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EPA Handbook

ST0761 Agriculture
or Horticulture
Professional Adviser
V1.0



EPA HANDBOOK

Version history

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About Open Awards

Set up in 1981 as Open College Network North West Region (OCNNWR) and now trading as Open Awards, we have been in business for 40 years. During that time, we have helped thousands of learners get started on the education ladder, return to learning, achieve qualifications to help their careers and progress into further and higher education.

We were the first awarding organisation to design qualifications and courses based on credit accumulation so that learners could achieve in “bite sized” chunks. We designed the units and qualifications that became the basis of the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF).

We are more than just another Awarding Organisation. Uniquely, we have deep roots in the education sector as forward-thinking organisations, FE Colleges and Local Authorities, created Open College Networks (OCNs) to promote education and achievement. We have a governance structure, which is drawn from the people who use our services – our providers and centres – so that we can truly say we are “of the sector and for the sector”. Our purpose is to meet the needs of our provider organisations and their learners. We are a not for profit organisation and a registered charity and we use our funds to invest in our products and services to support the very organisations that use our products.

Open Awards qualifications are approved by the regulators (Ofqual in England and CCEA in Northern Ireland) and are designed to meet the needs of learners and employers. The range of qualifications we offer is designed to meet the aspirations of learners who are seeking a stepping stone to their career, returning to learning or wishing to progress and build their skills and experience. We are constantly adding to our qualification portfolio to ensure that it is fresh and up to date.

We are delighted to have expanded our scope, becoming an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) for a growing number of apprenticeship standards in England approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). Our EPAO number is: **EPA0565**

Occupational Overview

The broad purpose of the agriculture or horticulture professional adviser is to consult with and provide technical advice to farmers and growers to help them support their crop husbandry, based on latest scientific thinking, environmental requirements and in line with legislation and policy.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with internal colleagues, farmers and growers and a range of industry experts (including scientists, independent experts, research organisations and other advisers). A large proportion of the working day is spent on grower premises i.e. farms, nurseries, estates, glasshouses, of varying sizes and often outside in all weathers.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for providing accurate research-informed advice. Advisers are accountable and expected to use their own initiative, working alone and with high levels of autonomy. Advisers could be expected to support a large group of growers and farmers (circa 40-100). In larger organisations an Adviser would typically report to Senior Management. Advisers may carry responsibilities for leadership and/or mentoring of new or developing members of staff. In some instances, Advisers would also carry the responsibility for resources such as their direct team personnel (which may encompass budget management) and activities for supporting staff such as: sharing knowledge and good practice, peer observations of grower and farmer crops and specialised precision farming developments.

Further details on the knowledge, skills and behaviours associated within the occupational standard are accessible on the IfATE website¹ and can also be found in Appendix 1.

Standard information

Level: 6

Reference: ST0761

Approved for delivery: 10 July 2020

Route: Agriculture, environmental and animal care

Typical duration to gateway: 30 months (this does not include the EPA period)

Employers involved in creating the standard: Hutchinsons, Yara Fertilisers, Frontier Agriculture Ltd, Farmacy plc, Wynnstay Group Plc, Corteva, Sygenta (Crop Protection UK), Cobrey Farms, Velcourt Farming Ltd,

External Quality Assurance Provider: Ofqual

¹ <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/>

Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements to become an Agriculture or Horticulture Professional Adviser as there are many routes to lead to this occupation. For example:

- the most frequent entry level route is for students who have completed an agriculture related further education course (HNC, HND or BSc) and would then pursue their professional qualifications on route to becoming a proficient and experienced Professional Advisor. This type of candidate (usually in their 20's) may have greater levels of academic ability but may have less hands-on and practical experience as that part of their skill-set is still developing. A key part of the Professional Advisor apprenticeship is to ensure their "practitioner" skills have been developed and refined and so they are confident and capable of providing agronomic advice across a broad range of crops.
- less common but regularly occurring is to employ someone with a wide range of arable and farming experience (possibly gained as a Farm manager and Assistant Farm Manager or Farm Foreman) and who has successfully taken education up to A-level and BTEC, who would be able to handle the next steps of professional qualifications that this role requires (i.e. the appropriate BASIS qualification), although they might not always have completed any further education at college or university level.
- an exceptional candidate who demonstrates great aptitude for the role yet does not have higher level education (but does possess English and Maths skills up to GCSE level) – an example would be an experienced Sprayer Operator who knows a great deal about the application and use of crop protection products, their effects and the consequences of use and wanted to change their career to take advantage of this knowledge and experience.
- having completed a form of higher education in a near-related area e.g., Geography or a Science but had pursued (usually under their own initiative) supportive qualifications and extensive vocational experience to fill the gaps in their skills, knowledge and experience (e.g., Foundation BASIS). They would then present as a very strong candidate who would be able to handle the challenge of completing all aspects of becoming a Professional Advisor.

Progression opportunities

Apprentices who successfully achieve this apprenticeship could progress into employment within the agriculture or horticulture industries as a Professional Adviser, e.g., an agronomist or plant nutritionist. With experience, this could lead to a role as an independent consultant or progression into crop research, managing trials or developing new products, including working alongside engineers developing precision farming technology.

On-programme requirements

The standard makes achievement of one of the following approved qualifications a mandatory requirement. Depending upon the elected occupational option appropriate to the apprentice, these are:

Either

- Option 1 (Agronomy & Precision Farming Adviser)
 - BASIS-FSTS - Certificate in Crop Protection IPM (Agriculture & Horticulture) – Level: 6 (non-degree qualification)

OR

- Option 2 (Nutrition & Fertiliser Adviser)
 - BASIS-FACTS Certification & Training Scheme (Agriculture & Horticulture) –Level: 5 (non-degree qualification)

Registration, Gateway and Booking

Registration with Open Awards

Registration is the point at which an employer signals that it has selected Open Awards as their end-point assessment provider. Employers are encouraged to register their apprentices with Open Awards, through the training provider, as soon as possible. Our EPAO number is: **EPA0565**

Registrations can be made by providers via the EPA Section of Open Awards' Secure Portal. Early registrations enable Open Awards to initiate early dialogue to ensure arrangements can be planned, such as assessor availability, to ensure end-point assessment is delivered as smoothly as possible in a timescale that supports the employer's planned gateway date. It also enables the training provider to access a range of practice and preparation materials, so they and the employer can support the apprentice prepare for end-point assessment.

Please note that Open Awards are only able to accept registrations from training providers who are currently on the Register of Approved Training Providers (RoATP).

In line with the Education & Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) requirements, the employer must inform Open Awards of the planned gateway and end-point assessment dates **at least three (3) months** in advance.

Gateway

Gateway is the point at which the employer reviews their apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours, and formally confirms the apprentice has reached occupational competency, completed all the mandatory elements of their apprenticeship programme and are ready for end-point assessment. The training provider may support the employer in making this decision, but the decision is made by the employer, with the apprentice also confirming they are ready for end point assessment.

End-point assessment must be completed by an independent End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) selected by the employer, such as Open Awards, from the ESFA's Register of End Point Assessment Organisations (RoEPAO).

The end-point assessment period should only start, and the end-point assessment arrangements confirmed, once the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level of the occupational standard, all of the pre-requisite gateway requirements for EPA have been met and that they can be evidenced to Open Awards. For this standard, end-point assessment should be completed within a period lasting for typically six (6) month(s), beginning when the apprentice has met the end-point assessment gateway requirements.

Gateway requirements

The training provider must provide Open Awards with all required evidence to enable Open Awards to undertake the necessary gateway checks. This evidence includes:

- Fully completed and signed Gateway agreement and authenticity form.
- Apprentices must have achieved English and mathematics at Level 2. The Department for Education maintains a list of current and prior qualifications accepted as meeting the minimum English and maths requirements for apprenticeships at Level 3 and above. The most current list can be found on the ESFA website². For those apprentices with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the apprenticeships English and mathematics minimum requirement is Entry Level 3 and British Sign Language qualifications are an alternative to English qualifications for whom this is their primary language.
- Apprentices must have achieved the approved on-programme qualification dependent upon their elected occupational option.
- Apprentices must have completed the minimum apprenticeship on-programme duration (usually 12 months from the start date).
- For this standard, apprentices are also required to have completed a portfolio of evidence.

Open Awards cannot accept end-point assessment booking requests until the gateway checks have been satisfactorily completed, so failure to submit all the necessary information or evidence will delay this process. Open Awards will contact the training provider if the information or evidence is missing or insufficient, so that this can be rectified as quickly as possible. Open Awards aims to complete gateway checks **within five (5) working days** from receipt of the gateway declaration and authenticity form, subject to provision of all necessary information and ancillary evidence.

Once gateway checks have been successfully completed, Open Awards will confirm provisional bookings or schedule subsequent bookings.

Booking

Bookings can be made by providers via the EPA Section of Open Awards' Secure Portal. As per ESFA guidance, Open Awards requires **at least three (3) months** advance notice of the potential gateway date. However, training providers may make provisional bookings at any point following Open Awards acceptance of an apprentice registration.

Open Awards will endeavour to accept and schedule bookings for end-point assessment to meet the expressed preference dates of the employer wherever

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-and-maths-requirements-in-apprenticeship-standards-at-level-2-and-above>

possible. However, any provisional booking cannot be confirmed or scheduled by Open Awards until gateway checks have been successfully completed.

Post-gateway, Open Awards normally require a **minimum of 15 workings days'** notice when provisionally booking the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A (Assessment Method 1) and a **minimum of 10 workings days'** for the Professional Discussion underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence (Assessment Method 3).

Cancelling or rescheduling a booking

Provisional bookings can be re-scheduled or cancelled by providers via the EPA Section of Open Awards' Secure Portal. Confirmed bookings **up to 10 working days** before the assessment day can be re-scheduled at no charge. Confirmed bookings cancelled or re-scheduled with **less than 10 workings days'** notice will incur a charge in line with Open Awards fees policy³.

Assessment plan version

Open Awards will undertake end-point assessment in line with the requirement of the current version of the assessment plan or in line with IfATE directions. Training providers and employers must contact Open Awards to discuss any instance where they believe it is appropriate for assessment to be undertaken in line with a historic/previous version of the assessment plan. Because Open Awards may need to liaise with either IfATE or the External Quality Assurance Provider to determine whether this is allowable, training providers and employers should be aware this may delay the ability of Open Awards to undertake end-point assessment until resolved.

³ Available on the Open Awards Secure Portal <https://portal.openawards.org.uk/Login.aspx>

Portfolio

Apprentices on this standard are required to develop and submit a portfolio of evidence. The portfolio must be submitted to Open Awards alongside other gateway evidence. Open Awards preferred format is an electronic portfolio either uploaded by the training provider to their Open Awards SharePoint folder, or else a login provided to enable Open Awards to access the portfolio. Training providers should contact Open Awards to discuss alternative arrangements, e.g., where a paper-based or mixed portfolio is developed.

Apprentices should select their best possible evidence to reflect their current level of proficiency against the standard at the point they undertake their professional discussion. The portfolio is not assessed and will only be used to support the professional discussion; feedback will not be provided on the portfolio. However, where the content requirements below are not met, or the evidence not authenticated as being valid and attributable to the apprentice, the portfolio will be returned by Open Awards to the apprentice, via the training provider, for amendment and subsequent resubmission. This resubmission will not be considered as an assessment attempt and therefore, resubmission of the portfolio will not constitute either a resit or retake of the professional discussion. However, this will delay completion of the gateway checks. Therefore, training providers and employers are encouraged to ensure the portfolio requirements are met before submission at gateway.

Open Awards have developed supporting evidence tracking documentation to support apprentices, training providers and employers meet the portfolio content requirements set out in the assessment plan. This documentation is available from the Open Awards Secure Portal:

ST0761-PAS	Portfolio authenticity statement – Completion of this is a mandatory requirement.
ST0761-ERS	Evidence reference sheet – Completion of this is a mandatory requirement as it shows the evidence requirements within the assessment plan have been met; however, Open Awards will accept any alternative equivalent approach demonstrating that the portfolio content and structure requirements set out below have been met.
ST0761-CMS	Criteria mapping sheet – Completion of this is NOT mandatory, but will help IEPAs prepare for the professional discussion by giving apprentices the opportunity to signpost to where they believe appropriate evidence may be found.

Portfolio content and structure

The portfolio must contain evidence related to the KSBs that will be assessed by the professional discussion.

It will typically contain 11 discrete pieces of evidence which should be mapped against the KSBs. Evidence may be used to demonstrate more than one KSB; a qualitative as opposed to quantitative approach is suggested.

Evidence sources may include:

- workplace documentation/records, for example workplace policies/procedures, records
- witness statements
- annotated photographs, project documents, blogs, press articles.
- video clips (maximum total duration 20 minutes); the apprentice must be in view and identifiable
- feedback from colleagues and/or clients.

This is not a definitive list; other evidence sources are possible. However, the portfolio should NOT include reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment.

Any employer contributions should focus on direct observation of performance (for example witness statements) rather than opinions. The evidence provided must be valid and attributable to the apprentice; the portfolio of evidence must contain a completed Portfolio authenticity statement (*ST0761-PAS*) confirming this.

Mock assessment activities are NOT considered acceptable evidence to be included within the portfolio.

Portfolio submission

The portfolio must be submitted at gateway alongside the gateway evidence.

Because the portfolio must be completed as a gateway requirement, all evidence must be generated and dated pre-gateway. No post-gateway dated evidence can be included as it will be considered invalid.

Where invalid evidence is included within the portfolio, the content requirements are not met, or the evidence is not authenticated, the portfolio will be returned by Open Awards to the apprentice, via the training provider, for amendment and subsequent resubmission. Resubmitted portfolios must be submitted to Open Awards to enable the gateway checks to be completed.

Identification checks

Open Awards requires the apprentice to present photographic identification to an Open Awards invigilator or assessor immediately prior to each assessment on each assessment day. This is a requirement to ensure Open Awards can confirm an individual completing an assessment is the person they are claiming to be.

The following are acceptable forms of evidence of an apprentice's identification:

- a valid passport (any nationality)
- a signed UK photo card driving licence
- valid warrant card issued by HM Forces or the Police
- other photographic ID card, e.g., employee ID card (must be current employer), student ID card, travel card
- UK biometric residence permit.

Where this identification is not available to be checked, the assessment will NOT be allowed to commence.

Where an apprentice does not have access to the necessary identification or where the name on the identification does not match the name registered with Open Awards, the training provider must contact Open Awards in advance to make arrangements for alternative or additional authentication checks to be made.

Data Management

Open Awards has a responsibility under the Data Protection Act to ensure that learners and apprentices are informed of how their information is processed and shared.

Open Awards collects and processes personal learner information for the purpose of: registering learners and apprentices, and awarding learner and apprentice achievements; exercising its functions; and meeting its responsibilities, both statutory and otherwise.

Further information on the personal data and information shared with Open Awards and how we use it and who we share it with can be found in the Privacy Notice: Learner Information which is on the Open Awards website.

Whilst we endeavour to collect only that data for which there is a legal or sound business requirement and to ensure the integrity of the data, we strongly encourage customers to contact us if you believe any data to be incorrect.

Any concerns can be sent to Open Awards by emailing [**enquiries@openawards.org.uk**](mailto:enquiries@openawards.org.uk)

Open Awards will store recordings of remote assessments (e.g., professional discussions), for quality assurance purposes, to allow sufficient time for learner complaints and appeals to be processed where necessary. Open Awards will permanently delete assessment recordings on a monthly basis to ensure that normally no recordings are retained for longer than six (6) months.

In compliance with ESFA Conditions for being on the Register of End-point Assessment Organisations, Open Awards must retain information about the EPAs undertaken and payment received for six (6) years after the activity took place. This will include details of what assessments were undertaken, against which versions of the standard and assessment plan, when and by whom, along with assessment outcomes and evidence of the internal quality assurance of those assessments. Open Awards is also required to share end-point assessment information with the External Quality Assurance Provider to ensure they are able to undertake their regulatory role. The External Quality Assurance Provider for this standard is Ofqual.

For the purposes of the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, Open Awards is the data controller for personal information processed by the organisation.

Assessment

The EPA consists of three (3) assessment methods which are individually graded:

- Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A
- Presentation and Q&A
- Professional Discussion underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence.

Assessment preparation

Support materials are available to support training providers and employers post-gateway to ensure apprentices are well prepared for their EPA experience. They are not intended to be used to measure proficiency pre-gateway or to support gateway decisions. These materials are either accessible to training providers through the Secure Portal or will be provided directly to the employer.

Order of assessment methods

Two of the assessment methods need to follow each other sequentially. The Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A needs to take place before the Presentation with Q&A. This is due to the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A being used as the basis for the Presentation with Q&A. The Professional Discussion can be scheduled and carried out at any point.

Assessment window

All three (3) assessments must be passed within a period lasting typically six (6) months from the gateway, but must last for a minimum of one (1) week. Therefore, training providers and employers should ensure that assessments are planned and booked to ensure these timescales can be met.

Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A

This assessment method comprises three (3) linked components which will be undertaken sequentially on the same day. Immediately following successful completion of the gateway checks the employer will be directly sent instructions to support them to identify a suitable assessment venue and to ensure sufficient and appropriate resources/ facilities will be available. Approximately two (2) weeks prior to the proposed assessment date the IEPA will contact the employer to discuss the assessment arrangements and confirm the proposed assessment venue is suitable, as well as confirm the assessment date and timings.

Crop walk

The apprentice will first carry out a field or crop walk on behalf of the landowner to gather sufficient information to subsequently produce a report appropriate to give to

the landowner in order for them to address the highlighted issues with the necessary actions.

The apprentice will “walk the crops” whilst being observed by the independent end-point assessor (IEPA). Whilst doing this they are expected to explain their approach for making assessments and formulating decisions.

A range of crops (minimum of two (2)) will be walked which are appropriate to local cropping patterns and the apprentice should consider field margin and environmental features. Dependent upon the context (Agriculture or Horticulture), the crop walk will either be field-walking or undertaken in a glasshouse (or similar environment).

The farm or glasshouse will have been previously identified by the employer which has the crops and practical facilities required to conduct the assessment.

Approximately two (2) weeks prior to the proposed assessment date the employer will be contacted directly by the IEPA to confirm the assessment arrangements and that the proposed assessment venue is suitable.

The following activities **MUST** be observed by the IEPA during your Crop Walk:

- The process of field-walking/glasshouse – apprentices are expected to verbally describe crop condition, growth stage, issues that are affecting the crop, as well as other features that are present within the field/glasshouse or are at the field margins which require protection
- Identify intervention methods or treatments that would be required and verbally describe these in the field/glasshouse
- Examine and verbally describe the key parts of either:
 - (Option 1 - Agronomy & Precision Farming Adviser) Sprayer – demonstrate understanding of previous applications (and the resulting crop or pest response that has been observed during the walk) and appropriate technologies, or
 - (Option 2 - Nutrition & Fertiliser Adviser) Fertiliser Spreader - demonstrate understanding of previous applications (and the resulting crop response) and appropriate technologies.

The IEPA will interact with the apprentice throughout the crop walk to determine the reasoning for their decisions and to ask additional questions that relate to the Knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped KSBs to this assessment method.

All activities must be **completed within 90 minutes**. There may be breaks during the Crop Walk to allow the apprentice and IEPA to move from one location to another or for comfort breaks; these will NOT count towards the available assessment time.

The IEPA has the discretion to increase the time of the Crop Walk by up to 10% (i.e., 9 minutes), to allow the apprentice to complete the sprayer or fertiliser spreader examination and description. The IEPA will not tell the apprentice in advance of the

assessment whether they will have any or how much additional time and the apprentice should NOT assume any additional time will be available.

Throughout the crop walk the apprentice may make whatever appropriate field notes they believe necessary to support them to compile their subsequent recommendation report; this includes technology to take photographs etc., if appropriate. They are also permitted to have field maps or similar with them to annotate and can have access to relevant support materials such as field identification guides; this includes mobile access to the internet if available.

Recommendation report

Following the crop walk the apprentice will compile their advice in the form of a Recommendation Report.

The report should detail the actions and treatments necessary for the crop which have been walked. It should contain sufficient information to support or justify the use of that treatment (s), e.g., if required to do so by an assurance scheme or food processor when they handle the output of the crop further down the food chain.

In addition, the report should provide appropriate guidance/tips for either the sprayer operator (Option 1 - Agronomy & Precision Farming Adviser) or the fertiliser applications operator (Option 2 - Nutrition & Fertiliser Adviser).

The structure of the report is expected to include sections such as:

- Site location and crops examined
- Issues identified during the crop walk which:
 - can be left as treatment is not currently necessary or
 - require action to be taken
- Where action is deemed necessary each crop, problem(s) an input/solution(s) is described which should cover product dose rate, timeline to make the treatment(s), spray volume, crop growth stage and other advice (e.g., weather considerations, intervals between input sequences, nozzle choice)
- List of products and quantities required to complete the treatment.

The report should be compiled using proprietary software recognised within the sector and licenced for the apprentice to use. This report must be compiled and delivered to the IEPA either as an electronic file or a paper-based document **within 60 minutes**.

The recommendation report must be written under controlled conditions in the presence of the IEPA. The apprentice will be able to access to any technical reference resources that a professional adviser compiling a recommendation report would ordinarily have access to.

One week (five (5) working days) prior to the confirmed assessment date, the employer will pass the farm/location, field/glasshouse and crop information to the apprentice so they can load this into the software in preparation for assessment. Information about this requirement will be provided directly to the employer.

The IEPA will review and mark the recommendation report immediately after it has been written, and on the same day as the crop walk. Whilst the report is being marked apprentices will not be allowed to have external contact during this period of downtime.

Q&A session

After the recommendation report has been marked by the IEPA, the apprentice will undertake a final Q&A session that covers the outstanding knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) assigned to this assessment method (Appendix 2).

This will also take place under controlled conditions in a suitable quiet venue and undertaken between the apprentice and the IEPA. Neither the training provider or employer will be present.

The Q&A session will **last 30 minutes** and will involve questions that will focus on issues concerning current crop situations, treatment application, environmental considerations, and legislation. The contents of the recommendation report will be considered by the IEPA within the Q&A to allow the apprentice to explain their decision-making processes and the considerations made. The IEPA will also draw on observations made during the crop walk to explore any areas of uncertainty.

The IEPA has the discretion to increase the time of the Q&A session by up to 10% (i.e., 3 minutes), to allow the apprentice to complete their last answer. The IEPA will not tell the apprentice in advance of the assessment whether they will have any or how much additional time available and the apprentice should not assume any additional time will be available.

Presentation and Q&A

The apprentice will prepare and deliver a presentation to an IEPA which will cover the KSBs assigned to this assessment method (Appendix 2). The presentation will be undertaken on a one-to-one basis; the IEPA is only able to assess one apprentice at a time.

The presentation will be based on aspects of the Crop walk with recommendation report and Q&A. The assessment will be split into discrete components held on the same working day; the Q&A session will lead directly on from the presentation component.

Open Awards will provide the apprentice with a brief for the presentation **within 10 working days** of the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A being completed; provision of the results of the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A is the point at which this latter assessment method is deemed to have been completed. The apprentice will get two (2) weeks' notice (i.e., 10 working days) to prepare the presentation. This brief will set out the requirements for the presentation and will be no more than 500 words.

The assessment must be carried out over a **maximum total assessment time of one hour** (60 minutes); the presentation will typically last for 40 minutes and the

Q&A session will typically last for 20 minutes. However, the IEPA has the discretion to increase the overall time by up to 10% (i.e., 6 minutes), but only to allow the apprentice to complete answer they have started. The IEPA will not tell the apprentice in advance of the assessment whether they will have any or how much additional time available and the apprentice should not assume any additional time will be available.

Open Awards expects the presentation and Q&A will be undertaken remotely through video conferencing (E.g., MS Teams or Zoom) and this assessment will be recorded. Open Awards will store recordings of assessments to allow sufficient time for learner complaints and appeals to be processed where necessary. Open Awards will permanently delete assessment recordings on a monthly basis to ensure that no recordings are retained for longer than six (6) months.

The apprentice will be expected to be in a quiet room at their employer's premises, free from distractions and influence to ensure the assessment can be undertaken under controlled conditions. However, apprentices can have access appropriate resources they deem appropriate and necessary, e.g.:

- PowerPoint presentation software (or similar)
- Projector and screen
- Flip chart and stationary resources
- Videos
- Computer and webcam
- Notes
- Interactive demonstrations
- Examples of work products.

As the Q&A session only involves the apprentice and the IEPA, neither the employer nor provider are required to, or able to attend.

Open Awards will provide employers with requirements for the presentation at least **five (5) working days** in advance of the assessment. This will specify requirements such as room layout, environment and IT equipment or materials. Where the professional discussion cannot take place at the employer's premises, a suitable alternative venue may be proposed, but must be approved by Open Awards in advance.

Please note that whilst the Presentation and Q&A must be undertaken after the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A, any evidence presented by the apprentice (e.g., oral evidence presented during the initial Q&A session) cannot be carried forward; each assessment method is considered discrete

Professional Discussion underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence

The apprentice and the IEPA will have a two-way dialogue, allowing the apprentice to evidence the KSBs assigned to this assessment method (Appendix 2) and draw on appropriate evidence from their portfolio to underpin the discussion. The portfolio itself will not be assessed, but it must meet a minimum level of quality to enable the professional discussion to take place.

The discussion will be undertaken on a one-to-one basis between the IEPA and the apprentice and will **last for 60 minutes**. However, the IEPA can increase the overall time by up to 10% (i.e., 6 minutes), but only to allow the apprentice to complete the answer they have started. The IEPA will not tell the apprentice in advance of the assessment whether they will have any or how much additional time and the apprentice should NOT assume any additional time will be available.

Open Awards expects the professional discussion will be undertaken remotely through video conferencing (E.g., MS Teams or Zoom) and this assessment will be recorded. Open Awards will store recordings of assessments to allow sufficient time for learner complaints and appeals to be processed where necessary. Open Awards will permanently delete assessment recordings on a monthly basis to ensure that no recordings are retained for longer than six (6) months.

The apprentice will be expected to be in a quiet room at their employer's premises, free from distractions and influence to ensure the assessment can be undertaken under controlled conditions. However, apprentices can have access to their portfolio to refer to during the discussion.

As the discussion only involves the apprentice and the IEPA, neither the employer nor provider are required to, or able to attend.

Open Awards will provide employers with requirements for the professional discussion at least **five (5) working days** in advance of the assessment. This will specify requirements such as room layout, environment and IT equipment or materials. Where the professional discussion cannot take place at the employer's premises, a suitable alternative venue may be proposed, but must be approved by Open Awards in advance.

Please note that where the Professional Discussion is undertaken after Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A, or Presentation and Q&A, any evidence presented by the apprentice (e.g., oral evidence presented during a Q&A session) cannot be carried forward; each assessment method is considered discrete.

Independent assessment

The end-point assessor (IEPA) will meet or exceed the qualification requirements set out in the assessment plan associated with the standard (as agreed with IfATE) and be independent of the apprentice, their employer and training provider(s) i.e., there will be no conflict of interest. This IEPA makes the final decisions on the individual assessment method grades and on the overall grade. These decisions are subject to

moderation and/ or verification through Open Awards internal quality assurance processes. Wherever possible Open Awards will endeavour to assign the same IEPA to undertake all three (s) assessment methods for an apprentice. However, this may not be possible, and will be unlikely in the event of a resit or retake.

Grading

Mapping of KSBs against assessment methods

Appendix 2 maps the individual KSBs to each assessment method.

Grading individual assessments

Each assessment method is graded using the criteria published in the assessment plan for this apprenticeship standard.

Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A

- If one or more pass criteria are not met, the assessment will be graded as a fail.
- To achieve a pass all pass criteria must be met (i.e., all three (3) assessment components must be passed to achieve an overall pass grade for the assessment method)
- To achieve a distinction all pass and all distinction criteria must be met.

Presentation and Q&A

- If one or more pass criteria are not met, the assessment will be graded as a fail.
- To achieve a pass all pass criteria must be met.

Professional Discussion underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence

- If one or more pass criteria are not met, the assessment will be graded as a fail.
- To achieve a pass all pass criteria must be met.

The pass criteria for all three (3) assessment methods and the distinction criteria for the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A can be found within the Assessment Plan.

Aggregation of individual assessment grades into an overall grade

All three (3) assessment methods are equally weighted so performance across the assessment methods will determine the overall apprenticeship grade. The grades from individual assessment methods will be combined in the following way to determine the overall grade (see Table 2):

A 'Fail' in any assessment method will result in an overall fail grade.

All three assessment methods must be at least passed for the apprentice to be awarded a pass overall.

The Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A must be passed at 'Distinction' and the other two (2) assessment methods at least passed for the apprentice to be awarded an overall distinction grade.

Table 2

Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A	Presentation and Q&A	Professional Discussion underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence	Overall grade
Fail	Any grade	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Any grade	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass	Distinction

Reasonable adjustments and Special considerations

Open Awards is committed to ensuring access to fair assessment for all learners and to protecting the integrity of assessments and qualifications.

There may be circumstances whereby arrangements need to be made to take account of particular learners' requirements in order to ensure that this is achieved without giving any unfair advantage over other learners.

The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures, sets out the principles which should be followed when making decisions about adjustments to assessment. It outlines Open Awards' reasonable steps to ensure it avoids disadvantage (directly or indirectly) in line with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010. The policy and procedures are accessible through the Open Awards Secure Portal

Reasonable adjustments

Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of the assessment outcomes but may involve:

- Changing the usual assessment arrangements, e.g., allowing a learner extra time to complete an assessment activity
- Adapting assessment materials e.g., by providing large print or providing materials in Braille
- Providing assistance during an assessment e.g., by providing a trained signer, interpreter or a reader
- Changing the assessment method e.g., from a written assessment to a spoken assessment
- Using assisted technology such as screen reading or a voice activated software.

Reasonable adjustments must be approved and set in place before the assessment takes place. The work produced by the learner will be assessed in the same way as all other learners.

Where the employer and training provider believe reasonable adjustment(s) may be required, this can be identified at the registration stage. Open Awards requires a **minimum of 20 days' notice** of any request for reasonable adjustments so this can be considered and where approved, arrangements made.

Special considerations

These are adjustments which may be applied after an assessment where the learner has encountered exceptional circumstances that have disadvantaged them during their assessment.

The assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard defines permissible special considerations and the circumstances surrounding the apprentice's end-point assessment that fall within this definition.

Cancellations or rescheduled assessments

Cancellation by the apprentice, training provider or employer

Provisional bookings can be re-scheduled or cancelled at no charge. Confirmed bookings can be re-scheduled at no charge **up to 10 workings days** before the assessment day.

Confirmed bookings cancelled or re-scheduled with **less than 10 workings days'** notice will incur relevant costs associated to the booking.

The 5% apprentice registration fee is non-refundable regardless of withdrawal date.

Cancellation by Open Awards

In the unlikely event that a confirmed booking has to be cancelled by Open Awards, it will be rescheduled as soon as possible for a mutually convenient time. There will be no additional charges associated with the rescheduled assessment.

Confirmation of results

Assessment results will be made available to providers via the EPA Section of Open Awards' Secure Portal. Results of assessment will normally be provided to the training provider **within 10 working days** of the assessment being undertaken. In respect of the Presentation and Q&A and the provision of the presentation brief, provision of the results of the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A is the point at which this latter assessment method is deemed to have been completed.

Resits and Retakes

Open Awards provides resit and retake opportunities in line with ESFA requirements unless the assessment plan associated with the apprenticeship contains alternative requirements.

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a resit or a retake. Open Awards will provide feedback alongside the result notification to all apprentices who fail an assessment method. This feedback will be provided via the training provider, normally **within 10 workings days** of the assessment taking place.

Where the result notification suggests a retake may be appropriate, the ESFA recommend the employer and training provider consider a supportive action plan that responds to the performance weaknesses identified within the feedback. This action plan should clearly state the nature and extent of the re-training and include the estimated time to prepare the apprentice for the retake. When a retake is booked, Open Awards will require confirmation via the training provider that the apprentice has received further training and is ready to be assessed.

A resit involves the apprentice attempting one or more failed assessment components again, without the need to undertake further training. The apprentice's employer must determine whether a re-sit or retake is an appropriate course of action.

Open Awards normally require a **minimum of 10 workings days'** notice when booking a resit or a retake. However, longer notice is likely in the event of the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A AND the Presentation with Q&A to ensure compliance with the timescales reflected within the assessment plan.

The number of resits and retakes that can be taken by an apprentice will normally be at the discretion of the employer. The ESFA recommends a limit of two (2) resits or retakes, however, more than two (2) resits or retakes may be taken if available, or unless otherwise specified or limited within the assessment plan.

Resits or retakes are only to be taken in the event of a fail grade. A resit or retake cannot be taken with the intention of increasing the original grade if an apprentice has passed an assessment method. Therefore, feedback will not normally be provided to apprentices who achieve a pass or higher.

The maximum grade that can be achieved for a resit or retake is a pass, unless Open Awards has determined there are exceptional circumstances. Where an apprentice believes exceptional circumstances impacted on their initial assessment attempt, they must submit a formal request with supporting evidence for exceptional circumstances to be considered, directly to Open Awards **within five (5) working days** of receiving the assessment decision.

As the Presentation with Q&A must be taken sequentially after the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A, in the event the result of the latter is a fail grade, the apprentice should resit or retake the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A before progressing onto the Presentation with Q&A.

In respect of the Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A, the assessment method is graded holistically; there is no ability for apprentice to partially complete at component level. Therefore, in the event of a fail grade, the entire assessment method (i.e., all three (3) components) must be resat or retaken.

The same IEPA who undertook the initial assessment attempt may be allocated by Open Awards to assess an apprentice's resit or retake. The allocation of IEPAs to assessments will be taken by Open Awards based upon the requirements of the assessment plan or operational considerations.

Appeals and Complaints

Open Awards is committed to ensuring that all assessment decisions are consistent, fair and based on valid judgements made by independent assessors.

If an apprentice is satisfied with their result but seeks information as to why a specific grade was awarded, they can request formal feedback through their training provider. This feedback will be limited to justification of the decision and will not be developmental in nature (i.e., indicate how they may have achieved a higher grade). This feedback may take **up to 20 working days** to be provided. Further details are available from Open Awards.

If an apprentice is not satisfied with their result, they can request an enquiry about results which is an informal appeal. Open Awards will review the documentation for administrative errors and correct these if identified. An enquiry about results must be made by the apprentice **within 10 working days** of notification of the results concerned.

Alternatively, or subsequent to an enquiry about results, if an apprentice is not satisfied with their result, they may lodge an appeal. Appeals can be made by the training provider on behalf of the apprentice, but they must have the permission of the apprentice to do this.

Appeals made in respect of the final overall grade will result in a delay to the completion certificate being requested by Open Awards. For further details regarding the process, timelines and fees, please refer to Open Awards' Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures which can be found on the Portal.

Completion and certification

Open Awards will issue a summary of results following successful completion of all EPA assessments. This will be issued to the apprentice via the provider and show the grade associated with each assessment, alongside the overall grade and the date this was awarded.

Open Awards will also request the apprenticeship completion certificate from IfATE on behalf of an apprentice once they have completed their apprenticeship. As part of the gateway declaration form an apprentice is required to give Open Awards permission to do this on their behalf. Without this permission Open Awards is unable to claim the certificate.

Open Awards will request the certificate once the apprentice has received and agreed the final grade. Where the apprentice does not formally agree the final grade, Open Awards will assume it is agreed once the window for an enquiry about results or appeal is extinguished (**10 working days** from the notification of results).

Requests for the certificate are then made **within 20 working days** and in most instances, sooner. IfATE normally send the completion certificate directly to the employer by recorded delivery; this can take **up to 15 working days** to arrive from the date it is requested.

Quality assurance

Internal quality assurance

Quality assurance is at the heart of Open Awards' practices and we follow suitably rigorous processes to ensure that the integrity of our assessments is maintained.

Internal quality assurance is the process of reviewing and evaluating assessment practices and decisions to ensure that:

- an identified individual is responsible for coordinating internal quality assurance processes
- there are clear and documented roles and responsibilities for all those involved
- all learners are assessed accurately, fairly and consistently to the right standard
- internal quality assurance is structured and incorporates all of the requirements set out in the assessment plan associated with the apprenticeship standard
- assessment tasks and learner work are sampled appropriately
- good practice is promoted through internal standardisation events and quality assurance meetings
- decisions are supported by full and clear records and action plans that are followed
- internal processes are transparent and regularly evaluated.

External quality assurance

External quality assurance for this apprenticeship standard is undertaken by Ofqual.

Maladministration and Malpractice

Maladministration is defined as any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in an apprentice, training provider or employer not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of end-point assessment.

Malpractice is any act, default or practice which:

- Compromises, attempts to compromise, or may compromise, the process of assessment/ examinations, the integrity of any end-point assessment activity or the validity of an assessment result or certificate, including maladministration
- Damages the authority, reputation or credibility of Open Awards or any officer or employee
- Involves a failure by an apprentice, training provider or employer to provide Open Awards with such necessary information as required to enable it to investigate allegations of suspected malpractice also constitutes malpractice.

An apprentice, training provider or employer must report any allegation of suspected malpractice/ maladministration to Open Awards. Failure to report allegations of malpractice/ maladministration can lead to assessment results not being conferred and certification claims not being processed, and future registrations not being accepted.

Further information is available within Open Awards' Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures, including how Open Awards will manage alleged or suspected malpractice or maladministration.

Where Open Awards is satisfied on the balance of probabilities that an allegation is substantiated, it reserves the right to impose a range of sanctions on an apprentice and/ or training provider and/ or an employer, depending on the seriousness of the situation and the risk to the interests of learners and the integrity of the end-point assessment and the effect on public confidence in Open Awards. Further information can be found within Open Awards' Sanctions Policy.

Open Awards will ensure that in most cases alleged malpractice is kept confidential between itself and those directly impacted. However, in cases of serious malpractice, Open Awards may exchange information with the regulators, other end-point assessment organisations and other appropriate authorities.

Open Awards Policies and Procedures

Current versions of the following Open Awards policies and procedures, relevant to end point assessment are accessible to training providers through the Secure Portal. Employers and apprentices can obtain copies from the relevant training provider, or can be obtained directly by contacting Open Awards.

- End Point Assessment Pricing Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- Data protection
- Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Fair Access policy

In addition, the current version of the following relevant document may be obtained by training providers, employers or apprentices by contacting Open Awards directly:

- Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessment Remotely

Open Awards recommends that local copies of policies and procedures are not made and referred to as these may not be current.

Fees and Charges

Open Awards standard fees and charges for end-point assessment, including resits and retakes are set out the schedule of fees. The current schedule can be found on the Open Awards' website.

Support

The Open Awards web site www.openawards.org.uk is the best source for general information with full listings of our qualifications, news, events, assessment information, policies, and details of our support services.

Support materials and sample assessments for the simulated observation and the professional discussion can be accessed via Open Awards' Secure Portal. A sample online knowledge test is accessible via the XAMS platform. Training providers should contact Open Awards directly to secure access to this resource.

In addition, our experienced customer service team can be contacted on 0151 494 2072 or via email enquiries@openawards.org.uk.

Glossary

Assessment	The process of making judgements about the level of occupational proficiency an apprentice can demonstrate when measured against the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the standard.
Assessment Criteria	Assessment criteria describe what a learner should be able to do in order to demonstrate competence (i.e., pass).
Authentic	Evidence must be the apprentice's own work.
Completion certificate	The certificate issued by IfATE which demonstrates an apprentice has successfully completed their apprenticeship
Diversity	Acknowledging that each individual is unique and recognising individual differences, e.g., culture, ability, gender, race, religion, wealth, sexual orientation, or any other individual characteristic.
EQA	External Quality Assurance
Equality	Fair treatment for all regardless of differences, e.g., culture, wealth, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation or any other group characteristic.
Evidence	How an apprentice demonstrates knowledge, skills or behaviour that can be used to make a judgment of achievement against criteria.
Fair	Ensuring that everyone has an equal chance of getting an objective and accurate assessment.
Gateway	The point at which the employer decides the apprentice is occupationally competent and ready to undertake end-point assessment
Holistic	Holistic assessment is identifying how evidence can relate to and be cross referenced to other units rather than taking a unit by unit approach.
Independent assessment	Assessment decisions made by an assessor and end-point assessment organisation who have no relationship with the apprentice, training provider or employer and therefore, have no interest in the assessment result
Independent end-point assessor (IEPA)	The assessor who assesses the apprentice during end-point assessment
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
Learning Outcomes	Learning outcomes describe what an apprentice should know and understand by the end of a unit.

Reliable	Reliable evidence indicates that the apprentice can consistently perform at this level. A reliable method of assessment will produce consistent results for different assessors at each assessment.
Simulation	Where simulation is allowed it must replicate working activities in a realistic workplace environment. A realistic working environment is one which replicates what is likely to happen when an individual is carrying out their normal duties and activities at their employer's premises.
Sufficient	Enough evidence as specified in Evidence Requirements or Assessment Strategy.
Valid	Evidence must be relevant to the learning outcome and assessment criteria i.e., capable of measuring the knowledge or skills in question. For example, a written test cannot measure a candidate assessor's ability to provide feedback to learners.
XAMS	The Open Awards platform used for online assessments and tests

Appendix 1 Details of the Standard

Appendix 1a Duties

Duty	KSBs
<i>Core occupation duties</i>	
Duty 1 Provide scientific and evidence based agronomic, environmental, legislative and crop husbandry advice to farmers, growers, distributors or other relevant stakeholders	K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 K6 S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7 S8 S9 S10 S11 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11
Duty 2 Maintain and develop relationships with farmers, growers and external bodies and all those involved with carrying out the agreed actions which arise from the advisory decisions that have been made	K7 K8 K9 K10 S1 S6 S7 S12 S13 S14 S15 S16 S30 B1 B2 B3 B8 B9 B12 B13
Duty 3 Assess grower cropping challenges and provide tailored advice (which could encompass crop husbandry decisions, farm business management, adherence to crop production protocols, acquisition of new equipment or changes to cropping patterns)	K1 K2 K3 K9 K10 S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7 S16 S22 S30 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B8
Duty 4 Utilize appropriate Management Information Systems (MIS) to handle, record, manipulate and interrogate data to the benefit of the farmer or grower and the service provider (many of which will be specific to the sector e.g., Gatekeeper or MuddyBoots)	K11 K23 S7 S12 S19 S20 B1 B3 B4
Duty 5 Deliver effective and high standards of Customer Care (to farmers, growers and colleagues)	K9 K12 K13 K14 S1 S7 S11 S12 S13 S14 S15 S16 S21 S22 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B7 B9 B14
Duty 6 Conduct, manage and maintain effective communications with farmers, growers and colleagues using a range of systems and techniques	K15 K19 S1 S13 S23 S24 S25 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11
Duty 7 Manage and plan workload and logistics (both for themselves and, where appropriate, for team members and those they may be mentoring or coaching)	K16 K17 K21 S14 S26 S27 S28 S29 B3 B7 B9

Duty 8 Maintain and enhance their continuous professional development and knowledge (which will also ensure compliance with the necessary standards and assurances within the Agricultural, Horticultural, Amenity and Food Production sector)	K18 K19 K20 K21 S11 S13 S14 S17 S18 S20 S22 S26 S27 S28 B1 B2 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B13
Duty 9 Demonstrate the business culture, values and standards of the business in which they are employed within the Agriculture sector (which may be farmer, manufacturer, distributor, services provider or adviser)	K18 K22 S1 S2 S5 S11 S25 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B12 B13
Duty 10 Develop new relationships with farmers, growers or other key businesses which will result in a wider area of influence, advice and support (N.B. All advisers will experience changes in the group of farmers and growers they support - with retirements or movement in ownership of land - and so must ensure they are adaptable and work with a collection of farmers and growers that will experience change over time. They must be aware of all grower enterprises in the area they work in and build new relationships when existing relationships come to an end.)	K8 K15 K23 K24 K25 S1 S9 S11 S12 S13 S16 S24 S30 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11
<i>Option 1 - Agronomy and precision farming adviser duty</i>	
Duty 11 Provide advice on all aspects of crop husbandry across a wide range of crops (which may include niche or specialist crops) and utilize precision farming tools and techniques where possible with the client if they have equipment enabled to do so	K26 K28 K29 K30 K31 K32 K33 K34 K35 K37 K39 S5 S17 S19 S20 S24 S29 S30 S31 S32 S34 S36 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B14 B15 B16
<i>Option 2 - Nutrition and fertiliser adviser duty</i>	
Duty 12 Provide fertilizer and nutrition advice across a wide range of crops (which may include niche or specialist crops) and utilize precision farming tools and application techniques where possible with the client if they have equipment enabled to do so.	K27 K28 K29 K30 K31 K32 K33 K34 K36 K38 K40 S5 S17 S19 S20 S24 S29 S30 S31 S33 S35 B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B14 B15 B16

Appendix 1b Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours

Knowledge

K1: Crop husbandry and management of controllable variables and awareness of non-controllable variables (e.g., climate, season and weather)

K2: Current and future research and development related to crop husbandry

K3: Health and Safety and risk analysis, product purpose, label interpretation and application approach

K4: How to minimise the impact of farming operations on water quality and wildlife, protect against soil erosion and understand the necessity to protect field margin habitat for biodiversity in line with policy and legislation from relevant Government departments

K5: Legislation regarding storage and transport of crop protection materials, containers and their disposal in line with policy and legislation from relevant Government departments

K6: The potential impact of changes in political stance (national and international)

K7: How to network and interact with all relevant professional bodies

K8: The current national economic and environmental climate and local area and community influences and demands

K9: Customer and stakeholder needs and expectations and the potential risks associated with the provision of advice

K10: Scope and frequency of advice appropriate to the relationship and role

K11: Internal systems that hold information and data, data filtering processes and GDPR regulations on the storage and use of information

K12: Internal and external customer service standards and complaint management procedures which ensures continued customer engagement

K13: Interpersonal techniques for effective interactions and positive outcomes

K14: Current organisational strategy in relation to customer service, customer loyalty and the legal rights of customers making purchases

K15: Range of communication media (verbal, non-verbal, written, digital) and appropriate interpersonal skills needed for each which meet farmer, grower or colleague preferences or expectations

K16: Outcomes of planning in short, medium- and long-term cycles (strategy) and what is required to implement them (tactics)

K17: The range of organisation, prioritisation, planning and time management techniques available to ensure personal efficiency, including impact of own time management and organisation on others

K18: Own development plan and alignment with company training policy and the changing standards or policy that may occur within the sector

K19: Skills required to be an effective adviser and enhancing own learning style and communication preferences

K20: Mentoring and/or coaching that is available from within the organisation and engaging with all opportunities for personal development

K21: Coaching and mentoring approaches and models to use with others

K22: Business culture, values and standards and the example to be set, their impact on the business and the need to operate to those values

K23: Scope of the potential customer base, the systems available which hold information and data and filtering data according to need

K24: Networking opportunities and the range of influencing factors on customer decision making

K25: Product offer and its measurement against competing products

K26: Chemical and non-chemical intervention methods and application approaches as described in BASIS-FSTS syllabus

K27: Macro and Micro nutritional crop requirements and application approaches as described in BASIS-FACTS syllabus

K28: Farming specific legislation and regulation (e.g. pesticides, product withdrawals, protection zones) and other associated legislation and regulation (e.g. drinking water directive)

K29: Commercial business management requirements for running a typical farming enterprise aligned to Farmer or Grower yield potential and expectations across a range of situations

K30: Precision farming methods, equipment and software tools, their advantages, limitations and suitability for farmer or grower needs

K31: Experimental approaches to evaluate new products, varieties and techniques which may be suitable to local Farmers or Growers

K32: Risk assessment(s) and required action(s) to correct both existing and potential problems or threats

K33: Product manufacture, availability and stock according to seasonal requirements

K34: How to manage personal workload pressures (high:low) associated with a seasonally influenced role

K35: Research and Discovery processes for new active ingredients plus industry stewardship schemes to preserve their efficacy and longevity

K36: Formulation and manufacturing processes of Macro-nutrient fertilisers and Micro-nutrient products and foliar treatments

K37: Weed, insect and disease life cycles of the major pests that threaten UK agricultural or horticultural crops and their management or treatment to minimise yield loss or crop quality reduction

K38: Chemical and physical properties of soil (e.g. pH, cationic exchange, sand, silt, clay or fraction) and their impact on nutrient availability to crops

K39: Pesticide resistance mechanisms that arise in weeds, insects and diseases and the techniques or alternative treatments which can be introduced to overcome or alleviate their impact when they occur

K40: Nutrient deficiency symptoms exhibited by crops and their methods of correction using appropriate Macro and/or Micro nutrient treatment

Skills

S1: Demonstrate clear communication skills with the ability to convey complex information objectively in both verbal and written forms

S2: Utilise up to date information and evidence to challenge views based on outdated or biased rationale

S3: Undertake critical analysis incorporating environmental knowledge with agronomic data to support decision making which creates solutions that meet farmer or customer needs

S4: Calculate any associated cost implications of husbandry advice

S5: Interpret and advise on implications of policy, legislation and best practice

S6: Carry out appropriate risk analysis and provide necessary reports

S7: Maintain accurate and up to date records setting out information relating to customer contact, advice and recommendations and store records in a manner that complies with GDPR principles

S8: Produce reports in a comprehensible format and timely manner

S9: Facilitate (and chair if necessary) meetings to deliver the required outcomes and decisions, adopting the best choice of media for the content being shared with the participants

S10: Comply with Health and Safety regulations and follow farmer and customer protocols and conduct own activities in a manner that protects self, others and the environment from potential harm

S11: Recognise their own working style and the preferred working style or approach of the farmer or customer, adapting own approach to match their needs with the requirements of the activity involved

S12: Build internal and external relationships that are durable, ethically sound, trust-based and where information and advice is shared in a professional and appropriate manner

S13: Build a network of grower contacts and industry stakeholders to gather information and knowledge to enhance own professional development

S14: Utilise time management techniques to organise self, others and activities to maximise personal efficiency and enhance timely delivery of services to the farmer or customer

S15: Evaluate changes to legislation and policy, calculating risks and impacts for Farmers or Growers including logistical and financial implications

S16: Be solutions-focused by recognising the expectations of Farmers or Growers and their key decision-makers and aspire to exceed expectations when opportunities arise

S17: Create and maintain a CPD plan to support learning and development both for themselves (and colleagues for whom they may be managing)

S18: Share good practice or best practice in a way that empowers colleagues and Farmers or Growers to succeed

S19: Analyse, record and present information to produce customer advisory recommendations or to provide customer analysis and business insight

S20: Use data (from own notes or records, Precision Farming sources or 3rd party sources) to analyse and solve farmer or grower problems

S21: Implement and comply with complaints procedures and protocols as stipulated by the business or the farmer or grower

S22: Employ active listening, questioning, summarising and influencing techniques to ensure relevant information and views are understood in order to determine an optimal solution for the farmer or grower

S23: Deal effectively with client, customers and colleagues at every level of the organisation as required by the role

S24: Engage and network proactively with farmer or grower decision-makers and colleagues, including senior management as required, to deliver business outcomes in appropriate time-frames

S25: Conduct effective communication using the best match of style and medium (face-to-face, phone, email, report) when seeking to meet the farmer or grower needs

S26: Align activities against expected outcomes after objectively assessing own capability

S27: Effectively coach and/or mentor others in their personal development and use of effective methods

S28: Review own progress against targets and re-prioritise when required, to ensure service delivery is on target and own short- and long-term goals are being achieved

S29: Effectively manage demands or pressures that could distract from the priorities of the business, the customer or the individuals own personal health and well being

S30: Use a balanced and objective approach with Farmers or Growers when providing advice and through negotiations, by understanding their needs and the value they assign to agronomy and nutrition services, support and advice

S31: Assess fields and crops in a programmed approach, complying with all necessary legislation and crop protocols to provide accurate input recommendations to the Farmer or Grower in a timely and precise manner

S32: Apply an Integrated Pest Management or Integrated Farm Management approach when determining how best to control the weeds, insects and diseases which occur on a Farmer or Growers crops or land

S33: Conduct in-field assessments of soil structure, composition and condition, and collect representative soil sample(s) for laboratory analysis (e.g. nutrient status, organic matter level, presence of contaminant)

S34: Assess the application of a Farmer or Growers crop protection treatment(s) through a hydraulic sprayer to confirm even and accurate application and provide subsequent calibration support or nozzle choice advice to the sprayer operator as may be required

S35: Assess the application of a Farmer or Growers crop nutrition treatment(s) through a granular spreader to confirm even and accurate application and provide subsequent calibration support to the operator as may be required

S36: Engage with the sprayer operator of each Farmer or Grower client (as part of NPTC's operator training requirement to earn CPD points) and share the rationale about the recommendations and inputs made which the sprayer operator subsequently applied to the crops

Behaviours

B1: Maintain a professional approach to all business dealings and sets an example

B2: Understand the principles, culture and values of associated businesses or organisations - as well as their own - and adjust personal behaviours in line with them

B3: Have considered and understand the impact of the decisions made and factored these into their own approach

B4: Take an evaluative stance, seeking out a range of relevant information to inform decisions and formulate recommendations

B5: Take responsibility for self and actions, understand own levels of authority and recognise when appropriate to escalate or seek support and assistance

B6: Are open to new developments, research and breakthroughs and are proactive in seeking out information

B7: Endeavour to always share good practice amongst colleagues

B8: Utilise wider knowledge from within the organisation and from outside sources to enhance business relationships

B9: Self-reflect, analyse successes and evaluate areas for improvement and take corrective action where appropriate

B10: Embrace diversity and always demonstrate a fair and ethical approach

B11: Seek feedback as part of continuous personal development and the desire to improve outcomes for customers and are prepared to flex approaches when appropriate

B12: Understand the role of both internal and external relationships, recognise boundaries and follow protocol in order to maintain strong, trusted relationships

B13: Demonstrate punctuality, reliability, trustworthiness and personal responsibility

B14: Personally commit to and take ownership of problems in order to resolve customer issues, bringing satisfaction to the customer and the organisation

B15: Are conscientious and continually seek to deliver on commitments made, managing any expectations of others where service or delivery is in question

B16: Demonstrate objectivity in the provision of advice, input and support to ensure they always deliver a benefit to the farmer, grower or client

Appendix 2 Map of KSBs against assessment methods

Assessment method	KSBs assessed
Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A [Crop walk component]	K1 K4 K10 K26 K27 K30 K32 K37 K40 S3 S4 S30 S32 S33 S34 S35 S36 B3 B13
Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A [Recommendation report component]	K28 S6 S8 S19 S31 B16
Crop Walk with Recommendation Report and Q&A [Q&A component]	K3 K19 K25 K31 K34 K38 K39 S5 S16 S18 S29 B1 B5 B6 B7 B14 B15
Presentation and Q&A	K2 K7 K9 K11 K13 K15 K22 K23 K24 K29 K33 K35 K36 S1 S2 S7 S11 S15 S22 S25 S28 B2 B4 B12
Professional Discussion underpinned by Portfolio of Evidence	K5 K6 K8 K12 K14 K16 K17 K18 K20 K21 S9 S10 S12 S13 S14 S17 S20 S21 S23 S24 S26 S27 B8 B9 B10 B11

Appendix 3 Portfolio Authentication Statement

Portfolio Authentication Statement



Authenticity & currency - The portfolio evidence submitted **must** belong to the apprentice, have been produced by the apprentice and must be current.

Apprentice name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Job title/ role:	Click or tap here to enter text.
ILR number:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Employer:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Standard name:	Agriculture or Horticulture Professional Adviser
Standard code:	ST0761

Please tick
(✓)

We **confirm** that the evidence submitted within the portfolio is the apprentice's own work

☐

We **understand** that results may be invalidated if evidence has been submitted that does not belong to the apprentice which has not been clearly acknowledged

☐

We **confirm** the evidence submitted within the portfolio was created by the apprentice pre-gateway during their apprenticeship

☐

We **confirm** the evidence submitted within the portfolio is valid and meets the requirements of the apprenticeship assessment plan

☐

Apprentice signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Employer signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

This statement **must** be submitted by the apprentice along with their portfolio

All information provided on this form will be held securely and only used for the purposes provided. Full details on how we use and protect your data are available in our [Privacy Notice](#).

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Appendix 4 Criteria Mapping Sheet (Portfolio)

Criteria Mapping Sheet (Portfolio)



Apprentice name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Job title/ role:	Click or tap here to enter text.
ILR number:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Employer/ Provider name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Apprenticeship standard:	ST0761

KSBs	Pass criteria All pass criteria are required to be achieved to achieve a Pass	Evidence reference	Location
K5, S10	Explains and applies the legislation covering the storage and transport of crop protection materials and their disposal, current health and safety legislation and how they apply this to visiting customer's properties.		
K6	Evaluates the process for keeping up to date with the potential impact of changes in political stance (national and international).		
K8	Explains how they research the current national economic and environmental climate and local area and community influences and demands.		
K12	Analyses customer service principles and describes the processes for how they implement them. Describes the organisational structure for handling and resolving customer complaints.		

KSBs	Pass criteria All pass criteria are required to be achieved to achieve a Pass	Evidence reference	Location
S9	Explains how they have facilitated or chaired a meeting by using the most appropriate communication method in order to ensure the delivery of information in meetings.		
S21	Evaluates compliance with the complaints policy and contributes to the implementation of it whenever necessary.		
K14	Explains the organisational strategy for internal and external customer service and how this builds customer loyalty. Explains how the legal rights of the customer regarding the purchase of products (crop protection or nutrition/fertilizer) are defined and how they are implemented.		
S23	Explains how they deal with co-workers and clients at every level of the organisation in an appropriate manner.		
K16, S26	Evaluates the difference between Strategy and Tactics and how they are applied to the activities they conduct in their role as a professional adviser - in order to deliver the expected outcomes and which are within their capability to deliver.		
K17, S14	Explains techniques which outlines their use of time and resources and demonstrates (by using examples) those which they have adopted and use in day-to-day planning and organization. Demonstrates when they have applied a time management technique which has improved the cost effectiveness of their services to a farmer/customer.		
K18, S17	Critically evaluates their personal development plan and how it aligns to remaining compliant with industry and the organisation's standards and ensures any colleagues they are responsible for can do the same.		
B9, B11	Reflects on their successes and examines how they would improve outcomes for themselves and for their customers.		

KSBs	Pass criteria All pass criteria are required to be achieved to achieve a Pass	Evidence reference	Location
K20, K21, S27	Articulates the techniques of mentoring and coaching and the experiences of these development principles they have had as a Professional Adviser apprentice. Explains how they have/would apply the techniques when supporting others.		
S12, S13, S24, B10	Justifies how they have built a portfolio of relationships (e.g., with farmer, grower, colleague) through networking activities, and the principles they have applied to ensure all operate on a professional, trusting, fair and ethical base.		
S20, B8	Evaluates how they gather and analyse data to develop and apply solutions which supports their farmer/growers when problems arise, drawing on wider information sources as required.		

Confirmation declaration

I confirm that the evidence submitted within the portfolio was produced by the apprentice and created by them during their apprenticeship.

Apprentice signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Employer/ Provider signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

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Appendix 5 Evidence Reference Sheet (Portfolio)

Evidence Reference Sheet (Portfolio)



Apprentice name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Job title/ role:	Click or tap here to enter text.
ILR number:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Employer/ Provider name:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Apprenticeship standard:	ST0761 Agriculture or Horticulture Professional Adviser

Evidence number	Evidence reference	Evidence format	Evidence location	Mapped KSBs (see Appendix 2 - ST0761 EPA Handbook)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Evidence number	Evidence reference	Evidence format	Evidence location	Mapped KSBs (see Appendix 2 - ST0761 EPA Handbook)
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
<i>Please add more rows if necessary</i>				

Confirmation

The portfolio has been checked by the training provider or employer to ensure:

- It contains evidence related to the KSBs that will be assessed by the professional discussion.
- All evidence is mapped against the KSBs.
- It does not include reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment.
- The evidence is valid and attributable to the apprentice.

Apprentice signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Employer/ Provider signature:	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.

All information provided on this form will be held securely on our database and only used for the purposes provided. Full details on how we use and protect your data are available in our [Privacy Notice](#).

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Appendix 6 EPA Planning Form

EPA Planning Form



This form is applicable to any End-point assessment (EPA) activity where the assessment(s) is undertaken at a venue not directly managed by Open Awards and to which the independent End-point assessor (IEPA) is required to attend in-person (i.e., the assessment(s) is undertaken face-to-face and not remotely).

The form must be fully completed by the provider or employer (as appropriate) and uploaded to the Open Awards Secure Portal at the same time as the assessment(s) is booked. Where remedial actions are identified, these must be addressed prior to the assessment day.

Full address of assessment venue	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location IEPA should report to upon arrival	This is important on large sites where there may be multiple receptions/ entrances. E.g., "Reception in Building 'C' on the attached map" Click or tap here to enter text.
Name of contact person at venue	This person will be responsible for meeting the IEPA on arrival, providing an appropriate health & safety briefing and must be available throughout the assessment(s) to deal with queries from the IEPA or emergencies Click or tap here to enter text.
Telephone of contact person at venue	Landline Click or tap here to enter text. Mobile Click or tap here to enter text.
Access arrangements	Is there anything the IEPA should be aware of. E.g., postcode to use with Sat Nav if different from above, car parking arrangements on/ off site, access from nearest train station Click or tap here to enter text.
Specific requirements the IEPA should be aware of	E.g., is PPE required and if so, is the IEPA expected to provide this or will it be provided for them Click or tap here to enter text.
Name of person completing this form	Click or tap here to enter text.
Job title/ position	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date form completed and uploaded to Open Awards Portal	Click or tap to enter a date.

Any other relevant information that would help the IEPA plan for the EPA.
E.g., challenging customers may be present or goods delivery is expected on the day of assessment.

Click or tap here to enter text.

	Yes/ No	If 'No', what remedial actions will be put in place to address this prior to the assessment(s)
There is a current health & safety policy in place for the venue which covers the EPA activities, the apprentice, the IEPA and other visitors undertaking quality assurance of the assessment(s)	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
There is appropriate liability insurance in place which covers both the apprentice, IEPA and other visitors undertaking quality assurance of the assessment(s)	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
The provider/ employer will undertake an appropriate risk assessment relevant to the assessment(s) and share this with both the apprentice and the IEPA	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
The apprentice will have access to any Personal Protective Equipment required and received prior training in its use and storage. This PPE will be fit-for-purpose.	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
There is adequate, accessible and signed posted first aid provision including first aid personnel and medical supplies available on the day of the assessment(s)	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
An emergency contact at the venue will be available for duration of the EPA	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
There are appropriate means of fire detection and raising the alarm in the event of a fire	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
There is an emergency procedure (e.g., fire or first aid) in place which will be communicated to the apprentice and IEPA before the assessment(s) commence	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
The venue and the assessment environment are safe and hazards appropriately managed in line with current best practice	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Welfare facilities (e.g., toilets, washing, eating and changing) are adequate, safe, healthy, clean and accessible to the IEPA	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
All necessary safety notices (e.g., warning signs, fire-related, first aid) are displayed	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.
All machinery and equipment required is in good working order, meets appropriate legal standards and has been maintained by a competent person	Choose an item.	Click or tap here to enter text.

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