

UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM

FAIR ACCESS POLICY

FOR APPRENTICESHIP END-POINT ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

The University of Buckingham acting as an apprenticeship End Point Assessment Organisation, is required to deliver an independent, objective assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the relevant Apprenticeship Standard. This is intended to ensure the integrity of Apprenticeship delivery and the achievement of the associated Apprenticeship award and any component qualifications

The University has developed this Apprenticeship End-Point Assessment Fair Access Policy, with respect to Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeship provision it may deliver directly, deliver via supporting provider arrangements, or for which it validates any element of a Standard, through franchise or other such arrangements.

Where such delivery arrangements exist they will be compliant with current requirements of the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Office for Students (OfS) and Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's relevant Quality Handbooks and other guidance and policy materials linked to its provision of Apprenticeship Standards. The University's Handbooks outline its frameworks, policies, procedures and guidance for the setting and maintenance of academic standards and the quality and enhancement of student's learning opportunities. They provide key information, procedures, regulations, templates and forms for prospective and current students, and members of staff.

This policy is also referenced to the University's Access and Participation Statement, as required by the OfS:

<https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/policies/access-and-widening-participation>).

FAIR ACCESS POLICY PRINCIPLES & PURPOSE

Fair Access is a principle around ensuring that all learners have an equal chance of success, by putting in place appropriate reasonable adjustments. The adjustments must not advantage the candidate nor affect the integrity of an end point assessment conducted by the University of Buckingham or any of its staff or contracted independent end-point assessors delivering EPA on its behalf.

This aim of this policy is to set out principles which clarify the expectations on all parties in support of fair access procedures. All apprentices and potential apprentices should be able to enter and successfully participate in an apprenticeship programme and end-point assessment in pursuit of their learning objectives.

The University is committed to ensuring that it and any approved end-point assessment venues including those operated by its partners, provide apprentices with all relevant information about the apprenticeship and the end-point assessment.

This policy confirms the University's intention to deliver an EPA service and a range of apprenticeship qualifications that are fair, accessible and do not include any unnecessary barriers to entry.

MANAGEMENT & STAFFING COMMITMENT

The University will ensure that its fair access policy and related procedures operate effectively ensuring fair access in practice to End-point Assessment (EPA) for apprentices on Apprenticeships delivered directly by the University and those delivered by partners utilising the University as an end-point assessment organisation.

The University's senior management and Apprenticeships Leads and Schools involved with delivering Apprenticeship Standards and / or End-Point Assessment, will ensure that processes and procedures are managed effectively and that they are in place to practically enable fair access.

All University staff and any partner or contracted staff involved in EPA, will be required to keep up to date with training in EPA and with respect to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The University's Academic Services Department will be responsible for ensuring that all staff and academic Schools within scope of this policy are aware of its requirements.

It is important that staff involved in the delivery of apprenticeship qualifications and on- programme assessment are fully aware of the contents of the policy. Partners and host venues responsible for facilitating end-point assessment, must ensure that they adhere to the requirements of this policy.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All Apprentices that are registered with the University and any of its Schools for their EPA including, those with protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act.
- University staff delivering any aspect of an Apprenticeship EPA.
- University partners and their staff delivering or facilitating any part of an EPA.
- Contracted Independent End-Point Assessors utilised by the University to support and provide capacity for its EPA activities.
- Providers of venues where EPA might take place in part or fully.
- EPA administrators and other staff that may be involved in the development, communications and delivery of EPA.
- Any advisory staff, consultants or partners working with the University in any capacity linked to oversight, monitoring or quality assurance and quality improvement of the EPA services provided by the University.

POLICY DIRECTIVES

In enacting fair access the relevant policy directives are to:

1. Ensure that every University approved end-point assessment location has and implements the fair access policy for the delivery and facilitation of end-point assessments.
2. Ensure that all end-point assessments are developed to be representative of the apprentices registered with the University for EPA.
3. Ensure that there are no features of EPA that could disadvantage any apprentices that have a particular protected characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the EPA or the apprenticeship achievement and any qualifications that form part of the Standard.
4. Ensure the nature of any such features or barriers will be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified in terms why they are required for the particular EPA.
5. Ensure fairness in the application of all access arrangements for EPA.
6. Ensure that apprentices with a protected characteristic are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in EPAs in comparison to apprentices who do not share that characteristic.

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7. Ensure that all achievement in EPA is comparable.
8. Ensure that adequate monitoring and review of equality and diversity throughout the process of developing and delivering EPA services.
9. Ensure that the University considers all access requests relating to EPA that are received, except where acceptance of the request is not logistically possible or where acceptance would undermine the reliability or integrity of the assessment.
10. Enable collection and analysis of monitoring data related to apprentice achievement in order to detect and mitigate against any accidental bias.
11. Ensure that all approved EPA centres / venues are fulfilling their fair access responsibilities by adhering to equality legislation and operating a fair access procedure and / or complying with the this policy.
12. Ensure specific and appropriate duties are carried out in respect of implementing the fair access policy into the work objectives of all staff, examiners and independent end-point assessors involved in the delivery of EPA.
13. Ensure equality training and guidance as appropriate is provided to the University's staff and contractors, including as part of induction training as well as further on-going training or CPD.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT EXAMPLES

Reasonable Adjustments may be unique to the individual and may not be included in the list of available adjustments listed below. Reasonable adjustments may include the following, but others may be applicable depending upon the needs of the Apprentice:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Computer reader/reader
- Read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen Scribe/Speech recognition technology
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Oral Language ModiLer
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Practical assistant
- Alternative site for the conduct of examinations.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled apprentice;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

As the needs and circumstances of each apprentice are different, a request for a reasonable adjustment is done on a case by case basis. The University expects provision of evidence of need before it agrees or take steps to make the necessary adjustments or modifications. The University aims to do this at least six weeks before an assessment.

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS

Where complaints relating to issues of fair access cannot be satisfactorily resolved, apprentices must be made aware of their right to appeal to the University via the applicable current arrangements outlined in its Complaints and Appeals Policy.

POLICY OWNERSHIP

This Policy is owned by: Chris Payne, Director of Academic Services

Review Date: July 2020