

Results and Awards Policy

Table of Contents

Overview.....	1
Policy Scope	1
Who is this policy for?	2
Purpose.....	2
Responsibilities	2
How are results and awards issued?.....	2
Third party access requests	3
Certification Requests	3
Results Statements	4
Revoking Results	5
Sanctions	5
Data Security.....	5
Confidentiality of Assessments Contents.....	6
Regulatory references	7

Overview

Award and certification is the final stage of end-point assessment and provides apprentices with proof of achievement. It can only take place once Professional Assessment Limited (PAL) quality assurance processes have been completed. In addition to receiving a certificate as issued by the Department of Education, the apprentice's Personal Learning Record (PLR) will include the successful attainment of their apprenticeship.

PAL's role is to ensure that the result of each assessment taken by the apprentice reflects the level of attainment demonstrated by them by taking into account all admissible evidence generated during end-point assessment (EPA).

Policy Scope

This policy explains the processing of grades and results and the principles PAL follows in determining the final grade for EPA activities. PAL does not award or grade any English and Math's, and regarding mandated qualifications, PAL will apply the requirements as set by the assessment plan and have appropriate third party arrangements with other AOs where necessary.

PAL's approach to quality assurance is addressed in our suite of quality assurance policies. To discuss or query the final results please refer to our appeals and enquiries policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with PAL's:

- Resit and Retake policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration policy

- Sanctions policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Appeals and Enquiries Policy

Who is this policy for?

PAL Independent Assessors (IAs); employers; apprentices; providers; PAL Quality team; Quality Manager; EPA Managers; PAL Directors

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish the roles and responsibilities of the results and awards function.
- To detail how results and awards are administered.

PAL is required to comply with Ofqual conditions which means PAL must have an explicit procedure for awarding and issuing results which enshrine secure and fair practices to ensure confidentiality of assessment and provide a clear audit trail of how grades and results have been consistently and accurately awarded.

Responsibilities

Apprentices: Are responsible for ensuring all evidence they provide in respect of their apprenticeship is authentic and is reflective of their performance and they have signed a statement to that effect, and they understand the sanctions for acts of plagiarism, cheating and falsification of evidence.

Employers: Are responsible for confirming at gateway and the assessment planning meeting the apprentice is ready for EPA and as such any evidence or performance of work submitted or assessed for EPA is the original work of the apprentice, and they understand the sanctions for acts of plagiarism, cheating and falsification of evidence.

Providers and Colleges (Third Parties): Are responsible for ensuring any submission of gateway evidence or evidence required for end-point assessment as satisfactorily been checked by their IQA practices before submission and that they understand the sanctions for acts of plagiarism, cheating and falsification of evidence that can be imposed on their learners, individual staff members or their organisation as a whole

PAL Independent Assessors: Are responsible for advising employers and apprentices at the assessment planning meeting of the requirements for authentic and learner-owned and created evidence. Assessors throughout their assessment activities must at all times ensure their assessment decisions meet the requirements of validity, authenticity, currency, sufficiency, and reliability and are compliant with the relevant assessment plan requirements and recognise where they fail to do this, they are subject to PAL's policies and sanctions.

PAL Quality Team (IQAs): Are responsible for quality assuring EPA activities in accordance with Ofqual's general conditions of regulation; EPA conditions and the relevant assessment plan and ensuring assessors follow PAL protocols and policies and where this is not the case, they apply PAL's relevant policies and procedures with the support of PAL's Business Operations Director, EPA Managers and Responsible Officer, which includes the overturning of assessment decisions where applicable

All stakeholders must understand where PAL has reasonable belief or evidence that any assessment decision is flawed or based on falsified evidence this will be notified to Ofqual as a potential or actual adverse effect.

How are results and awards issued?

Assessment reports will be uploaded to epaPRO (online platform utilised by PAL to manage EPA activities from registration to certification) by the IAs for the duration of the end-point assessment (which is timetabled, to fall within the prescribed assessment timeframe as detailed in the respective assessment plan). All reports are securely held in a dedicated apprentice folder and on completion of the last element of assessment and grading, the end-point assessment summary report and results are uploaded to epaPRO by the IA within 48 hours of the final assessment.

The reports will be accessed by the PAL quality team for quality assurance checks and confirmation of marking and grading, and accuracy of assessment reports produced, in accordance with our quality assurance policy. The quality team is responsible for ensuring the result of each assessment as undertaken by the apprentice reflects the level of attainment demonstrated by them.

Concerned parties will be kept advised of the stage of marking and certification progress via epaPRO using their log-in credentials. The PAL EPA manual and the EPASS team additionally provide guidance regarding result processing.

Once the successful and non-successful completions are confirmed and processed by the PAL quality team the epaPRO system is updated, and the EPA team will advise the Department for Education (DfE) of the outcome and the overall assessment grade via the dedicated portal.

The End-Point Assessment Lead and team (EPASS team) team have the responsibility for checking the correct outcomes are communicated to the DfE. DfE are responsible for the issue of the apprenticeship certificate based on the results information provided by PAL.

Unless the assessment plan stipulates otherwise (for example, a test must be passed before an apprentice can progress to other methods of assessment), assessment component results will not be issued prior to full completion and quality assurance taking place.

All final grade decisions will be recorded in epaPRO under the apprentice's name, with access limited to relevant and authorised PAL personnel and the relevant parties, which are the apprentice, employer and provider; it is important to note that all certificates are directed to the named employer unless PAL receives specific and valid instructions to change this. It is therefore essential that all stakeholders make sure PAL has current contact details on epaPRO. Incorrect information can delay not only assessments but the apprentice receiving their certificate.

PAL will not request a certificate for 15 working days post issuing the results, this provides sufficient time for interested parties to clarify, or enquire about results before formal notification to DfE Apprenticeship service

PAL will always endeavour to present results in the timescales agreed in our service level contracts with Providers and PAL will monitor the turnaround of results. In the event PAL cannot meet the stated timescales as indicated at the assessment planning meeting or in issued and agreed service level contracts, PAL will keep all parties involved in the required extension for time and the reasons for this. Please note where we have incorrect contact details, PAL is not responsible for any delays in certificate issue.

Third party access requests

To facilitate reviews/technical evaluations/ regulatory checks, PAL will grant time-bound access to named persons of external agencies. Where administration and access rights are required by the regulator or approved agencies, PAL's Responsible Officer in conjunction with PAL's Business Operations Director will confirm such access arrangements and inform the relevant PAL personnel to facilitate such requests.

Certification Requests

Professional Assessment Limited issues results to the DfE which will then issue the apprentice with an apprenticeship certificate, if they have been successful and met the minimum pass requirements, as stipulated in their prescribed assessment plan. For unsuccessful completions, PAL informs DfE of the grade via their portal.

For all certification requests and notification of results the following checks are made to ensure these are accurate:

- Name of the apprentice used on registration is the same name the apprentice declared they wish to be used on the certificate. Please note this must be the apprentices recognised name as stated at registration and on the ILR and epaPRO. (Please advise EPASS regarding any official name changes who will advise on evidence required to change records)

- Name of the employer/address for certification purposes.
- The correct standard and specialism where applicable.

PAL applies for apprenticeship certificate using two portals/systems. The two portals/systems are:

- Apprenticeship Assessment Service Portal – Named individuals to include EPASS team, EPA Managers and Business Operations Director have unique login credentials to the portal.
- epaPRO.

The EPASS team retain a record of certification application/numbers.

Apprentices are required to apply for their apprenticeship completion certificate (in accordance with the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009). The apprentice can specify that this be done, on their behalf, by a third party and therefore they must give PAL permission to apply for the certificate on their behalf.

Consent can be granted to PAL as part of the EPA planning meeting, or by submitting the PAL Apprentice Consent Form.

The apprenticeship certificate is sent to the apprentice's employer, unless there is a valid reason for sending the certificate to an alternative destination, such as a business closure, the apprentice being made redundant from the employer or has left their place of employment.

It is the responsibility of the DfE and associated agencies to issue certificates, and PAL can only provide general guidelines for certificate turnaround times and our records are of certification requests, as opposed to certificates issued.

In the case of missing or delayed certificates we will report such incidents to the apprenticeship assessment service/DfE and ascertain the delivery points and respond accordingly. In cases where businesses are closing or there is a real concern the apprentice may not receive their certificate, the EPASS team will review where the certificate is to be sent to.

The DfE can introduce and endorse assessment flexibilities across a range of apprenticeship standards and discretionary assessment allowances, pertaining to named and specific apprenticeship standards. PAL regularly checks for such updates to ensure that the relevant guidance is followed and assessment and awarding of assessment is aligned to contemporary guidance.

Results Statements

For successful completions, apprentices, employers and providers can access the results via their epaPRO account. The end-point assessment summary report can be downloaded from the system.

For unsuccessful completions, apprentices, and employers have the end-point assessment summary report emailed to them, which provides a commentary supporting grade outcome.

PAL will indicate whether a fail result indicates a resit or retake approach and advise relevant parties. The EPASS team will update epaPRO noting an apprentice has gone back into a period of teaching and learning and the DfE are notified via the portal.

The EPASS team will inform the apprentice, employer and provider of the next steps and gauge whether a period of re-training is required, or if a resit is possible within the assessment window, dependant on the specific requirements of the relevant assessment plan.

In the situation that PAL is unable to publish results due to PAL actions¹ within our stated timescale as detailed in our service level contracts and agreed at the assessment planning meeting, PAL will inform the relevant regulator in line with the relevant conditions.

Revoking Results

If situations arise that call into question the validity of an awarding decision, examples of which are:

- Via an appeal or an enquiry in accordance with our Appeals Policy, or our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- An error has been made and an apprentice has incorrectly been awarded, or not awarded, a qualification (standard) achievement
- A certificate can be revoked if the result on the certificate is false because of malpractice, maladministration, or it is revealed to be inaccurate because of an appeals process

PAL will apply its relevant policies to the situations above and the relevant governance reports will be updated accordingly for the purpose of regulatory bodies' notification and self-evaluation activities. Any results revoked will also be recorded, with reasons for any decision provided.

Where PAL determines any actions associated with the requirement to revoke a result, has the potential to cause an adverse effect, or has caused an adverse effect, PAL's responsible officer the or the deputy responsible Officer² will be notified, and they will report to the regulatory body. PAL expects and requires the full co-operation of involved parties, where it is necessary to undertake an investigation to ascertain the full facts that led to need to revoke a result, in accordance with regulatory conditions.

In the situation where the initial investigation indicates others could have been affected PAL will undertake a full review and report to the relevant regulator.

In the case of flawed assessment please also refer to PAL's grading and marking policy. PAL will look to correct and amend any results, where a result and grade has been affected by a flawed assessment.

Sanctions

A sanction can be applied against an organisation, site, individual provider or employer personnel or an individual apprentice or in combination. Taking a decision to apply such sanctions is not taken lightly.

PAL reserves the right to place sanctions on any of the above where it is necessary to safeguard the integrity of assessment outcomes and apprenticeship standards and to protect its interests and that of the learner/apprentice and other stakeholders.

Where sanctions are applied, they must be complied with and any agreed resolutions and action plans for improvements should be addressed within the agreed timescales. Sanctions will remain in place until PAL can be assured that the issues identified have been appropriately resolved and systems and processes are in place to avoid such reoccurrences of the event or omission.

For further information please refer to PAL's sanction policy.

Data Security

EPA Managers and the EPASS Lead and EPA team are responsible for access arrangements to epaPRO and assessment evidence and reports, creating accounts and logins for new IAs and inactivating accounts for staff members that do not complete EPA activities. Such tasks are completed on a demand basis and reviewed regularly.

¹ Where a delay in certification is due to other parties to include DfE, PAL will monitor this, dependent on the delay and impact PAL reserves the right to make this an event notification to Ofqual or the relevant regulator. Where details on epaPRO have not been updated, any delays to certification are a result of third-party systems and processes, persistent occurrences will be judged as maladministration by PAL

² In the absence of the RO and DRO, a member of PAL's events notification and regulation team can report to Ofqual

Any breach of data security is recorded in accordance with PAL's data protection and privacy policy and confidentiality policy. PAL's Business Operations Director and Director of Audit and Compliance review our data collection and storage protocols, to ensure we only collect the data we require to discharge our services. All assessment records are kept for a period of six years, as required by the relevant regulatory bodies.

Access to epaPRO is only granted to an employer or provider once a service level contract has been signed and received by PAL. The Business Operations Director or EPA Managers will inform the EPASS team of client details and the EPASS team will provide the provider and/or employer with an epaPRO login and user guidance.

Apprentices are identified through their ULN (unique learner number) and name. The apprentice's personal data is required to undertake administration and assessment in relation to the EPA for which the apprentice is registered. When collecting personal data or sensitive personal data, providers must ensure that the information they provide regarding data protection is, at all times, accurate and compliant with any Data Protection Laws.

Confidentiality of Assessments Contents

PAL treats all end-point assessments in the same way as 'live' exam material and as such what we will share with apprentices, employers or providers is guided by the following Ofqual conditions of recognition.

PAL draws upon Ofqual conditions- regardless of whether or not it is an Ofqual EPA standard

- **Condition G4 links to maintaining the confidentiality of assessment material and requires us to take all reasonable steps to ensure that such confidentiality is maintained. This condition includes the restriction of sharing such materials with prohibited training parties, which will include providers, employers, and apprentices**

Whilst we appreciate employers, providers and apprentices are not asking for copies of our assessment materials, such as a copy of the Multiple-Choice Question Test paper an apprentice would complete, the nature of such assessments like Professional Discussions, which include IAs using internally devised assessment materials and or stem questions from our developed question banks put these assessments into this category. PAL will not provide access to full recordings of assessments, even where the request is made, with the only intention of enhancing a provider or employer's training and development offer for their apprenticeship programme, or in the support of an individual apprentice resitting or retaking an assessment.

In respect of sharing assessment recordings, PAL has to consider how the sharing of such assessment recordings could therefore lead a stakeholder to build up a sufficient bank of our stem questions for assessments such as professional discussions, presentation/ project question and answer assessments, which would therefore impact predictability of assessments, which in turn could result in an adverse impact on one or more apprentices.

PAL will provide apprentices with a generic professional discussion/ interview agenda to aid professional discussion preparation; no individualised professional discussion agendas will be shared with apprentices, employers or providers in advance of the professional discussion.

PAL has an appeals and enquiry policy and process in place that supports an enquiry or appeal to be where interested, and relevant parties legitimately perceive that an apprentice's assessment has not been conducted in an unfair or biased fashion. PAL is not in a position to modify, or alter the assessment requirements, to include grading and mark schemes as stipulated in an assessment plan.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed as a minimum on a yearly basis

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; Arrangements with Centres C2; Compliance of qualifications with regulatory documents D5; Maintaining confidentiality of assessment materials G4; Results for a qualification H5; issuing results H6.

Condition EPA1 Compliance with Assessment Plans and gateway requirements. Condition EPA3 Notification to Ofqual of certain events in relation to EPAs.

Date created: 6th June 2018

Last review: 31st January 2025

Next review: 31st January 2026

Person Responsible for Review: Business Operations Director

This Policy has been agreed by Linda Martin, Managing Director