



# Resit and Retake Policy

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## Overview

All end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) are required to ensure that resits and retakes are conducted effectively, this is an expectation set out by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and is an aspect of EPAO work that is monitored by the respective regulatory bodies. This policy outlines the provisions made for apprentices who fail one element or more of their independent assessment.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and as when assessment plans are evaluated by IfATE. Professional Assessment Ltd (PAL) works with the direction given via the assessment plans and trailblazer groups and the pertinent regulatory authorities in marking and grading assessments and applying the appropriate resit and retake approaches.

Resits and retakes must be conducted in a fashion that is fair and equitable and the procedures applied to resits and retakes must not exclude or favour any apprentice, or apprenticeship standard.

PAL recognises the fact that assessment plans do vary in their stance to how resits and retakes are applied, and in some cases the guidance provided by the assessment plans are unclear and, in these instances, PAL will apply the principles of the Professional Assessment Limited (PAL) policy.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to all resits and retakes. It is important that anyone who represents PAL and is involved in assessment development and delivery is familiar with this policy and applies the appropriate processes and assessment grading to resit and retake situations.

Employers and providers through contract negotiation should be appraised of who is responsible for the payment of resit and retake fees. Assessors should also use the assessment planning meeting to remind apprentices and employers of resit and retake opportunities, when they can be deployed, and the invoicing arrangements associated with these assessment activities.

### **Who is this policy for?**

- All Independent Assessors (assessors) (IAs) (to include associate assessors).
- All IQAs (to include associate IQAs).
- All EPA personnel.
- EPA Managers.
- Quality Manager.
- PAL Directors.
- Resource Development Lead.
- Resource Development Support Officer.
- Employers.
- Apprentices.
- Providers.

The Qualifications Director is responsible for updating this policy and ensuring the resit and retake guidance is accurate and accessible. The Qualifications Director is also responsible for ensuring that all assessment and quality assurance personnel are familiar with this policy.

The Resource Development Lead is responsible for the maintenance of the Padlets and ensuring the latest information regarding resits and retakes is available via the Padlets and referenced in apprenticeship standard specifications.

The Business Operations Director is responsible for ensuring service level contracts and PAL's price list and pricing policy contains accurate information regarding resit and retake charges. The EPA team and EPA Managers are also responsible for communicating this information and any changes regarding resits and retakes to apprentices, employers, and providers.

This policy only applies to apprenticeship standards and assessments PAL undertakes and is responsible for. Each AO/EPAO will have their own resit and retake policies, for apprenticeship standards the policy will be guided by the relevant assessment plan and where a mandated qualification is integrated into an apprenticeship assessment plan, the AO responsible for the qualification will set any resit or retake parameters, however it will be necessary that both the EPA and qualification are successfully achieved to gain an apprenticeship certificate.

### **Purpose**

**Resits and retakes must be conducted in a fashion that is fair and equitable and the procedures applied to resits and retakes must not exclude or favour any apprentice, or apprenticeship standard.**

PAL recognises the fact that assessment plans do vary in their stance to how resits and retakes are applied, and in some cases the guidance provided by the assessment plans are unclear and, in these instances, PAL will apply the principles of the Professional Assessment Limited (PAL) policy.

### **Resits and Retakes**

Some apprentice standard assessment plans specify a maximum number of resits or retakes, others do not, where there is no limit to the number of resits or retakes an apprentice can have, PAL has taken action to make a reasonable and pragmatic interpretation of the assessment plan guidance. As an independent end-point assessment organisation, we will work with the employer and apprentice to facilitate resits and retakes, as requested and permissible according to the requisite assessment plan.

Before resits and retakes take place, PAL will provide details of non-achievement, so all parties know what aspects of performance were assessed and graded as not meeting the pass threshold.

Multiple resits and retakes will potentially exceed the end-point assessment affordability criteria, as detailed in assessment plans and the ESFA guidance that end-point assessment should not exceed 20% of the funding band value.

PAL will invoice and expect payment from the main Training Provide and/or College for any resit or retakes. The Training Provide or College can elect to pass these additional costs onto the relevant employer or come to any appropriate arrangement with their employers.

The terms resit and retakes are defined as:

- **Resit** - where an apprentice has failed an assessment component, but it is judged no further training is required, and the resit can be taken in the prescribed assessment window.
- **Retake** - where an apprentice is required to undertake an assessment activity as a result of a fail, after a period of re-training, if the retake falls outside of the initial assessment window, the apprentice will need to retake all components of the end-point assessment.

Some standards and assessment plans specify a sequence of assessments and only allow the apprentice to move to the next assessment activity on the achievement of the subsequent event. PAL builds this requirement into our specifications for these apprenticeship standard assessment plans. For assessment plans that consist of several assessment components, but no sequence, PAL works on the premise if the apprentice has failed two assessment components, or two assessment activities, a period of retraining is recommended. **PAL interprets this generally, as either two fails of the same assessment, for example two fails of a test, or a fail of a test and a professional discussion.**

**Resits and retakes can only be taken where an apprentice has failed an aspect of assessment, they cannot be used in any circumstances to improve a grade.**

### ***Resit and Retake Charges***

Charges for resits and retakes are detailed in PAL's price list and information is included in service level contracts and the Business Operations Director and EPA team can also provide such information.

PAL will invoice the principal contractor (typically the Training Provider or College) under current contracting arrangements for resits and retakes. PAL will be guided by this policy and the specific apprenticeship assessment plan when organising resits and retakes and unless advised otherwise by the Training Provider or College will conduct resits and/or retakes accordingly.

Any resit or retake will also need be agreed with the employer and apprentice and take place within a reasonable timeframe. In the situation where an employer does not support a resit or retake, but the provider and or apprentice advocate such action, Professional Assessment will seek regulatory guidance before issuing any decision in the matter.

Under no circumstances under current funding rules can an apprentice finance any resit or retake.

### ***Exceptional Circumstances***

In the event of exceptional circumstances causing the apprentice not to have had the full opportunity to undertake an assessment method, then they will not be graded for that method (meaning they are not to be given a fail or a pass). Instead, the assessment will be re-arranged to take place as soon as possible.

In the event that reassessment of an aspect of assessment will fall outside of the assessment window and thereby trigger a full re-assessment, PAL will check if exceptional circumstances are a factor in not meeting the required assessment timeline and discuss options for the application of special considerations.

Exceptional circumstances could be for example, (but not limited to):

- Sudden ill-health of the apprentice making continued assessment untenable.
- Equipment failure, malfunction, for example, loss of internet connection with a remote professional discussion, or power loss, prohibiting the use of equipment or safe working rendering the assessment incomplete or non-viable.
- Unforeseen occurrences such as extreme weather which prevents the assessor or apprentice from being able to attend the assessment, and alternative assessment arrangements are not viable or feasible.
- No business, where customer interaction is an integral part of the assessment, and despite planning, on the day the business has very limited or no footfall.
- Workplace emergency, evacuation, or disruption, which is severe enough to impede normal business activities for the duration of the planned assessment.
- Pandemic, or wide scale contagious illness, that prohibits reliable assessment and where alternative assessment arrangements, subject to regulatory approval cannot be safely or fairly applied.
- Redundancy or business goes into administration during the end-point assessment window, meaning the involvement of the employer cannot be secured or the apprentice cannot be assessed at a suitable workplace.

A no show by the apprentice, with no reason provided, would be judged as a cancellation, and incur a cancellation fee.

### ***Resit, Retake, and Impact on Grades***

Providers, employers, and apprentices should refer to the respective assessment plans to check the resit and retake allowances and the impact on grading. For many apprenticeship standards (but not all) a resit or retake will result in an overall limiting grade of a pass.

**PAL will ensure that any resits, and retakes are conducted in accordance with the assessment plan, and do not undermine the assessment process or disadvantage or advantage any apprentice.**

Before an apprentice partakes in a resit or retake, it is imperative they have support from their training provider and employer, and in the case of retakes, further training requirements need to be identified, agreed, and enacted.

Where a retake means the assessment period (window) as specified in the assessment plan<sup>1</sup> will be exceeded, all parties need to recognise that a full re-assessment is required, regardless of any outcome for any individual assessment component, so for example a pass cannot be carried over to a full reassessment and the apprentice will be required to fulfil all the EPA requirements if the apprentice is to achieve an apprenticeship certificate.

Re-assessments will be charged for as per PAL's pricing policy and service level contract. If it is the case that exceptional circumstances can be applied to the situation, PAL will review what aspects of re-assessment need to take place, and if deemed relevant, seek the opinion of the regulatory body and/or relevant agencies. Any such arrangements will require approval from PAL's Responsible Officer and or Business Operations Director.

Failing an end-point assessment does not affect any qualifications gained as part of the apprenticeship programme, independent assessment is separate from any additional qualification attainment. Where the qualification is integrated into the EPA, typically the qualification assessment will be the last assessment and both the qualification and EPA elements will need to be passed to achieve an apprenticeship certificate.

Non-achievement of any element of the end-point assessment does mean the apprentice will not receive an apprenticeship certificate and from a training provider's perspective, the non-completion will impact on attainment/achievement rates. Non-achievement, where a full assessment has been carried out, still allows for the full completion payment.

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<sup>1</sup> EPA timescales vary, Training Providers, Employers and Apprentices should refer to the relevant assessment plan to determine the assessment window duration granted for a specific standard.

## Protocols for Resits and Retakes

PAL will review the latest assessment plans for the standards we work with and apply the latest guidance. Policy updates will reflect the assessment plans guidance at the time of this policy update. PAL retains an internal record regarding how each standard and assessment plan version supports resits and retakes, because changes and revisions take place on a frequent basis it is not possible to include such information in this policy. If you are unsure regarding the resit and retake arrangements regarding any specific apprenticeship standard and assessment plan and cannot find this information in PAL's Apprenticeship Standard (Padlet) online resources, please contact PAL via our freephone number or epa support services email.

For knowledge tests, assessment plans will specify what mark or grade constitutes a fail, but they do not as a rule specify what fail mark necessitates a resit or retake<sup>2</sup>. As an EPAO, PAL would expect the employer and training provider, with the apprentice, to ascertain if additional training is required and agree with PAL's EPA team, whether a resit or retake is the correct action.

For assessment activities such as observations, practical assessments, presentations, professional discussions and competency-based interviews, where the apprentice has not demonstrated competence in the minimum required criteria, resulting in a fail, but whose performance demonstrated only minor areas of development to confer capability for the standard, PAL will advocate a resit. Where the minimum criteria has not been covered, and the assessment indicated that the apprentice was not used to working to the standard required, in their day to day job, and demonstrated a lack of capability in a range of skills areas, PAL will advocate a retake, however it is for the employer and training provider to decide with the apprentice on what further training is needed and how such training will be executed.

For portfolio and project work, where the evidence or work requires further amplification, restructuring or refinement to meet the standard, PAL will advocate a resit, and the apprentice will be provided the opportunity to submit additional evidence in a specified timescale. Where such work demonstrates considerable gaps in skills and knowledge or the brief has not been achieved, PAL will advocate a retake. It is for the training provider and employer to agree with the apprentice what further training is required and how such training will be executed.

Additionally, where the assessment plan indicates that elements of evidence are mandatory and the portfolio/project or assignment does not contain the appropriate quality/quantity of evidence in these areas, the portfolio will be referred and deemed a fail, until the additional evidence can be obtained, unless the assessment plan allows KSBs to be assessed via another element of the end-point assessment, which is **not** the case in most assessment plans.

**Note new assessment plans versions in nearly all cases, do not allow for such flexibility, as the plans instruct what KSBs are to be covered by distinct and independent assessment components, and do not allow for any carry over of missed KSBs from one element of EPA assessment to another.**

If the apprentice is unable to use or provide evidence materials, which are integral to the discussion or the apprentice cannot engage in the discussion at the required level, resulting in a fail for this element of assessment, PAL will advocate a retake. It is the decision of the training provider and employer, along with the apprentice to decide on the nature of the further training.

**Resits and retakes must be completed within the assessment window, unless PAL has agreed and confirmed special considerations are to be applied, as a result of exceptional circumstances. If a resit and/or retake cannot be completed within the assessment window, the apprentice will be required to undergo a full re-assessment of all assessment components, to achieve their apprenticeship certificate, regardless of any previous grades achieved.**

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<sup>2</sup> ACW and LACW apprenticeship standards do provide guidance regarding test fails and the requirement for a resit or a retake

Where two assessments are interdependent, for example an assessment plan allows aspects of performance not seen in an observation to be covered in the professional discussion, PAL's interpretation is unless the mandatory aspects of the observation have not been met, or there has been a serious breach of health and safety or other legislation or the apprentice has demonstrated unprofessional conduct in the observation, an assessment outcome and therefore the potential for a resit or retake cannot be made until the completion of the professional discussion.

Where the assessment plan details two fails automatically trigger a retake, PAL will apply that condition

### ***Minimising the Need for Resits or Retakes***

Before the gateway review, apprentices ideally should have completed practice assessments, and the gateway review should be an adequate evaluation of the apprentice's performance against all of the standards.

PAL cannot make a case for assessment readiness and will work with the gateway evidence provided. Subject to the gateway evidence meeting assessment entry requirements PAL will validate the gateway evidence and schedule assessments.

The assessment planning meeting is primarily one of scheduling and sequencing the assessments and establishing contact and an opportunity for the employer and apprentice to ask questions about the process.

**All parties need to be familiar with the standards and assessment plans they are working with and registering with the EPAO early on in the apprentice's journey means access to assessment advice can be sought and acted upon in good time. It is the Training Provider and Employer's responsibility to ensure their apprentice is registered on the correct apprenticeship standard and working on the correct version of the assessment plan.**

### ***Grades***

Apprentices, employers, and providers should refer to the version of an assessment plan their apprentice is working on, typically this is the plan that was live at the point the apprentice commenced their apprenticeship programme regarding the rules of resits and retakes, unless the EPAO, trailblazer group, IfATE or the regulatory body have made alternative provisions regarding which version of a plan is applicable to a particular apprentice, based on their enrolment date.

PAL does reserve the right to request an apprentice moves to the latest version of an assessment plan, where the revision is minor and there is no significant change to the EPA and the assessment methodologies are the same or similar or less onerous for the apprentice compared to the assessment plan they started with. Additionally, if there have been several changes or versions to an assessment plan and the apprentice has been on programme for three+ years, PAL reserves the right to place the apprentice on the latest version of the assessment plan, in these circumstances PAL will communicate this to those affected prior to any EPA undertakings.

In some cases, standards and assessment plans will have different grade criteria; some standards have pass, fail, merit and distinction, and some standards have fail, pass and distinction, as assessment plans are reviewed there is an increasing correlation between grade outcomes used.

In addition to some variation in grade outcomes, pass rates between standards can vary, so for example for some standards, the assessment plan will stipulate 50% as a pass, whereas other standards and assessment plans will have higher pass rates. The EPAO will apply the grading and marking criteria as defined by the relevant assessment plan.

### ***Who can I talk to if I am not sure of the Resit and Retake requirements?***

In the first instance please speak with our EPA team. If they cannot answer your question they will confer with PAL's Quality Manager, or PAL's Qualifications Director and Responsible Officer.

## ***Regulatory references***

PAL is required to establish and maintain compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. This policy relates to Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition: Arrangements with third parties C1; Marking the Assessment H1.1 Results for a qualification H5; Issuing results H6.

EPA Conditions Ofqual Condition EPA 1 Compliance with Assessment Requirements and Gateway Requirements; EPA 3 Notification to Ofqual of Certain Events; EPA 6 Interpretations and Definitions

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Person Responsible for review: Qualifications Director

This Policy has been agreed by Linda Martin, Managing Director