vital for career success. The development of Apprenticeships marks a significant change in who determines the content and design of HEP programmes, and is driven by Government policy:

*(n)obody understands the skills employers need better than the employers themselves. That is why we are placing them in the driving seat. They are designing apprenticeships so that they focus on exactly the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required of the workforce of the future.*


This approach removes the primary focus from qualifications, originated and written by universities, and places employers at the heart of design and delivery through an emphasis on determining an explicit outcomes-driven curriculum. In practice this means being concerned with what Apprentices can do at the end of their Apprenticeship rather than strict stipulation of how they might get there. Government policy documents speak of the power of Apprenticeships to fulfil both social mobility aspirations, and to serve the higher-level skills needs of business:

_The development of higher (level 4 and 5) and degree (level 6 and 7) apprenticeships aims to widen access to the professions and develop the higher level technical skills needed to improve productivity and support businesses to compete internationally._

_HM Government (2015:p.18)_

Multiple Agencies

The Department for Education provide policy oversight for Apprenticeships through two bodies; the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), an executive agency who are accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults, and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), a crown non-departmental public body with a remit to ensure the development of high quality Apprenticeships which are respected as highly as other education routes. In practice this involves setting approval criteria for Apprenticeships, supporting the Trailblazers, determining funding that can be drawn down, and quality assurance.
Different focus for Quality Assurance

Quality assuring Apprenticeships brings new organisations into the HEP landscape for many disciplines. Ofsted will inspect the quality of Higher Apprenticeship training provision from level 2 to level 5. In the case of Degree Apprenticeships providers delivering prescribed Higher Education as part of an apprenticeship standard, the Quality Assurance Agency and Ofsted will reach a judgement, informed by joint working.

Key Point

The policy drivers are so much more prevalent in Apprenticeships in comparison to other programmes and cannot be treated in a cursory fashion or in a limited way but must be at the centre of the design as they determine the final outcomes.
One of the major differences between an Apprenticeship and a standard full or part-time degree is the relationship between the HEP and the employer. Traditionally, the contract to provide a programme is between a student and the HEP. However, with an Apprenticeship, the employer contracts the HEP to provide the programme; they pay the tuition fees through the company’s levy payment or a combination of employer and Government payment from the Levy pot. This sounds relatively straightforward, but the reality for practitioners is somewhat different.

With the employer in control, they can request regular updates on the Apprentices’ progress, including attendance, behaviours, and grades. Significantly, they play a major role in the development and support of their Apprentice as they progress through the programme. They also provide a vital feedback element, highlighting where new knowledge is applied in the workplace and the difference that this makes to the business.

Although providing such detailed information to an external body may be a significant change for practitioners, it is useful to see impact and allows any changes to be made or issues with an Apprentice to be managed quickly. Fig. 1 illustrates the close bond between the Employer, Apprentice and HEP. Such a close relationship provides the Apprentice with a rich development environment in which they learn more about their business and can practice skills, test their knowledge and abilities in the ‘safe’ classroom before application in the workplace.

Figure 1 - Tripartite Working
Curriculum design and delivery

There are clear guidelines for the design of the curriculum for Apprenticeships, primarily the Apprenticeship Standards. These should be coupled with the pedagogic approach of the course, whether a qualification is to be awarded as part of the Apprenticeship or not, feedback from employer engagement (including PSRBs), and the design of the student experience.

Apprenticeship Standard

**Key Points**
- What must be taught through the programme?
- What must be learned at and evidenced at work?
- What can be learned at and evidenced at work?

Understanding the Apprenticeship Standard must be the starting point to ensure the end goal is met. Starting with the Standard can inform programme learning outcomes, which will be reviewed by the IfATE every 3-5 years. HEP validation and approval panels need to have confidence that the programme enables demonstration of the Standard.

Pedagogic approach

**Key Points**
- How can personalised learning be included?
- What negotiated/tailored projects can be included?
- How will typical assessment be more authentic?

The curriculum development team must discuss the approach to learning on the programme to ensure a learner-centred curriculum which makes the most of the work based nature of Apprenticeships. Consider the development of an experiential learning curriculum in which the Apprentice is immersed in situations, and learning neatly dovetails with work.

The authenticity of assessment is important, as it promotes deep and meaningful learning but also shows the Apprentice a strong relationship with real-world situations.
**Qualification**

*Key Points*
- What must remain to keep the HEP academic award rigorous?

The Standard will outline whether or not a specific qualification is required to be awarded as part of the Apprenticeship. Often Apprenticeships are developed in an area where the HEP already offers degree programmes. When developing the curriculum where a previous degree is in existence it is important to remain open minded about what can be kept, what might be shared or adapted, and what might need to be put aside within an Apprenticeship programme. Do not simply re-timetable an existing course into an Apprenticeship; this approach does not work for the Apprentice or the employer as it has not taken the work environment into consideration.

**Employer Specification**

*Key Points*
- How has employer feedback influenced decisions when designing the programme?
- What changes have been made to existing practice in light of the employer consultation or specification?

It is advisable to evidence employer engagement, demand and influence on the curriculum as part of the development and, where appropriate, the requirements of PSRBs. Providing clear evidence that the knowledge and skills required by the employer has been considered and included is essential, if there will be multiple employers accessing the programme, this will require careful consideration and representation.

**Student Experience**

*Key Points*
- Individual Needs Assessment
- Employer Liaison Visits
- Individual Learning Plans
- Portfolios / E-portfolios

Undertaking an Individual Needs Assessment for each Apprentice at the point of enrolment is required for a number of reasons, but primarily; repeated learning cannot be funded and Apprentices with prior experience or learning may have exemptions from parts of the programme.
Employer liaison visits for progress review checks are an essential part of any Apprenticeship, they form part of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and provide a key link between the employer and the HEP. When designing your curriculum, you need to consider the length of time that such visits will take to ensure that you have sufficient resource allocation.

As the Apprentices progress through the programme, collation of evidence is required and is usually achieved via an online portfolio. Ensuring that any portfolio will meet the needs of a growing number of apprentices should be considered at the design stage.

**Admissions and prior learning**

**Initial needs assessment**

Apprentices, especially those who have been in employment for some time, can enter the course with advanced standing. The ESFA require an initial needs assessment to establish the type of work and level at which the Apprentice is working and the qualifications that they currently hold.

In addition to prior experience and qualifications, prior to end point assessment, Apprentices need to have passed their GCSE English and Maths (or equivalent) at grade C (4). Those who do not have the relevant qualifications may be required to complete and pass Functional Skills tests. HEPs will either require this as an entry criteria, or to be taken alongside the Apprenticeship.

Undertaking an Apprenticeship alongside full time work is a significant challenge, therefore it is important to establish the Apprentices’ commitment to the programme. HEPs must provide Apprentice with essential information about the level of work needed to complete the programme including the potential impact on their personal lives.
It is important to work with Admissions Tutors and teams to develop an understanding of the variety of experience and qualifications that Apprenticeship applicants bring. It is important that the practitioner carrying out the initial needs assessment or making the admission decision is aware of the funding restrictions on repeated learning, and the HEP processes for recognition of prior learning (RPL). Any exemptions due to prior learning must comply with HEP regulations for the accreditation of prior learning, whether that is certificated or experiential learning.

Each Apprentice’s contract will highlight whether there are any exemptions for prior learning or experience. Such exemptions will have an impact on the amount the employer is charged, so it is crucial that the initial needs assessment process is thorough and accurate as this is audited by the funding body, ESFA.
Relationship building with employers

Managing the relationship with the employer is essential. Good practice recommends that the Course Leader and or Business Partner or equivalent, meets with the employer and Apprentices at the application stage. This allows the HEP to view the working environment, and gain a greater understanding of the Apprentice’s duties, and agree contact time between the HEP and the employer. A good relationship at the start of the contract will ensure that if and when problems arise, there is a robust line of communication to reach an amicable solution as quickly as possible.

It is important to ensure the employer is aware of and engaged in the regular progress review meetings with the HEP. It is a requirement of the Apprenticeship that regular reviews are undertaken during the year and the frequency of these meetings should be agreed at the outset. The University Vocational Awards Council (UVAC, 2017) provides a useful and practical guide to these reviews.

It is advisable that each visit is structured with a clear agenda to provide scaffolding for conversations and to ensure visit parity across a cohort. It will also ensure the employer can engage with the visit to gain updates on progress and to see whether additional support is required. Visits can highlight any areas that require support such as access to other parts of the business normally outside the Apprentices’ remit. Employers can facilitate links within the business to ensure a positive experience.

Apprentices come from a range of backgrounds and areas of business, some are new recruits, and some are expanding their skills within the business as part of continuing professional development. Some employers have a clear agenda for succession planning, especially if they have a mature workforce profile and see the Apprenticeship as a structured route to achieving their goals. It is therefore important that the visiting tutor is aware of the background of the relationship with the company and the reasons why they have chosen to develop their staff through an Apprenticeship.
The role of the mentor is an integral part of the Apprenticeship. A mentor may be a current line manager or someone else in the organisation with the required knowledge, skills and abilities to support the Apprentice through their programme. In many cases, mentors may not have received prior training for the role, therefore it is important for the HEP to set out clear expectations and offer ongoing support to the employers and mentors because of the centrality of the role in enabling the success of the Apprentice. There is a strong evidence base about the positive impact of mentoring, particularly on the behaviour, engagement, attainment and educational and career progression of young people (Hooley, 2016). Recent work by Roberts et al (2019) has proposed a model of mentoring practice for those involved in supporting Degree Apprentices, equally applicable to all apprentices.

Figure 2: A model for mentoring Degree Apprentices (Roberts, Storm and Flynn 2019)
Their model suggests five domains which support the learning of Apprentices and goes on to suggest a series of good practice principles for each of the domains, which are sound recommendations, and some of which are summarised here:

- **Provide induction** – focussing on a structured relationship, with clear ways of working with early support to provide an individualised response
- **Set workplace expectations of professionalism** – from setting a good example, uncovering hidden or expected norms at work, giving background or historical context to assisting in the development of understanding standards of practice
- **Proactively facilitate learning within and outside of the workplace** – manage regular reflection on progress, understand the purpose of the Apprenticeship and use their own position to build learning relationships for the Apprentice with other colleagues
- **Encourage engagement with support networks** – assist, encourage and empower their Apprentices to join a variety of groups, communities and networks that will support and extend their learning
- **Support the achievement of the Apprenticeship Standard** – understand the requirements of the Apprenticeship and both support and drive the Apprentice towards its achievement

HEPs must work with employers to ensure the mentors put in place to support the apprentices do in turn, have the necessary support and professional development required to carry out their role.
Off the Job Training

Specific advice about Off the Job (OTJ) training should be taken from the Government website to ensure that you are compliant with current rules (see Reference). Within these requirements, the following good practice applies.

Apprentices are required to spend a minimum of 20% of their contracted hours away from usual tasks, engaging in OTJ training.

HEPs need to record the progress towards the required 20% OTJ training for audit purposes, as part of the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). The requirement to monitor progress against the 20% is throughout the Apprenticeship, so live data must be captured monthly. Software systems, bespoke to Apprenticeships, are available to support this. The ESFA requires providers to demonstrate that employers are giving Apprentices at least 20% of their contracted time to engage in OTJ training. This needs to be a live record; it is simply not enough to record recommended learning hours at programme approval and use this as a template of expected intensity. Procured systems usually have functionality to record and verify OTJ training. If you don’t have a system, you might ask Apprentices to keep an E-portfolio or spreadsheet log.

All OTJ training should support the Apprentice to develop competency against the Apprenticeship Standard.

The Apprenticeship Standard should be a regular reference for self-assessment to demonstrate progression and to ensure the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours in the Standard maintain currency and reference through delivery.

Discussion of OTJ training should be a fundamental part of the tripartite progress reviews. It is important to capture records of these meetings and, also record agreed actions. Using a simple RAG (Red, Amber, Green) system to rate specific components allows a cohort view of attendance, expected progress, and quantifiable elements. This enables all parties to respond and highlight issues or achievements as these should be a collaborative effort, do also consider how outcomes might be shared and signed off.

At the end of on programme learning the Apprentice reaches a point known as the Gateway. This is where the employer confirms that the Apprentice has met all the requirements of the Assessment Plan and is ready to proceed to End Point Assessment. This is typically a collective decision with HEP, through documented discussion, considering the evidence of all OTJ training which is usually recorded in a portfolio.

Be mindful that OTJ training might not only incorporate taught time. The ESFA produce useful guidance of other OTJ training examples. It is good practice to review OTJ training hours at scheduled Apprenticeship meetings, such as the tripartite progress review.

You might find that specific professions, and particularly roles with external regulation, have additional requirements in delivery (e.g. minimum placement hours). Integrate these into your planning where possible, and consider how your recording systems might fulfill both purposes to minimise duplication.
With a minimum of 20% of the Apprentice’s time spent on learning away from their job, and with demand from employers for Apprenticeships to be completed in timespans similar to full time undergraduate degrees, HEPs need to look at embracing technology to supplement time spent in face to face sessions.

Using **virtual classroom software** allows the running of group sessions which can be joined from wherever the Apprentice is based, and the sessions can be recorded for future use. Whether running a seminar, a revision workshop or a discussion based lecture, virtual classrooms enable collaboration without geographical constraint. By having access to webcams, microphones, chat boxes and a shared whiteboard there are lots of options available to the lecturer in how they choose to run the session. For Apprentices, this is a great way of supporting group work across a range of work locations, and for additional ad-hoc scheduled sessions.
Being able to offer Apprentices **online tutorials** at a distance facilitates their need to discuss their academic and personal progression both in the workplace and when they are at home. Making use of online tutorials allows conversation with eye contact, particularly important for pastoral support. Widespread familiarity with video calling in business and the professions also enables employer liaison tutors to use the platform to meet with mentors and line managers, as well as the Apprentice, should additional support be required.

Many of the Apprenticeships require the maintenance of a **portfolio** throughout the programme, which is then either used in preparation for or as part of the EPA. It can be used to record the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), the progress reviews and to map evidence of achievement against the Apprenticeship Standard. Apprentices can share some or all of their portfolio with their mentors and/or line managers, and export it throughout as well as at the end of their programme.

Face to face teaching time is limited when working with Apprentices, and therefore making use of technology to record live, as-live lectures or **lecture capture** to create screen capture videos is a great way of maximising their contact time. This recorded form of contact also allows the Apprentice to revisit content around assessment time, when facing a challenge at work, or prior to a workplace visit from their employer liaison tutor. Using lecture capture also enables the use of resources from a wider range of academic colleagues.
Progress Review

It is essential that progress for each student is monitored throughout their Apprenticeship, not just for the need to map OTJ training, but also for the following elements:

Meeting Occupational Standards

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) are an independent public body, who develop and maintain ‘quality criteria for the approval of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans’ (IfATE 2018) for each occupational area. Ensuring these are met during the progress meetings is essential. There are a number of tools which can be used to monitor progress against the Standards.

Gathering evidence for the End Point Assessment

Working towards the EPA should commence from the start of the programme. During each progress review it is good practice to check the apprentice is gathering appropriate evidence to support their achievement of the Standard as they move towards the EPA.
Engaging the employer in progress reviews allows for clear visibility of return on investment and also:

- To see distance travelled from the start of the course
- To provide additional support in the form of mentoring / access to resources
- To plan for future module / project engagement
- To provide feedback to the apprentice on the impact of their studies on the business

All Apprentices need support and encouragement to hone their academic and professional skills. It is often the case that they look only to the summative result of their assignments, ignoring the detailed feedback provided to enable them to progress further. It is good practice during progress reviews to discuss any feedback received on assignments to ensure they are aware of how to enhance their grades.

For those who are new to academic writing, a lack of confidence can be an issue, therefore encouragement is essential. Progress reviews provide regular opportunities to celebrate their successes, as achievements should be recognised and applauded.

**Authentic Assessment**

A ‘one size fits all’ approach to assessment should be avoided when developing the curriculum. Practitioners should *provide assessment which drives the learning process ... rather than merely assessing what has been learned at the end* ASET (2013: p.21). The assessment should measure the understanding of the subject matter and be relevant to their working environment. Practitioners who have prior experience of designing work based and placement learning assessment will recognise the ‘bespoke’ nature of the assignments undertaken by their Apprentices. When undertaking an assessment, it is advisable for the employer / mentor to be involved in the process to ensure the Apprentice has a thorough understanding of their working environment, and access to any information which will aid their understanding of the business.

It is useful to acknowledge that Apprentices are often diverse, in terms of age and experience. Consequently understanding of the theoretical aspects of assessment, and ability to apply new knowledge and gain new experiences through additional skills may vary significantly.

It is good practice to engage employers with assessment from the outset. It is important they are involved with planning for assessments, providing the Apprentices with much needed support to gather work based evidence or develop new experiences. In addition, it is useful for the employer / mentor to validate the work based elements of assessment to ensure the Apprentice fully understands their working environment, and how the business functions relate to each other.
Aside from on-going assessments as part of on programme learning, employers should be involved at two significant stages:

- To agree the EPA delivery method, and EPA organisation
- To agree with the Course Leader when the Apprentice is ready to undertake the EPA as part of the gateway decision making

Ideally, the employer / mentor should be involved with providing support and feedback throughout the duration of the programme. It is advisable that where employers / mentors are involved in both formative and summative assessments, that prior support and guidance is provided by the HEP.

**End Point Assessment (EPA)**

“*Begin with the end in mind*, Covey (2004) is the best way to view the EPA.

The QAA describe the EPA as an ‘holistic and independent assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt throughout an apprenticeship standard’. Knowing what the EPA entails is essential to the effective delivery of the programme as everything leads to that point.

Engagement with the employer in relation to the EPA is important as they will need to have (if appropriate) chosen their EPAO and be fully aware of the Apprentices’ readiness to undertake the EPA.

Undertaking the EPA should be a collaborative agreement between the employer who will verify the Apprentice is occupationally competent to undertake the EPA, the HEP which has been assessing the student and preparing them for the EPA throughout their studies, and the Apprentice themselves, who needs to have the confidence to undertake the final assessment.
Glossary

APEL
Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning

APCL
Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning

EPA
End Point Assessment

EPA Gateway
The point at which the employer is confident that the apprentice is occupationally competent and ready to undertake the EPA - QAA (2018)

EPAO
End Point Assessment Organisation

ESFA
Education and Skills Funding Agency

HE
Higher Education

HEP
Higher Education Provider

IfATE
Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

ILR
Individualised Learner Record

Ofsted
Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills

OTJ
Off the job training

QAA
The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

RPL
Recognition of Prior Learning
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