



Changing lives through learning

Non-Pharmacy Apprenticeship Standards

August 2024 – July 2025

Lead Independent End-point Assessor Report

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Introduction

Welcome to our annual Lead Independent End-point Assessor (LIEPA) report. The purpose of this report is to provide our stakeholders with valuable and informative feedback emerging from end-point assessment activities completed for apprentices registered and assessed against the following apprenticeship standards:

- Open Awards Level 3 end-point assessment for ST0906 Youth Support Worker
- Open Awards Level 3 end-point assessment for ST0161 Junior Energy Manager
- Open Awards Level 5 end-point assessment for ST0945 Outdoor Learning Specialist
- Open Awards Level 5 end-point assessment for ST0495 Rail and Rail Systems Engineer
- Open Awards Level 7 end-point assessment for ST0586 Regulatory Affairs Specialist
- Open Awards Level 3 end-point assessment for ST0958 Community Health and Wellbeing

This report reflects apprentices who have been registered for and/or completed their end-point assessment between August 2024 and July 2025.

Our intention through this and related reports is to provide providers and employers with insights to ensure apprentices are fully prepared for, and experience, a high-quality end-point assessment with Open Awards. We are committed to publishing a report across all the apprenticeship standards we assess at least annually.

A separate LIEPA annual report is available for pharmacy-related end-point assessments.

Open Awards End-point Assessment Delivery Team

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Evaluation of Registration, Gateway and Bookings

Registration with Open Awards

Please can we remind employers to ensure they register apprentices with Open Awards through their chosen training provider (the 'Provider') as soon as possible. This ensures that we can provide an efficient end-point assessment experience. A further benefit of registering apprentices in a timely manner is access to a growing range of practice and preparation materials to support and prepare apprentices for their end-point assessment.

As a minimum, our expectation is that registration takes place at least six (6) months before the apprentice reaches Gateway.

Delaying registering apprentices until they are close to Gateway may impact Open Awards' ability to plan to assess the apprentice in a timely manner.

Gateway

Gateway is the point at which the employer, in conversation with the Provider, reviews their apprentice's knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) and formally confirms the apprentice has reached occupational competency. It is also the point where the apprentice is confirmed to have completed all the mandatory elements of their apprenticeship programme and is ready for end-point assessment.

To support Providers to manage the process, we have a generic Gateway support video available. Please speak to our Customer Service Team if you require help accessing this: customerservices@openawards.org.uk

Open Awards aims to make the apprenticeship Gateway submission and checking process as straightforward as possible. However, in a small number of instances the necessary Gateway checks **cannot** be completed. This inevitably results in a delay to the apprentice being able to be assessed until the issue gets resolved.

Pleasingly, we are encountering fewer instances of Gateway submissions being rejected because Providers are being more familiar with the submission requirements.

Common reasons Gateway submissions are rejected

- **Incomplete Gateway documentation**
- **Missing or unacceptable signatures**
 - Signatures of the Provider, employer and apprentice play a vital part in supporting us to authenticate the Gateway evidence submitted. To help clarify what is acceptable, we have a guidance document which is available on our Secure Portal.
- **Missing or inconsistent dates**
 - We are unable to accept Gateway documentation which has been completed before the Gateway meeting has taken place or there are missing dates from the form itself. Therefore, please ensure Gateway documentation is formally completed and dated during or as soon as possible after the Gateway meeting.
- **Incomplete/ unacceptable English and maths evidence or proof of exemption**
 - Please ensure that the evidence presented is appropriate, clear and readable. The Department for Education maintains a list of the current and prior qualifications accepted as meeting the minimum English and maths requirements for apprenticeships at Level 2 and above. Our Assessment Delivery Team use this as our reference to determine what evidence is acceptable.
 - If your apprentice is 19+ and has opted not to undertake the English and maths requirement, please make sure to upload the signed agreement by the apprentice, provider and employer.
- **Portfolio of evidence**
 - Where a portfolio (or logbook etc.) is required to be submitted, there have been instances when these have not been shared with us as part of the Gateway submission process. This can lead to delays whilst our Assessment Delivery Team requests this information from the Provider. This most commonly occurs because security/login details to access an e-portfolio/ electronic portfolio have not been provided.
 - In addition, there have been some instances where the format of the portfolio is not in line with the requirements of the relevant apprenticeship standard as set out in the associated assessment plan. It is important to ensure that the structure and amount of evidence are presented in line with the guidance provided in each standard-specific *EPA Handbook*.

Providers should be aware that Gateway evidence needs to be completed and submitted in a suitable timeframe. If there is a substantial delay between Gateway and submission, we may require further evidence the apprentice and employer are still happy to proceed with assessment.

Preparation for assessments

Providers should ensure they familiarise themselves with the materials Open Awards has available to support them, the employer, and apprentices for end-point assessment. This can all be found on our website and through our Secure Portal.

For observations in the workplace, we recommend employers make the apprentice's work colleagues and others in the immediate work environment aware in advance an assessment will be taking place so as to not affect the assessment. For example, in one instance an assessment was interrupted by someone undertaking a scheduled equipment audit.

It is vital that apprentices bring suitable photographic ID with them to each assessment to confirm their identification. This is required for every assessment the apprentice is due to undertake. If they fail to have this ID with them, the independent end-point assessor (IEPA) **cannot** let the assessment proceed.

Standard specific guidance

Below is standard-specific information for those apprenticeship standards where there is sufficient evidence to enable meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

Open Awards Level 3 End-point Assessment for ST0906 Youth Support Worker

Apprentices have been well prepared for their end-point assessments and are keen to complete their apprenticeship. Where apprentices have been on programme for an extended period, some found re-engaging with taught content and portfolio evidence more challenging; therefore, a short revision or refresher tutorial prior to Gateway is recommended.

During the Professional Discussion, apprentices should ensure all IT equipment is charged and connectivity is secure. Apprentices are encouraged to make proactive use of their portfolio to underpin responses, as this strengthens links between theory and practice assisting an evidence-based discussion. Providers are reminded that the Professional Discussion is explicitly designed to draw on portfolio evidence to underpin discussion and stronger revision of content is advised. An area for improvement is in analysing theory in relation to work-based practice; therefore, providers should encourage apprentices to illustrate how theoretical concepts are applied within their work-based practice, thereby strengthening the overall discussion.

K9- Critical reflection, and how to use it in practice to enhance continuous professional development for youth support work

Upon review, some apprentices understood youth work terminology but were not always able to fully explain its meaning or application. The expectation is that professional language is used purposefully to evidence understanding of youth work theory, principles and practice, rather than as jargon. Apprentices should therefore be supported to embed the “youth work talk” within their practical understanding and reflective responses, demonstrating clear links between theory and real-world delivery.

Further support apprentices to better understand and articulate youth work principles and models (**K3**, **K4**) and to communicate effectively using appropriate professional language while reflecting on how these are applied in their own practice.

K3- Local and national factors that impact on young people i.e. social, environmental, economic, political.

K4- Local community networks and ways in which young people might become involved.

For the Observation with Questions, session planning should be detailed and time-bound, clearly setting out the needs, aims, objectives, method, implementation and planned activity. Providers and employers should support apprentices to ensure the session plan is relevant to the correct age range and not designed for young adults. The observed group must include a minimum of three young people within the recognised youth work age range of 11 years and above. Providers are encouraged to check session plans prior to Gateway to confirm suitability.

The observation should be carefully planned well in advance of Gateway to ensure it reflects authentic youth-work practice within the apprentice's normal working environment. On occasion, observation groups have appeared to be arranged specifically for assessment purposes. Providers should therefore ensure that session planning and participant selection are genuine and representative of the apprentice's typical practice. The delivery element of the plan needs to be timed and detailed.

Employers should be reminded that all people on site must be aware that the questioning session must not be interrupted. Similarly, any co-workers present should be discouraged from taking a lead or intervening unless there is a health and safety, safeguarding, or other organisational requirement. These arrangements ensure that the apprentice can demonstrate their full competence and that the assessment proceeds without unnecessary disruption.

S5 – Plan, deliver and evaluate youth work sessions to meet identified needs and objectives.

Open Awards Level 3 End-point Assessment for ST0161 Junior Energy Manager

Overall, apprentices demonstrate a solid understanding of the energy audit process, particularly in areas such as metering, data analysis, and cost savings. However, a key area requiring further focus and improvement is the water audit element, which is often less developed compared to the energy component. From observation, apprentices appear to be less well prepared to conduct and report on water audits, which impacts the overall quality and completeness of their assessments.

Strengths Observed

- **Metering Criteria:** Reports generally show strong coverage of metering and measurement, particularly in relation to electricity and gas.
- **Data Analysis:** There is good evidence of quantitative analysis, including the use of energy consumption data, cost breakdowns, and savings estimations.
- **Financial Evaluation:** Cost-saving elements are typically robust, with many apprentices making appropriate use of Net Present Value (NPV) and payback period calculations.
- **Regulatory Knowledge:** Apprentices demonstrate sound understanding of UK and EU regulations and compliance standards, which is consistently evidenced across submissions.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Energy audits are often supported by clear photographs and supplementary documentation, strengthening the credibility and quality of findings.

Areas for improvement

While the energy audit component is well executed, the water audit remains an area that consistently requires greater attention. Apprentices should be encouraged to:

- Conduct more thorough investigations into water usage patterns and efficiency opportunities.
- Include water consumption data and metering analysis comparable to that used for energy.
- Integrate water-saving recommendations supported by quantitative evidence.

Training Providers may wish to reinforce water audit principles during delivery, offering practical exercises and case studies to strengthen apprentice confidence in this area.

Barriers to Achieving Distinction

Distinction-level performance is often not achieved due to recurring gaps within the energy audit section. Specifically, apprentices frequently do not:

- Identify and anticipate problems related to workplace energy performance arising from installation or maintenance activities.
- Demonstrate measurable, positive outcomes showing how their actions have improved workplace energy performance indicators.
- Explain evidence-based corrective actions or recommendations that address regulatory compliance issues within the workplace.

To address these, Training Providers should place greater emphasis on the analytical and problem-solving aspects of energy auditing—moving beyond data reporting to interpretation, prediction, and solution development.

Recommendations for Training Providers

- Reinforce both energy and water audit frameworks in teaching and practice.
- Provide apprentices with practical case studies to simulate real-world audit challenges.
- Encourage inclusion of impact analysis—linking findings directly to improved performance indicators.
- Support apprentices in developing evidence-based improvement strategies tied to compliance requirements.
- Emphasise reflective evaluation to help apprentices articulate the effectiveness of their recommendations.

Summary

In summary, while apprentices perform well in metering, data analysis, and cost assessment, the water audit remains a key area for development. With enhanced training and focus on predictive analysis, corrective action, and evidence-based reasoning, Training Providers can better equip apprentices to achieve distinction-level performance across both energy and water audit criteria.

Data from the Knowledge Test indicates there are three (3) areas for improvement for apprentices to consolidate their knowledge and understanding:

TK5 – Understand the principles of energy loss assessment

TK6 - Understand the principles of industry regulations, and environmental and regulatory requirements, and EU directives relevant to energy and climate change within the context of the Junior Energy Manager's workplace.

TK9 – Understand how to estimate energy used from solid or liquid fuels that are not metered.

Open Awards Level 5 End-point Assessment for ST0945 Outdoor Learning Specialist

Apprentices have demonstrated strong engagement across all assessment components and a secure understanding of expectations. Within the Proposal, Presentation and Q&A, most produced structured, relevant, and well-presented programme proposals that responded effectively to the customer needs brief and reflected clear understanding of legislation, sector standards, and workplace procedures (**K10–K12**). Overall, apprentices displayed strong familiarity with the key requirements outlined in the Assessment Plan and a good understanding of workplace regulatory frameworks.

Higher-level performance requires apprentices to apply critical thinking and demonstrate evaluative reasoning through use of assessment verbs such as justify, evaluate, and critique. These verbs require apprentices to link multiple concepts, theories, and sources to support their decisions, rather than relying on descriptive or procedural responses.

It was noted that higher-graded apprentices were able to integrate theoretical frameworks such as Udeskole and demonstrate how these underpin their programme design and delivery. However, not all apprentices were aware of these sector-specific approaches, resulting in missed opportunities to link theory to practice. This highlights a development need in applying recognised outdoor learning approaches (**K4**), relevant theories of human and social development (**K5**), and the evidence base for outdoor learning (**K7**), supported through pedagogically informed programme design (**S4**).

K4- Recognised approaches to outdoor learning appropriate to their workplace including their history, pedagogy/andragogy and application when designing, planning and delivering outdoor learning programmes

K5- The background and application of relevant theories of human and social development; models of psychology; and neuroscience appropriate to their work.

Apprentices should be supported to provide well-evidenced rationales for their decisions, explaining why certain approaches were chosen and assessing their relative strengths and limitations. Providers can enhance distinction-level readiness by:

Embedding opportunities to practise evaluative writing and discussion within on-programme assignments.

Critiquing the relevance of theories and evidence used in workplace contexts and assessing how effectively these meet the needs of participants, customers, and stakeholders.

Introducing peer or mentor critique sessions to strengthen analytical language and reflective reasoning.

Encouraging apprentices to link their proposals to frameworks such as Theory of Change, evidencing how proposed activities contribute to short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes (**K2, S4**).

Supporting apprentices to justify approaches to decision-making and professional judgement in outdoor contexts, including balanced discussions of benefits and limitations.

K2- How to use Theory of Change to design outdoor learning programmes or services that contribute to desired long-term impact, including organising and aligning intended outcomes with meaningful/realistic learning opportunities utilising outdoor activities and experiences.

S4- Make programme design and delivery decisions based on the pedagogy/andragogy of the chosen approaches to outdoor learning used by their organisation.

These areas can be further strengthened within the Q&A component, where apprentices have an opportunity to expand on their written rationale and demonstrate critical thinking. Apprentices are encouraged to evidence understanding of ethics and risk-benefit assessment (**K8**) and to apply professional judgement when responding to dynamic change in group or environmental conditions (**K13**).

While apprentices demonstrated confidence referencing EYFS frameworks due to their employment settings, there was limited linkage to outdoor learning theories or sector models. Providers should encourage apprentices to explore and apply recognised outdoor learning pedagogies, evidencing how sector-specific frameworks inform programme design and delivery (**K4, K5, K7, S4**).

K7- The evidence base for the effectiveness of the outdoor learning provided in their workplace and the relevant evaluation and research data.

Apprentices also demonstrated limited reference to leadership theory and reflection-in-action when responding to dynamic change (**K11**), and feedback from evaluation or research data was often used descriptively rather than analytically (**S18, S19**). These areas, while sufficient for a pass, must show evaluative reasoning and synthesis to evidence distinction-level competence.

K11- Theories and models for leading groups in the outdoors.

S18- Use research data and evaluation of own experience to plan and lead evidence informed outdoor learning experiences; and communicate the value of an outdoor learning programme.

S19- Use data gathered on outputs, outcomes and impacts of outdoor learning programmes to quality assure programme and organisational improvements in the short, medium and longer term.

Observation with Questioning

Higher-graded apprentices demonstrated well-considered session planning and the ability to adapt to participant needs, strongly evidencing differentiation of learning methods (**K15, S7, S8**). They displayed personalised leadership and instruction that supported the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of participants.

K15- Methods to differentiate learning to respond to different learning preferences, group dynamics and interpersonal communication, emotional and cultural intelligences.

S7- Lead differentiated outdoor learning activities and experiences to meet the needs and capabilities of individual participants within the group using appropriate resources and techniques.

S8- Instruct others in how to participate in activities correctly and safely and vary the content, tempo and direction of the activities to enable all participants to contribute to and benefit from the experience.

Areas for further development include encouraging apprentices to evaluate decision-making and justify facilitation approaches (**S11–S12**), referencing how these promote inclusion, engagement, and achievement. Providers and employers can support this by:

Embedding reflective discussion within session debriefs, prompting apprentices to consider why and what if questions.

Using reflective journals or structured observation feedback to build evaluative habits aligned with higher-grade criteria.

Providing clarity on the required duration and structure of the assessment to reduce uncertainty and ensure readiness.

Where apprentices achieved strong KSB coverage, their session planning was proactive and well considered. In these cases, apprentices produced structured sessions meeting both programme outcomes and standard-specific criteria, incorporating clear outdoor learning components.

Apprentices would benefit from further support in demonstrating higher-order assessment verbs such as evaluate and justify. Specifically, development is needed to:

Evaluate decision-making and judgement during the session, considering alternative responses to dynamic changes such as weather, participant behaviour, or equipment failure (**S9**).

S9- Make decisions informed by data such as by observations, experience, reflection-in-action (in the moment), reflection on-action-in-context (during the experience), reflection on action (post experience) and professional judgement.

Evaluate facilitation approaches and their influence on inclusion, engagement, and achievement (**S11, S12**).

S12- Use a relevant approach such as instruction, teaching, coaching and mentoring approaches to assist participants to meet the intended outcomes of a session and programme.

Justify steps to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within their organisation and the wider sector (**K18**).

K18- Methods to identify and overcome barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion within programmes, the organisation and the wider sector.

Common barriers to higher grades included:

Sessions appearing “engineered” for assessment rather than reflecting authentic workplace practice (**K10, S6, B1**).

B1- Acts in a way that builds and maintains positive relationships with colleagues, customers and stakeholders.

Inconsistent differentiation of learning and limited demonstration of emotional or cultural intelligence (**K15, S7, S11**).

K15- Methods to differentiate learning to respond to different learning preferences, group dynamics and interpersonal communication, emotional and cultural intelligences.

S7- Lead differentiated outdoor learning activities and experiences to meet the needs and capabilities of individual participants within the group using appropriate resources and techniques.

Limited evaluation of facilitation methods, with apprentices explaining how they delivered but not why those methods were chosen (**K17, K18, S12, S13**).

K17- Feedback methods that support participants to achieve intended outcomes and development goals.

S12- Use a relevant approach such as instruction, teaching, coaching and mentoring approaches to assist participants to meet the intended outcomes of a session and programme.

Feedback that was reactive rather than developmental, missing opportunities to evidence reflective, ethical practice (**S14, S22, B3**).

S22- Use reflective practice in their work.

S14- Use the rules of assessment evidence to determine participant progress towards intended outcomes and provide appropriate feedback in terms of its timing, frequency, content and delivery that promotes further learning.

Environmental and sustainability practices not critically reflected upon or linked to wider sector expectations (**S16, B5**)

B5- Champions, actively respects and protects the outdoor environment in which they work.

S16- Plan and lead programmes and activities that are sustainable, minimise impact and connect participants with their environment.

Professional Discussion underpinned by the Logbook

Apprentices demonstrated sound practical knowledge but frequently provided descriptive rather than analytical responses. Providers can support apprentices to improve by linking theory, research, and sector policy to professional reasoning. Apprentices should be encouraged to use their logbooks proactively to evidence applied learning and to draw on sector bodies such as the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL), Forest School Association (FSA), and Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC). Embedding these frameworks during on-programme delivery will strengthen apprentices' ability to critically evaluate sector influences and meet distinction-level expectations for leadership and reflection (**K3, K4, S13**).

K4- Recognised approaches to outdoor learning appropriate to their workplace including their history, pedagogy/andragogy and application when designing, planning and delivering outdoor learning programmes

S13- Use relevant approaches to outdoor learning; theories of human and social development; psychological models; and neuroscience to support participants to achieve the intended outcomes of a programme

To achieve higher grades, apprentices must demonstrate higher-order reasoning through evaluation, justification, and critique. Providers can support this by:

Encouraging apprentices to explain why specific approaches were chosen and how alternative methods might affect outcomes (**K21, S1**).

S1- Use questions, observations, discussions, surveys and active listening to identify the programme needs and expectations of customers, participants and stakeholders.

Reinforcing analytical language (evaluate, justify, critique, synthesise) within formative assessment and feedback.

Developing analytical writing, evidence-based discussion, and reflective evaluation skills (**S22, S23, K26**).

K26- Ethics and the value of reflective practice for professional development.

S22- Use reflective practice in their work.

S23- Recognise own values, beliefs, strengths, areas of development and set future goals in line with own and the organisations objectives.

Creating opportunities to explore and debate current research, social impact, and ethical practice, connecting theory to real-world contexts (**K21, S18, S19**).

K21- Methods to gather and analyse feedback and evidence data on outputs, outcomes and impacts of an outdoor learning programme.

S18- Use research data and evaluation of own experience to: plan and lead evidence-informed outdoor learning experiences; and communicate the value of an outdoor learning programme.

S19- Use data gathered on outputs, outcomes and impacts of outdoor learning programmes to quality assure programme and organisational improvements in the short, medium and longer term.

Supporting apprentices to revise and familiarise themselves with their portfolios, as many struggled to reference evidence effectively during the Professional Discussion.

Encouraging discussion of ethical dilemmas, social issues, and sector challenges impacting outdoor learning and recreation (**K26, K27, B4**).

K26- Ethics and the value of reflective practice for professional development.

K27- Contemporary issues and the global challenges faced by Outdoor Learning, including the role and vision of organisations such as the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

B4- Acts in a professional and ethical manner and portrays a positive approach to work.

Overall Summary

Apprentices consistently meet pass-level standards, demonstrating sound practical competence and secure procedural knowledge. To achieve distinction, they must move beyond description toward evaluation and justification, showing analytical reasoning and synthesis across all assessment methods. Providers and employers can support this by embedding reflective and evaluative practice throughout training, integrating outdoor learning research and frameworks, and reinforcing the language of analysis and critical reflection in formative feedback.

Open Awards Level 5 End-point Assessment for ST0495 Rail and Rail Systems Engineer.

To ensure apprentices are fully prepared for their end-point assessment (EPA), Training Providers should support the apprentice in developing a **Portfolio of Evidence** that meets the following requirements:

The apprentice's portfolio must:

- Be compiled **during the on-programme period** of the apprenticeship.
- Contain evidence aligned to the **Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs)** assessed through **Assessment Method 2: Vocational Competence Discussion supported by a portfolio of evidence**.
- Typically include **14 or more discrete pieces of evidence**.

- Provide coverage of **all 22 occupational duties** outlined in the standard.
- Be submitted to **Open Awards as a single PDF document**.

All evidence must be **valid, authentic, and attributable solely to the apprentice**. The submission must be accompanied by a **signed authenticity statement** from both the apprentice and their employer.

Assessment Timelines

For this standard, the **EPA** must be completed **within 16 weeks** of the apprentice meeting Gateway requirements. The total assessment time is **14 weeks and 1 hour**, comprising:

- **14 weeks** for the **Workplace Project**.
- **1 hour** for the **Vocational Competence Discussion**.

Training Providers should ensure all assessments are **planned, supported, and delivered within the 16-week EPA window** to maintain compliance with Open Awards' assessment requirements.

Workplace Project

The **Workplace Project** enables the apprentice to demonstrate their competence in applying both **technical knowledge** and **practical skills** within their specialist area. It must also evidence the apprentice's ability to apply the **core areas** of the apprenticeship standard, including:

- **Safe and professional working practices** – Demonstrating accountability for maintaining a safe working environment for themselves and others.
- **Delivery of engineering solutions** – Contributing effectively to the design, development, and delivery of engineering solutions that meet operational needs efficiently.
- **Problem-solving skills** – Applying creative and structured approaches to diagnose and resolve technical challenges.
- **Teamwork and collaboration** – Demonstrating understanding of team dynamics and contributing effectively within collaborative environments.

The completed project should provide **clear, practical evidence** of the apprentice's competence, technical expertise, and professional behaviours.

Vocational Competence Discussion

The **Vocational Competence Discussion** is a structured, two-way professional dialogue between the apprentice and the **Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA)**. It enables the apprentice to demonstrate their understanding and

competence in the KSBs assigned to this assessment method, as defined in the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan.

Key features include:

- **Open questioning** – The IEPA will ask a minimum of **seven (7)** open questions to explore the apprentice's competence across key performance areas.
- **Portfolio evidence** – The discussion will draw upon evidence from the apprentice's portfolio. While the portfolio is **not directly assessed**, it must meet a high standard of quality to effectively support the discussion.
- **Apprentice reference** – Apprentices may bring and refer to their portfolio during the discussion to support their responses.

This assessment method provides an opportunity for apprentices to **demonstrate depth of knowledge, reflect on professional practice, and evidence their readiness** to meet the occupational standard.

Open Awards Level 7 End-point Assessment for ST0586 Regulatory Affairs Specialist.

Apprentices have been well prepared for their assessment components and have demonstrated a good understanding of the regulatory environment and the role of the Regulatory Affairs Specialist within the wider healthcare and scientific context. Apprentices were able to articulate their findings clearly and link their work to real-world regulatory practices.

In the **Project Showcase**, apprentices should not only present their findings and recommendations clearly but also show how their work has wider business or regulatory impact. The apprentice should be prepared to respond to the chosen case study in a way that demonstrates not just problem solving, but also strategic foresight. Recommendations should go beyond the immediate brief and present a measurable strategic impact. Providers should note the need for apprentices to show a high level of "professional judgement" (i.e., making decisions in ambiguous regulatory areas, balancing risk, interpreting data) and that they can justify the rationale behind decisions, including when data is incomplete or conflicting.

- o **K5.1** *The impact of regulatory decision-making on the business, patients and future developments.*

They should further be able to demonstrate leadership: influencing cross-functional teams, shaping regulatory strategy, anticipating business / regulatory changes (rather than simply reacting).

During the Viva Voce, apprentices should demonstrate professional judgement by evaluating complex or ambiguous regulatory situations and integrating commercial, quality, and lifecycle considerations.

- o ***B6.1 A commitment to meeting the needs of all stakeholders within and outside the organisation in the best interests of the end user and/ or patient.***

Providers can further support apprentices by encouraging them to practise presentations, engage in mock discussions, and develop confidence in articulating strategic and evidence-based reasoning. Good practice is also required to prepare for potential technical issues during presentations, which has the potential to impact performance. Apprentices are therefore encouraged to check their presentation setup beforehand and ensure they can confidently manage the technical aspects of delivery. Training providers can also stress the importance of time management as an area for improvement, as some apprentices required intervention from the assessor to maintain adherence to the assessment schedule. A particular area of strength is the sound reflective practice that has been shown by apprentices with comprehensive self-evaluation and awareness of their role and team operations with robust understanding of compliance with regulatory standards.

To achieve distinctions, apprentices should aim to go beyond meeting the standard requirements by demonstrating strategic foresight, innovation, and leadership in their approach.

Open Awards Level 3 End-point Assessment for ST0958 Community Health and Wellbeing.

Apprentices have been well prepared for their end-point assessments and demonstrate enthusiasm to complete their apprenticeship. This standard is a recent addition to the portfolio and feedback is based on a limited number of assessments completed to date. Apprentices have generally engaged positively, although some found re-engaging with evidence from the taught programme challenging after a long period of study. Providers may wish to consider offering a short revision or refresher tutorial prior to Gateway to support knowledge recall and application during the assessment. Apprentices and Training Providers are also reminded to reference the Pass and Distinction Grading Descriptors set out in the EPA Handbook to ensure full awareness of expectations across each assessment component.

In the **Demonstration of Practice**, providers are encouraged to remind apprentices to make full use of the time available and to conclude with a clear action plan with defined targets. A sound understanding of local organisations and agencies was identified as essential to enable effective client signposting and referral. Providers can further support apprentices to reflect on possible evidence towards K11 and S13 which did not meet the required standard:

K11- *the local and national statutory organisations and agencies that deliver public services (including education, housing, welfare, justice, health and care) and how they are funded.*

S13- *Identify barriers preventing individuals from accessing local services, including how services are promoted or communicated.*

During the **Professional Discussion**, apprentices should be reminded of the importance of ensuring that IT equipment is fully charged and that their internet connection is stable. While apprentices may refer to their portfolios, it was noted that few led discussions with this evidence, which limited their ability to demonstrate clear application of theory and policy to practice. Revision of key theoretical frameworks and reflection on how these have been applied in the workplace would strengthen responses and ensure alignment to the higher-grade descriptors.

- o **K25-** *National and local strategies and policies to improve health outcomes and address health inequalities.*
- o **S28-** *Apply the most recent evidence to improve the effectiveness of strategies, policies and interventions that impact health and wellbeing outcomes.*

Apprentice performance in the Knowledge Test has been of a high standard, demonstrating strong understanding across most areas of the standard. The main area identified for improvement relates to **K8** *which focuses on national guidance on the engagement and management of volunteers and how their rights and welfare are protected*. Further emphasis on this area during preparation would support apprentices to demonstrate a deeper understanding of volunteer management, safeguarding, and compliance with relevant national guidance.

Key Recommendations for Employers and Providers

Practice to Avoid	Recommended practice
Registering apprentices in the same month they complete Gateway, causing possible delays in planning assessments.	Ensure timely registration of apprentices with Open Awards and provide an early estimate of the anticipated Gateway date.
Unfamiliarity with the EPA process adds confusion and stress to planning assessments.	Maintain a comprehensive knowledge of the EPA process.
Apprentices do not access or read the standard-specific EPA Handbook.	Ensure apprentices receive and review the relevant standard-specific EPA Handbook.
Lack of understanding among apprentices regarding the KSBs and their assessment.	Ensure apprentices have a clear understanding of the KSBs and how they will be assessed.
Gateway preparation is often incomplete or delayed, with little use of sample or mock tests to support apprentices.	Ensure thorough and timely Gateway preparation, including the use of sample and mock tests to help apprentices become familiar with the process.
Failure to appoint a primary contact for workplace assessments results in insufficient support during the EPA at the employer's location.	Designate a primary point of contact responsible for workplace assessments who will be available on-site at the employer's location throughout the entire duration of the EPA.
Failing to prepare in advance and relying on improvisation causes unnecessary stress and errors.	Ensure apprentices are well-prepared in advance and avoid last-minute improvisation.
Apprentices do not bring their ID on the assessment day, preventing the EPA from proceeding and potentially incurring cancellation fees.	Ensure apprentices bring their ID on the assessment day; without it, the EPA cannot proceed, and cancellation fees may be incurred.
Lack of effective communication among the apprentice, awarding organisation, and training provider leads to confusion, missed deadlines, and inadequate support.	Maintain effective communication between the apprentice, awarding organisation, and training provider.

- We are always striving to continually improve our end-point assessment service and therefore will be gathering feedback on your experience and support us to continually improve. Please look out for the survey link in your inbox which will be sent to you following the assessment.

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