

(COVID 19 Contingency Plan End Point Assessment Delivery – March 2020)

Introduction

This guidance is made available for all of our apprentices, training providers, employers, external quality assurance providers, the ESFA and IfATE.

Remote End-Point Assessments

In response to ongoing development with COVID-19, we are implementing the following contingency actions based on up to the date guidance from Public Health England, the Department for Education, Education Skills Funding Agency and the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education.

PAL has operated using remote technology in many of our End Point Assessments over the last two years and has established procedures in place already for assessment of Portfolios, Projects and holding Professional Discussions.

With the restrictions and closures now in place, PAL will be expanding this process and offering all Professional Discussions, Technical Interviews, Presentations, Q&A assessment by remote delivery using Zoom or Skype, or where requested by the employer or training provider another webinar platform.

With travel restrictions in place and many apprentices and employers in furlough, the PAL EPASS team will make provisions to make direct contact with apprentices, utilising contact details provided. To facilitate assessments, we ask that training providers ensure the details of apprentices on EPAPro are correct and we encourage all employers to support their apprentices who are ready for assessment to proceed, utilising the proposed assessment flexibilities. PAL will provide and continue to update all stakeholders regarding any changes or further amendments and flexibilities to the assessment process. To confirm, apprentices are allowed to undertake end-point assessment, if they are furloughed.

If any employer, training provider or apprentice wishes to discuss end-point assessment arrangements, please contact us via infor@professionalassessment.co.uk or use one of our two help numbers on 0800 160 1899 or 0800 389 4373.

From Monday 23rd March, PAL EPA will also make available all of our Knowledge Tests for End Point Assessment, including Multi-Choice examinations using both our existing URL based exam platform orcas and Zoom to facilitate remote invigilation.

The live invigilation of apprentices using webcams and screen sharing will enable PAL to ensure that the apprentice can complete this element of their End Point Assessment. In addition to remote proctoring, PAL can undertake question and answer sessions, professional discussions, competency based interviews and project presentations via webinar.

Many EPAs require an on-site face-to-face technical observation, PAL will deploy any agreed assessment flexibilities, as supported by the EQAP, IfATE and the ESFA, to progress EPA. Alternatively PAL will support breaks in learning and suspend assessments, where requested.

On-site visits will only resume as and when guidance is provided, that it is safe and reasonable to do so and PAL is satisfied that the employer site has made provision for safe working practices and assessment in accordance with the Department for Education, Public Health England and the Education Skills Funding Agency guidelines.

PAL's EPASS Team, is on hand for any questions or enquires you may have and will continue to provide updates via its website, social media platforms and Padlets. The Padlets will be regularly updated and have a dedicated Covid-19 section that provides general information and support materials, as well as specific assessment arrangements to support our customers through the EPA process at this time.

All of PAL's EPA team are working on a remote basis to ensure that we continue to offer the highest level of service. Our info@professionalassessment.co.uk and epasupportservices@professionalassessment.co.uk are manned and checked every day and our assessors have full access to these email addresses.

Our accounts team will also be available to discuss assessment arrangements and options, to ensure minimal disruption to the final stage of the apprentice's programme.

Our 0800 160 1899 phone number is available seven days a week and all calls are logged and will be responded to within five working days and for any urgent enquiries, the majority of calls will be dealt with on the same day

We are aware that these matters are constantly evolving and PAL will continue to provide updates as and when necessary.