



LEVEL 2 FOOD & DRINK
PROCESS OPERATOR
END POINT ASSESSMENT
PRICING POLICY
2021



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1. Introduction

This document contains the policy and procedures relating to the costs, fees and circumstances that apply for the provision and fee setting for a Level 2 Food & Drink Process Operator apprenticeship Standard end point assessment (EPA)

EPA is a new way of assuring quality in the apprenticeship system. It replaces the previous model of continuous assessment resulting in qualifications. Once an apprentice has completed the on programme period of the apprenticeship, all parties involved will agree and confirm the apprentice's readiness for EPA.

On completion of the apprenticeship programme, Level 2 Apprentices will have completed the mandated qualifications and are declared ready for EPA gateway.

Entry to Level 2 Food & Drink Process Operator Gateway

Apprentices must meet the gateway requirements and provide evidence of doing so to FDQ before plans and dates for their EPA can be formally commenced. At gateway, the employer and training provider (if applicable) must be satisfied the apprentice is consistently working at, or above, the level set out in the occupational standard and will complete an FDQ **Gateway Declaration Form** confirming readiness for EPA and be able to provide authenticated evidence (copies of certificates) to confirm achievement of;

- Level 2 Diploma for Food and Drink Process Operations
- English and mathematics at level 1

In addition, FDQ will need to see evidence of

- English and mathematics test **undertaken** at level 2.

Assuming all is received the apprentice's application for EPA will proceed to

Gateway Stage

FDQ will commence talks with the employer and training provider following receipt of the entry to gateway evidence of completion. At these meetings FDQ will go through the EPA requirements including selected meat, geographical logistics, dates and final fees and this information is loaded to a Contract of Services that will underpin the agreement between all parties.

The EPA will be completed within a minimum 12-week assessment window. The whole assessment process is managed by FDQ with the EPA conducted by an independent examiner (IE) who submits their initial results & grade to a moderation process at FDQ where upon a final outcome is confirmed. The employer and provider

will receive a Statement of Result that must be agreed by all parties and upon confirmation FDQ will request the final completion certificate from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

2. Policy Statement

FDQ requires the agreed fee to be paid and collected at the earliest opportunity. This means, except in cases where the cost is not known, all fees will be collected within 14 days of the invoice and cleared 7 days in advance of the FDPO EPA test date. If payment is not made or evidence of a third party commitment to pay is not produced the EPA cannot take place.

The fee for a Level 2 Food & Drink Process Operator is agreed at stage one. FDQ will generate the invoice for the EPA once contracts have been issued **usually 7 days** prior to the appointed EPA date.

The Food & Drink Process Operator end-point assessment will normally take place on an appointed day over a typical period of up to 4 hours with FDQ providing an independent EPA service to that examines the three distinct components:

- i **multiple choice test (MCT)** lasting up to 60 minutes
- ii **practical skills assessment (PSA)** lasting up to 120 minutes
- iii **vocational competence discussion (VCD)** lasting 30 minutes

FDQ aims to supply results from the EPA to customers within 21 days. FDQ invoices carry a 30 day expected payment date from when the EPA has been carried out.

3. Information applicants & their employers

Information on fees as contained in this document will be made available to employers to enable them to negotiate and agree the fee with payment to be routed via their preferred RoAPT approved training provider.

4. Payment and Fee Collection

Fees can be paid by any of the following methods:

Choose one of methods below	
For FDQ centres the usual BACs based payment system applies	For non-FDQ centres payment can set via Bankers Automated Clearing System Limited (BACS)

5. Guidelines for fee setting

The final fee for an FDPO apprenticeship standard end-point assessment may vary as FDQ in discussion with the employer / provider will consider the following dependent factors;

- **Dual EPAs** – Instances where two apprentices from the same employer/workplace are assessed in the same location on a single day
- **Multiple EPAs** – Where several apprentices can be assessed on the same day in the same location discounts will apply.
- **Geographical** – Where apprentices may be located in areas requiring extended travel and in some cases overnight accommodation for examiners.
- **Late/Early Shift** – FDQ appreciates the food industry is often a 24/7 working environment so there may be times when FDQ conforms to the preferred overnight/weekend shift patterns that suit the apprentice

The fees shown in this document are assumed on a single applicant basis for EPA.

In summary, the guiding principle for FDQ to be transparent about the fee setting calculation and where savings are applicable to share these with the employer/provider.

6. The FDPO Instruments of Assessment

The apprentices will undertake **three discrete** end point assessments

a. Knowledge - Multiple Choice Test (MCT)

The MCT assesses the underpinning knowledge and understanding and comprises 30 multiple choice questions (MCQs) over a 60 minute time limit. The MCT will test understanding across a range of areas including:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	The principles of quality management & good practice in the food industry	Hygiene standards and food safety
Health and Safety in the food industry	Products: how to handle products and the effects of external influences on them	Effective communication skills and team working

How to use relevant tools and equipment in food production	The principles of Continuous Improvement (CI) in the food production industry	Performance data: understanding, interpreting and acting on it.
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The apprentice must answer 18 to pass and can achieve merit with a score of 23.

Those scoring 27 to 30 will achieve a distinction grade.

b. Practical Observation & Questioning

The practical observation & questioning assessment involves the apprentice undertaking a range of process tasks over an uninterrupted period of 2 hours. The instrument of assessment will reflect naturally occurring tasks and activities from the process line with scope to move from one area / function of the business to another.

During the practical observation there will be opportunities for independent assessor and apprentice to question and answer to clarify knowledge and understanding being applied. Wherever possible the practical assessment will take place in the workplace but where necessary to assist the apprentice a simulated food processing environment will be considered.

The practical observation will cover the following aspects of the standard:

Environmental Management System requirements	Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	Hygiene standards and food safety
Health and safety in the food industry	Products: how to handle products and the effects of external influences on them	Performance data: understanding, interpreting and acting on it

The practical observation will be marked and scored using robust methods of assessment. The observation will result in a pass, merit or distinction grade. FDQ will

provide a range of sample materials and specifications for employers and providers that will assist preparations for the apprentices.

1. **Professional Interview** - The professional interview concludes the EPA session and is a structured discussion between the apprentice and their independent assessor. The professional interview will cover areas of the standard not assessed in the other end-point assessment components; these could include:

Skills

Ensure effective handovers to appropriate colleagues	Actively contribute to optimal production performance, e.g. line optimisation in the control of yields/stock levels
Contribute to Continuous Improvement (CI) activities	Contribute to effective changeovers

Behaviours

Self-development: seeks learning and development opportunities	Working in a team: builds good relationships with others	Problem solving: participates in problem solving
Responsiveness to change: flexibility to changing working environment and demands	Company/industry perspective: desire to learn about the company and food industry, acts as an ambassador	Demonstrates and encourages curiosity to foster new ways of thinking and working

The interview will be structured and typically last 30 to 45 minutes with the FDQ Independent assessor selecting at least six questions from a bank of standardised competency based questions.

6. EPA FAQ on Fee setting rationale –

Question	Answer
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<p>How are end point assessments costs calculated?</p>	<p>The Government does not dictate the fee to be charged for end point assessment. Standard apprenticeships are assigned maximum funding rate by the Funding Agency and employers decide the percentage of the overall funding value that is assigned to the occupational assessment plan.</p>
<p>How do employers select and pay for the EPA?</p>	<p>The employer will select the EPAO (FDQ) and negotiate a price for the EPA The price agreed should not usually exceed 20% of the funding band maximum for the standard.</p> <p>The agreed price to be charged will be based on administration and delivery of end-point assessment (eligible costs) and may also comprise an element linked to profit.</p> <p>Payment from the employer to FDQ will be routed through the provider. In order to receive payment FDQ and the provider must have a contract agreed and in place as soon as possible after notification from the employer.</p>
<p>What should the contract between FDQ and provider cover?</p>	<p>This contract must cover roles and responsibilities and a schedule for the channelling of funding through the provider to FDQ.</p> <p>The terms of the contract between the EPAO and the provider must confirm that FDQ is in charge of EPA delivery on behalf of the employer and that the provider is acting as an agent of the ESFA in passing the payment (either from the employer’s apprenticeship service levy account or co-funded) to FDQ.</p>
<p>When can providers expect to receive the final is 20%?</p>	<p>For standards the final payment will be made once the end-point assessment has been completed and the prime provider has informed the ILR for the apprentice. FDQ will;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform the prime provider of the apprentices completion of the on the day it was undertaken. This enables field 21 (funding) of the ILR to be processed and notified to the ESFA. 2. Once results have been agreed, submit a ‘request for final certification’ to the ESFA and alert the provider of this action. This will enable the provider to complete field 28 of the ILR (SUCCESS RATES)

So EPA fees are 'fixed' by Government and set at 20% of the max funding rate?	Not necessarily, EPAOs have a responsibility to price up the EPAs to reflect the different eligible costs such as administration, registration and examination that occur as part of the delivery of the EPA. This will ensure the delivery of a fair, valid and reliable testing experience for the apprentice. Fees therefore will vary according to the requirements of the EPA. In some cases, this will mean the cost of the EPA will be justified at 20% and in other cases it may be lower.
What is the max funding rate for the Level 2 Standard?	The Government has assigned a max funding rate of £5,000 to the L2 FDPO Apprenticeship Standard, therefore the 20% 'completion' payment would be 20% of £5,000 = £1,000 .
EQA Charges	From November 1st 2019 , the Government has mandated that External Quality Assurance for apprentices on this Standard will be subject to a £40 tariff that is to be charged at the gateway stage. This charge is to be passed on to the customer but clearly itemised on the invoice as an EQA charge per apprentice.

7. Fee setting & remission rationale

7.1 Single apprentice fee

Max fee scenario	Scenario – Single apprentice takes their EPA in an external assessment facility	Rate to be charged by FDQ
Single applicant	This price is fixed on the following assumptions 1. The employer will offer the facility on a free of charge basis for EPAs to be carried out. 2. The provider will ensure the necessary 'controlled' environment is sufficiently isolated for the EPAs	Max £1,000 Single Rate
Setting	Apprentices are required to wear PPE and use their own tools/equipment. FDQ will accommodate early starting times and weekends as required.	

Additional Discounts	FDQ will apply a 10% reduced rate for occasions where more than one apprentice undertakes their EPA on the same day in the same place. For e.g., instead of the single day rate £1,000, assuming 2 x apprentices undertake their EPA a 10% discount will apply meaning a charge of £900 each. In this instance the total invoice fee would be £1,800	
Additional Discounts 2	FDQ will apply further discounts where multiple apprentices are in scope for EPA services. Depending on the workforce numbers FDQ will consider a £750 minimum fee discount per apprentice. FDQ will be pleased to discuss this as applicable.	
Eligible Costs	Normally included within List Price and an eligible cost	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs associated with the administration, registration and examination of end-point assessments as set out in the standard/s and assessment plan/s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External setting and marking of tests Registration and delivery of on-screen tests Recognition of achievement Feedback, grading and submission for certification Access to video conferencing for remote assessment 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs associated with providing guidance and support and the materials (non-capital items) used in the delivery of end-point assessment (equipment or supplies necessary to enable the assessment to take place) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All support materials and guidance provided to the employer or provider for end-point assessment preparation during on-programme learning, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment specifications/Assessment logbooks / Checklists / Exemplars Support & training from expert product managers Papers/supplies/software required for the assessment to take place (non-capital items) such as ingredients or paper tests where required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs associated with ensuring trained staff and appropriate premises are available to deliver end-point assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-visit to the workplace to ensure suitability of premises & discuss EPA itinerary with all parties Trained Independent End-point examiners 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check appropriate premises for EPA activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs to support any special arrangements needed to ensure any apprentices with special educational needs, disabilities or with another temporary or permanent debilitating condition can fairly access end-point assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All reasonable adjustments requested in line with the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations • Written paper exams
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with the development & maintenance of assessment instruments & tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All preparation assessment materials, tools and instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with any further assessment required by the apprentice to achieve end-point assessment (for instance retakes or resits) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback and area analysis available to providers to support preparation for re-sits/retakes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with ensuring consistent and robust internal quality assurance (for instance moderation and standardisation of assessment instruments and tools, assessors and assessment decisions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal quality assurance provided by EPAO End-point Assessment Managers (moderation or standardisation) • Results generation & issue to respective parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs to take account of any EQA charges you may incur and certification charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All External Quality Assurance costs incurred & certification costs charged to the EPA by the EQA – these can be up to £40 per candidate respectively.

Other scenarios may occur and fees will need to be set on a case by case basis with discrete discounts applying for different types/volumes as considered at the discretion of the CEO.

8. Guidance for re-sits/re-takes

Apprentices who fail one or more EPA components will be offered re-sits/re-takes. Re-sits/re-takes must not be offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to distinction. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does.

The apprentice's employer will need to agree that a re-sit/re-take is an appropriate course of action. Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for the re-sit/re-take.

A re-sit/re-take must be taken within 12-weeks of the original fail notification; otherwise the entire EPA must be re-sat/re-taken.

The maximum grade awarded to a re-sit/re-take will be pass, unless the EPAO identifies exceptional circumstances accounting for the original fail.

EPAOs must ensure that apprentices undertake a different knowledge test, workplace observation specification and interview questions when taking a re-sit/re-take.

EPA to be undertaken	Proportion of original fee
<i>Knowledge Test Inc. extended answer</i>	25% of fee
<i>The On-Site observation</i>	50% of fee
<i>Interview & Presentation</i>	25% of fee

*FDQ will apply discretion as required for re-sits /re-takes

9 Refund of fees

If FDQ cancels an EPA then any fees paid will be automatically refunded to the applicant organisation

If the apprentice withdraws from their EPA without providing 24 hours' notice to FDQ the fee remains payable as detailed in the ***EPA Fee Terms and Conditions (Appendix A)*** and any fees paid will not be refunded. This applies at all times and in all situations, including changes of circumstance and cases of hardship.

If the learner is not able to undertake their EPA on account of ill health then, on the production of medical evidence (e.g. a doctor's note), then a postponement may apply and the EPA could be rescheduled. On occasions where severe weather causes a postponement then some discretion will apply, however FDQ will always endeavour to factor in weather conditions in advance.

The FDQ Chief Executive must approve any refunds/credit notes before issue.

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