

# Education and Training Foundation

Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment Programme

## Apprenticeship Standards

A Practitioner Research Project led by AIM Awards Assessment  
into the Preparation and Delivery of End Point Assessments in  
the Creative Industries

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### **1. The Research Questions**

As the first end point assessments were being delivered for a range of Standards in the creative industries, we began our research by formulating some key questions that would enable us to consider ways that apprentices, employers, providers and the EPAO and its assessors could effectively prepare for the new 'high stakes' approach to the assessment of an apprenticeship:

- Do training providers understand the change in their role in the transition from Frameworks?
- What is the employer impression of End Point Assessment in practice?
- To what extent have employers felt involved in supporting their apprentices to achieve the Gateway point of readiness for assessment?
- Have the Assessment Plans proved effective? What have been the challenges?
- How have the Assessment Plans been interpreted by providers and the End Point Assessment Organisation?
- What is the Apprentice experience of End Point Assessment?
- How can the experience of End Point Assessment in practice inform the writing of future Standards and Assessment Plans?

## 2.Context of the research questions – apprenticeship policy, apprenticeship practice and organisation.

2.1 It is important to note that this is a report that focuses on one specific industry sector, rather than engaging in a comparative study, and reflects on the experience of one End Point Assessment Organisation. That having been said, it is a broad sector. In 2016 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defined the creative and cultural industries as ‘those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’. This includes: advertising and marketing; architecture; crafts; product, graphic and fashion design; languages, literature and culture; marketing and sales; media and communication; publishing and information services.

A 2018 Research Report into good practice in Level 4 and 5 qualifications, carried out by CooperGibson Research for the DfE noted

‘... the need for individuals to develop a broad skills base in technical areas, marketing and promotion, business and digital technologies as well as specific specialisms such as performance. This therefore allows for more transferability across the sector’

With a focus on the creative industries, then, led by AIM Awards Assessment as a specialist creative and cultural industries End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), the principal objective of this Project has been to investigate and consider how End Point Assessments (EPAs) are working in practice for the first set of Standards approved for delivery in this industry sector. With the aim of identifying areas that can be considered to contribute to the journey towards excellence, this research has been conducted with the ethos of an honest assessment of current practice. There is a tacit recognition that this practice can still only be developing EPA in apprenticeships is an entirely new concept and as we began our research only approximately 5,000 end point assessments had place taken nationally across all sectors. Many Standards require well over the required minimum 12-month training period and our sample of completed EPAs considered in this research is therefore necessarily small.

2.2 The first honest admission that should be accepted is that there was little sector wide, substantive formal testing or trial of the proposed EPA process before launch of the first live apprenticeships. A small-scale mock end point assessment project undertaken in 2017 by the Association of Colleges on behalf of the ETF Future Apprenticeships Programme set out with the objective to

‘test and trial apprenticeship EPA activity considering a range of areas such as the resources used by End-Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs), the consistency of grading by Independent Assessors (IAs), and so on. The purpose of the research was to gain a greater understanding of what leads to an effective EPA experience for all stakeholders and to share these findings prior to the major roll out of EPA across all apprenticeship standard delivery.’

There was a recognition that

‘Although the original intent was to use ‘live’ EPAs, it became clear that this would prove to be too disruptive for those involved. As EPA is a new process there was also an understandable level of reticence amongst those leading the way to put themselves ‘under the microscope’.

Our Research Project, then, whilst relatively small and focused on one specific industry sector, grasps that nettle and is based entirely on live EPAs and evaluates practice in addition to considering in more detail the inter-relationships between apprentice, assessor, employer, provider and the process/ operational systems. It has been funded through an Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) Project grant administered Education & Training Foundation (ETF) as a practitioner led project rather than the Institute for Apprenticeships specifically commissioning evaluative research.

At the completion point of this research project the number of completed end point assessments was as follows:

Standard	Total Number of Completed Assessments	Fail Grade Percentage	Pass Grade Percentage	Distinction Grade Percentage	Not Yet Graded Percentage
Junior Content Producer	73		36%	59%	5%
Broadcast Production Assistant	66		68%	30%	2%
Assistant Technical Director - VFX	5		80%	20%	
Junior 2D Artist - VFX	5	40%		60%	
<b>Overall Completed</b>	<b>149</b>				

A further 37 apprentices were registered and approaching Gateway across these Standards with an additional 24 on the recently approved Public Relations & Communications Assistant Standard.

2.2 At the outset of our research we identified some important considerations:

- The process and practice of EPA is still relatively new for all stakeholders involved in our project.

- Four of the Standards that feature in this Report were developed relatively early on in the Government introduction of the new Apprenticeships [Assistant Technical Director (Visual Effects), Junior 2D Artist (Visual Effects), Junior Content Producer and Broadcast Production Assistant]. There has been an acknowledgement by the IFA that,  
“some of those early assessment plans are not great, because people didn’t really understand what they were doing” and the Institute is “learning from those early assessments.” [Gerry Branagan at the 2018 Federation of Awarding Bodies Annual Conference 2018]
- The Junior 2D Artist and Assistant Technical Director are the first formal apprenticeships for the visual effects industry in a sector that more traditionally recruits new entrants from higher education.
- Creative industries do not conform to regular patterns of work ie short term contracts dictated by production schedules, freelance and ‘out of hours’ working is the norm, therefore may be potential challenges for some of the assessment methods and assessment scheduling as well as being able to guarantee contracts of the required minimum length of 12 months. In practice contracts need to be longer than this to build in the potential for re-sits/re-takes of EPA.
- Products / services generated by the creative industries are founded on intellectual property. The makers / creators and business owners have a subtly different relationship to their business product / service than other sectors. This influences not only how they think about entry level talent recruitment and development because they have a greater need to ‘trust’ new talent to treat their creative product / service with the consideration they think it needs but also presents issues of commercial confidentiality during the EPA process. Hence their willingness and ability to understand apprenticeship Standard philosophy and practice may be less than that of other sectors where apprenticeships are the norm. Were in not for the requirement to pay the Levy, it is quite likely that, for some employers, there would be a reluctance to engage.
- There are very few people with the level of industry experience and teaching/ assessment experience to deliver end point assessments.
- The creative industries infrastructure is full of gaps with very few clearly established progression pathways and, as yet, very few apprenticeship Standards. This may have a tendency for an apprenticeship Standard to be a ‘best fit’ rather than an ‘ideal match’.
- There are a wide range of job roles/ contexts for some of the Standards even within the creative industries.

### 3.The Project team – participants and their roles

Name	Job Title	Research role
Karen Hedger	Business & Relationship Lead, Creative & Cultural Industries, AIM Awards Assessment	Lead Researcher
Martina Porter	Director, All Spring Media	Direct participant - case study and video producer [Output]
Andy Freedman	Freelance Consultant	Direct participant – case study
Noel Dunne	Director, Creative Alliance	Direct participant – case study
Kathryn Taylor	Development Coach, Creative Alliance	Direct participant – case study
Sam Williams	Development Coach, Creative Alliance	Direct participant – case study
Alison Haynes	Development Coach, Creative Alliance	Direct participant – case study
Kathryn Geraghty	Education Manager, National Theatre	Direct participant – research planning
Amy Smith	Head of HR, Framestore	Direct participant – research planning and VFX Evaluation
Simon Broad	Head of Operations and Development, New Talent Team, BBC Academy	Direct participant – research planning and Broadcast Production Assistant Evaluation

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Gathering the data.

We devised a Research Questions Matrix of parallel questions for end point assessment stakeholders – employers, providers, apprentices, the EPAO (from an EPA management perspective) and its end point assessors [see Appendices]

Creative industries employer representatives interviewed or taking part in seminars:

Bauer Media, BBC, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, BILD, Clarke Associates, Corsham Institute, Double Negative, Framestore, Icon Films, Immediate Media, Institute for Practitioners in Advertising, Lexhag, National Theatre, The Mill, The Royal Shakespeare Company Wolfgang Media.

Training Providers involved in the seminars, interviews and evaluations:

All Spring Media, Bauer Media, Cirencester College, Creative Alliance, Creative Process Digital, Nescot, Outsource Training, PRCA, Uxbridge College.

We determined that interviewers should not necessarily feel bound by the questions but could interpret and use as a stimulus to discussion as appropriate to the individual stakeholder group and context. For example, some interviews were conducted on a one to one or 3 three - way basis with individual employers and apprentices, others formed part of a seminar for groups of apprentices and their employers or training provider(s). The questions centred on how prepared for the EPA people felt and also, where assessments had taken place, how they had found the process and whether achievement had been as expected. Questions were grouped under 5 broad headings:

- *Understanding of end point assessment* - we were keen to discover the extent to which stakeholders were aware of the principle of end point assessment and their understanding of the distinctive roles of provider, employer and EPAO. What did they feel they needed to understand about end point assessment and who could, or was, supplying them with that information and/or guidance? Were they aware of the notion and guiding principle of ‘high stakes assessment’?
- *Preparation for end point assessment*. We wanted to ascertain how early in the apprenticeship journey, employers, apprentices and their training provider were aware of the assessment methodologies identified in individual Standard Assessment Plans. How prepared were apprentices feeling and to what extent and what type of support did their employers and providers need from the EPAO? What were the general levels of confidence in the process and the

potential of apprentices to achieve of their best? How were employers and providers working together to agree apprentice readiness for Gateway? What was the relationship between employer, provider and EPAO and how prepared did assessors themselves feel approaching EPA for the first time, what support/information did they need to ensure best practice in assessment?

- *Delivery of the end point assessment.* To what extent were employers/providers present on assessment days? Did providers feel the need to provide pastoral support? Were employers/providers taking part in any of the assessment activities where permitted/required to do so? How comfortable did apprentices feel during the EPA process and was it as they expected? Did anything specific inhibit or enhance their experience? How difficult did they find each of the assessments and were there any specific problems? We wanted to compare the experience of apprentices with that of their assessors asking their views on the most and least successful aspects of the EPA delivery and what they would change in the future. How well prepared did they think the apprentices were?
- *Outcome of the end point assessment.* The key question for employers was, of course, did any apprentices fail who they have or would consider employing nevertheless? We were also interested in the significance to employers and apprentices of the grade obtained and whether there was any difference as to what might have been expected. We were interested to learn from providers the extent to which the performance of apprentices was as they expected and the extent to which they felt that any sample papers/ guidance produced by the EPAO had contributed to enabling them to successfully support their apprentices to be Gateway ready. Were they confident that they had made the right judgement about apprentices being ready for Gateway in respect of any fail grades?
- *EPAO processes.* We wanted to consider the extent to which administrative processes are a factor in a successful end to end to end experience of EPA for apprentices, employers and providers including the amount/timing of issue/format of guidance and sample EPA papers. How much information does the EPAO need about the context of the apprentice job role to effectively prepare assessment tasks and when is it needed? Where should the main administrative relationship lie i.e. between EPAO and provider or employer?

In formulating our questions we were also aware of the benefit that our research could have on the development of future Assessment Plans and the importance it could have as a means of providing feedback to Trailblazer groups on the success of their Assessment Plans – posing questions of whether the EPAO interpretation and articulation of assessment methodologies was in line with the original vision of the Trailblazer Groups and whether practice would suggest amendment when the Plan comes to Review.



Interview summaries between provider, employer and apprentices and in seminar/workshops are given in the Case Studies at Appendices 1-4. Findings are also included in relevant paragraphs throughout this Report. The Questions Matrix is at Appendix 6.

### c. Evaluating and measuring impact

This is the first research report of its kind into the process and practice of End Point Assessment and represents more of an activity to put down a marker for subsequent research, something against which research in, say, a year's time and once more EPAs have been completed and can be effectively measured. That having been said, during the lifetime of this Project, participants have already identified areas where good practice activities could be launched and tested and there has been a general consensus of opinion that the very undertaking of the research has itself resulted in a very welcome opportunity to expand the reach of awareness of employers about the new model of apprenticeships as well as a vehicle for practitioner self-assessment. Specific impacts as they relate to direct and indirect participants are identified in more detail in Paragraph 7 below.

## 5. Research Outcomes

### 5.1 Understanding end point assessment

We identified key areas of shared uncertainty around the nature of end point assessment articulated through very similar questions raised by each of the stakeholders:

- Will the assessor understand the apprentice's job? [employer, provider and apprentice]
- What are the credentials of the assessor? [employer and provider]
- What happens if I don't understand what the assessor is asking me? [apprentice]
- What happens if I have done really well in my job but I perform badly in the assessment? [apprentice]
- What if my job doesn't require me ever to pitch an idea or give a presentation? [apprentice]
- What format does the professional discussion take? [provider and employer]
- What happens if the assessor and I don't get on?

In essence, then, the questions raised, and the uncertainty expressed related to the conduct of the EPA in practice – what it would 'look' and 'feel' like. Given that there was very little in the way

of experience to go on in these early days, this is not, perhaps, surprising and, in fact, some of these questions were also raised by the assessors themselves in the preparatory EPAO Assessor training for each of the Standards. For providers, used to supporting apprentices in a developmental process, no longer being involved in assessment and having to part company with their apprentices at the Gateway was causing some trepidation about the whole concept of EPA despite the acceptance that the assessment methodologies were well aligned with the Standard and well suited to the particular nature of the creative industries. They were worried that the new system of a harsh EPA might not offer the space for encouragement and support.

‘It’s about getting the balance right between managing expectations for apprentices entering a sector where one is likely to hear ‘no’ far more times than ‘yes’ as it’s a sector based on auditions, pitches, applications etc. and to survive, there is an element of skin thickening that has to occur, with ensuring that those who haven’t had the opportunities to develop the confidence in their own abilities are not stymied so early on in their careers that they never get onto the climbing frame. From a widening diversity and inclusion angle a more supportive and encouraging approach is required.’

A key issue for employers is whether an end point high stakes test is really appropriate for the more organic nature of some aspects of the creative industries.

‘In this industry we don’t test right or wrong so the nature of an end point assessment is at odds. We recruit on the basis of a portfolio, a showcase reel, so this is unfamiliar ground.’

It has been crucially important to the EPAO that its assessors are drawn directly from industry and that the assessments themselves are created also by industry experts.

VFX Assessor

‘What I would worry about is that we have to be really careful that the assessment doesn’t have a life of its own – it has to resemble what we would naturally do on the job.’

‘Assessment tools shouldn’t be a barrier to whether the apprentice can do the job’

## 5.2 Preparation for end point assessment

For the majority of the employers taking part in this research project, the EPA is still an unknown quantity and, particularly where they have an already strong relationship with providers delivering old Framework apprenticeships, some expressed a keenness to rely on the provider to provide all the information necessary to help them prepare for the EPA.

Provider

‘all parties [ apprentice and employer] only know and feel as confident as the training provider does.’

‘I’m meeting apprentices hired for their technical and creative skills. They all communicate effectively with colleagues as a necessity, but some will still find presentations to a stranger in a pressured situation challenging. Being challenged is fine, but we’ll rely on the skill of the Assessors to ensure that issues around presentation don’t outweigh other achievements.’

That having been said, there was at a minimum, an acceptance that as the EPA drew closer, there would be a need for closer involvement with the EPAO in terms of assessment scheduling.

‘We are a working theatre so we need to know well in advance what the requirements will be and what we need to put in place.’

Generally, employers understood the rationale for the move from Frameworks to Standards but there were varying views on the relevance of grading.

‘a good thing for the apprentices to be able to be proud of what they have achieved in their apprenticeship.’

‘appreciate the grading –pass and distinction –to drive up quality, so that it is, not just about getting by.’

‘for me a pass is just about scraping through, distinction is performing almost perfectly to a very high standard’.

Where employers had been giving more considered thought to the EPA, there was more concern expressed about the conduct of the assessments.

#### Employers

'...not clear about how it would work to have someone observing [our apprentice] dealing with a customer in the office as the observation part of EPA. [She] 'would like more ideas about how this has been done before.'

'During an EP Assessor visit it is impossible to predict the nature of the queries coming in: other learners could be in the office or a member of the team could be dealing with something confidential. Also concerned that our apprentice could have done great job on programme but this might not be reflected on the day of the observation, because of the stresses of being observed by a stranger.'

#### Trade Body

'It was only being involved in helping a Trailblazer write an EPA and with the IfA Fast Track process that we got to grips with what was feasible to use as assessment methods. Sometimes we were surprised that their progress was not monitored throughout the months of the learning; and only relaxed about that when a portfolio was included in the methods.'

Apprentices were generally uncertain and confused but clear about what they thought they need.

#### Apprentices two months into programme

'In terms of the assessment it's still very vague about what I'm supposed to be doing just in terms of preparation. I know there is a document explaining it but it needs to be more visible, in front of you all the time. Perhaps in the corner of OneFile so it's constantly reminding you of what you're working towards because at the end of the day that's going to be the make or break isn't it'. An introduction and FAQ and maybe perhaps some examples of interview questions. Some things that are going to happen on the four-day assessment.

'At the moment I don't see how the projects link to the end-point assessment and it would be nice to know if there are specific questions in the interview'

### 5.3 Delivery of the end point assessment

Whilst the directive nature and purpose of the Assessment Plan is necessarily the ultimate point of reference for the EPAO as it designs and produces assessment tasks and supporting guidance materials, experience of delivering EPAs is exposing the significance of the context of the apprentice job role. This is having a concomitant impact on the appointment of assessors and allocation to specific apprentices with the recognition that, in addition to occupational competence in a given industry area relevant to a Standard, the assessor needs to have a good understanding of the apprentice's work context if they are to gain the employer and apprentice confidence of a fair EPA. It also raises questions about the extent to which assessment tasks themselves are contextualized or designed to be sufficiently broad so as to fit all workplace scenarios. Financial considerations, of course, come into play here as, already, it is clear that as funding bands are reduced for most of the new Standards as they become 'live', the financial challenges for EPAOs are significant.

#### Public Relations & Communications Assistant

The initial Trailblazer development for this Standard covered Public Relations Assistant as a distinct occupation. During the approval process this Trailblazer group was asked to incorporate, also, Communications Assistant. Whilst it is true that there are skills that are transferable between the two, in practice there are at least 3 distinct contexts that we had to consider during this period of research alone – public relations agency, internal communications assistant in creative industries and communications assistant in a public sector context. With a multiple choice exam as one of the assessment types, it has proven a particular challenge not only in respect of the cost of material development but for providers and employers to understand the importance that apprentices do have the breadth of learning about different contexts and have gained knowledge and skills beyond what their regular work entails. The 100% requirement for knowledge, skills and behaviour coverage in the workplace project has proven an additional challenge where apprentices will not, in a live and realistic piece of work, be able to demonstrate all skills. Initial close working with employer types to understand context whilst developing assessment materials was found to be of crucial importance.

#### Junior Content Producer

Of the 110 EPAs delivered or with registered apprentices approaching Gateway during the period of research, job roles were largely marketing focused but also included graphic design, photography and digital learning. Contexts ranged from large multi-media organisations such as Bauer Media (an employer/provider), broadcasters including ITV, SKY, Channel 4, large

publishing houses such as Haymarket but also large companies and SMEs employing apprentices in creative roles not in a creative industry – travel agent, schools, asset management, healthcare, service based industries, a garage and several local authorities. It is worthy of note that providers and employers are expressing their intent to move to this Standard in the future from Digital Marketer where the Assessment Plan with its requirement or a vendor coding qualification is proving not contextually appropriate for job role.

During the EPAO evaluation of the delivery process, there was a general consensus amongst the assessors that a greater understanding of the apprentice's specific job would be helpful to their own preparation for the EPA.

#### 5.4 Outcome of the end point assessment

Given the issues described in the paragraphs above, and the intention that EPA should be 'high stakes,' it is not surprising that the situation did occur, during our research period, that apprentices failed the EPA but were considered sufficiently competent and useful to the employer to be offered a permanent contract nevertheless.

Visual Effects - Apprenticeships are new to the visual effects industry and employers were very keen to review the outcome of the EPAs in detail and with a great deal of honesty.

'Our apprentice failed because [they] didn't have experience of Python but he is a good employee. We needed more mock papers which would have identified this requirement and we could have helped – we had no idea. Only failure brought it to light. Now the whole team is supporting – we felt we had let our apprentice down.'

'The provider's delivery [of the 20% off site learning] was hampered by the lack of anyone who really understood what was going on day to day in the workplace.'

'Now we have sample papers from the EPAO, it will be easier to monitor our apprentices.'

'We recognise that we need to involve line managers more. Some apprentices were not really ready for Gateway, this might have been exposed if there had been greater line manager involvement. Who takes responsibility for educating the line managers, though? They see the apprentice doing the job they want them to and therefore assume they must be Gateway ready'.

Evaluations identified generally positive views towards grading but there was a recognition of the challenges of stakeholder interpretation of the Assessment Plan during the EPAO standardization and quality review processes. Assessors were keen to explore potential ways of improving their delivery of the EPAs through self- assessment and a shared critique of the way in which the EPAO presented assessment tasks to the apprentice.

#### Employers

‘We shouldn’t diminish the value of a pass, one of our apprentices who was awarded a pass was given a promotion into a lead role in his job in visual effects’

‘..it was good to have grading, it offers the opportunity for stretch and challenge’

#### EPAO

It was agreed that the numeric grade system on the Assessment Plan was less significant than the criterion-based system written into the tasks. The EPAO felt that an arbitrary number could not be mapped to a set of knowledge, skill and behaviour measures, and this would be fed back to the Trailblazer Group.’

‘Fuller definition is required around the interpretation of the Project; there is a need for clarity of shared understanding between employer, the provider and how we, as the EPAO, have interpreted the Assessment Plan’.

#### Assessors

‘Most of the apprentices have been trained to use mobile devices to capture video, image and audio. This limited their ability to achieve the distinction grades in a number of criteria.’

‘Creating a guide of what, as assessors, we can and can’t do, perhaps creating questions that the employer or training provider can ask to best guide the apprentice with an indication of responses that would be pass and distinction.’

## 6. Practical Outputs

The primary objective of our research project at the outset was to produce this document which could be used as a discussion paper on the implications of the new End Point Assessment process for Apprenticeships in the creative and cultural industries. As such, we had, at the beginning not identified any specific tangible outputs to be produced during the lifetime of the research.

However, our activities have generated opportunities to produce two artefacts and a series of case studies:

1. A video recording featuring, and produced by, apprentices on the Broadcast Production Standard [ Appendix 5]. This features BBC apprentices talking about the process and practice of EPA and suggest hints and tips for future apprentices as they prepare for their own EPA. The video has been recorded on the set of *The One Show* We think this will be

useful for apprentices preparing for any Standard across the creative industries and, hopefully, prove equally relevant for other sectors.

2. A questionnaire 'Framing the Questions Towards Defining the Characteristics of 'Outstanding' End Point Assessment. This is our research questionnaire that we devised at the beginning of our project and which has been used in face to face and telephone interviews with employers, in workshops with groups of apprentices and in EPA formal reviews. The intention is that it is used as a stimulus for conversations and should be used with a free-flow approach in order not to be restrictive. It can be adapted for use with stakeholders either at the EPA preparatory and/ or evaluation/review stage and, we think, could be a useful aid to measure/record distance travelled.
3. Case Studies are attached as appendices to this Report.

## 7.Evidence of Impact

### 7.1 Impact on Direct Participants

The impact of the research on the direct participants has been to offer the opportunity to revise and extend action plans and to enable a deeper understanding of the difference in stakeholder roles in terms of teaching and assessment. It has offered a lens through which to identify the importance of the relationship between employer, provider and EPAO that can lead to an informed and shared understanding of how the EPAO has interpreted the Assessment Plan and the relevance/impact of the apprentice's work context to that understanding.

#### EPAO

'In addition to our Expression of Interest Form currently sent to enquiring providers, we will be creating an employer engagement /assessment preparation questionnaire to employers as soon as we know they have apprentices. This will include probing a little more into context, things we need to be aware of, why they have chosen the particular standard etc. This will be a document provided to the assessor for contextual information/background to the employing organization to support their own preparation for the apprentice's end point assessment.'

'It's important that the EPAO shares its interpretation of the Assessment Plan with both employer and provider at an early date and, commercial considerations apart, shares resources such as guides and sample papers as soon as possible. Waiting until apprentices are formally registered at a three to four-month period before Gateway is too late. Early preparation is a key factor on the journey to an outstanding result at EPA. Listening to what apprentices are saying they need is informing the content and format of the guidance we produce'



### Training Providers

‘The insights gained from dialogue with employers have been extremely valuable, being in research mode as distinct from the context of a specific apprentice. Consequently, I have been better equipped to indicate the most suitable sources of information for potential employers and to anticipate better, a number of potential concerns around the EPA.’

‘From a leadership perspective, the involvement has developed a deeper understanding of what I need to put into place to support delivery staff in the transition from an assessment led model to a teaching and learning led model. It is particularly useful to have employer and learner perspectives informing this.’

‘As a consequence, we have been able to develop plans and strategies for new apprentices to make the progression to EPA less stressful and easily to understand from the outset. We start EPA preparation with employers from before recruitment, alerting them to the importance of the Assessment plan.’

‘It’s made me think about the language I use, both with the apprentices and employers. I know am conscious about explaining the process in as work-friendly a way as possible.’

‘It’s definitely heightened my awareness at how little information is available about the End Point Assessment process and how as Development Coaches we almost have a duty to find out as much as we can for our learners. It’s also made me realise we need to be proactive in obtaining this information rather than passive and hoping it will filter through to us.’

### Assessor

‘It is as vital that assessors are as prepared for the EPA as the apprentice as they are instrumental in ensuring that the apprentice has the best shot possible at scoring well’.

## 7.2 Impact on Indirect Participants

Approximately 120 individuals, in addition to the project team, across stakeholder groups have been made aware of this Report and have contributed to it in some way.

## 8. Key Models Towards Outstanding Practice in End Point Assessment

In these comparatively early days of delivering end point assessments in the creative industries we can, realistically, only suggest the direction of activity towards achieving outstanding practice in

end-point assessment. Much of this report has necessarily been concerned with how stakeholders are preparing for end point assessment and a growing understanding by the EPAO as to how they can best be supportive whilst retaining the required objectivity. Nevertheless, there are some areas and particular activities that, as a result of our questioning approach to this research project are suggestive of the way forward. Some of these are actual, others are included here as actions and recommendations to take forward.

*8.1 Mapping the Training Curriculum to the Assessment Plan – All Spring Media, the National Theatre and the BBC.* The BBC highlighted concerns about whether the training prepared for the test or prepared for the job. To this end, the provider contextualised on-programme formative assessments to “feel” more industry like or be completed within the workplace. They also developed a strong culture of reflection, allowing the apprentices to review their work and identify for themselves the distance they had travelled.

*8.2 Early EPAO engagement with employers to support understanding of the EPA, any requirements for their participation and to enable them to best support their apprentices and also to ensure that assessments and assessors are contextually appropriate.* AIM Awards Assessment is developing an employer engagement and evaluation process that will comprise personal contact and a two part questionnaire for the employer to complete; Part 1 will focus on preparing the employer for their apprentice’s EPA and Part 2 will take the format of an evaluation to support the AIM Awards policy of continuous improvement. Guidance that had previously been made available on registration of apprentices will be made available at an earlier date.

*8.3. There is more to be done by EPAOs to enable employers, providers and apprentices to understand how grades are conferred* and how employers and training providers can influence the apprentice’s opportunity to demonstrate their achievement at the highest level through more active engagement on the employer’s part and a more detailed understanding of their role in bridging the gaps on the part of the training provider.

*8.4 When deciding on the best match of Standard to apprentice, providers and employers should be at pains to consider the Assessment Plan every much as the Standard Document* and ensure that the job role on offer is an appropriate match to the Standard. The methods that are required by the Assessment Plan to demonstrate competence may be as significant as content. Employers and providers should agree the Standard for their apprentice based on a detailed understanding of the Assessment Plan in order to ensure that the apprentice will not only be able to meet the pass criteria but will have the opportunity to demonstrate their achievement to meet distinction criteria. This is particularly where the Assessment Plan requires competence in an area in which the apprentice may not have day to day experience and should consider opportunities to bridge gaps either through off or on the job training. Line managers will, ideally, be involved in this discussion and the training plan for the apprentice.

8.5 *Apprentice apprehension is eased when they can hear about, or directly from, previously successful apprentices about the process and practice of the EPA.* This could be either from the training provider, from employed apprentices in the workplace and through the production of guidance materials made available to them from the EPAO. See para 6 Outputs above.

8.6 *Apprentice understanding of the link between their learning and the EPA can be supported on programme through easy access to mapping documents e.g on One File, or similar, by the training provider as part of the 20% offsite learning.* The EPA should be embedded into the delivery of the apprenticeship from the beginning of the programme and not appear as a separate entity as the apprentice approaches the Gateway point.

## 9. Case Studies and Appendices

1. ALL SPRING MEDIA: BROADCAST PRODUCTION ASSISTANT AT THE BBC AND THE NATIONAL THEATRE
2. CIRENCESTER COLLEGE - CASE STUDY: FOUR CREATIVE INDUSTRY EMPLOYERS IN THE SOUTH WEST
3. AIM AWARDS ASSESSMENT - PREPARING FOR END POINT ASSESSMENT – STAKEHOLDER SEMINARS
4. CREATIVE ALLIANCE
5. VIDEO PRODUCTION
6. FRAMING THE QUESTIONS TOWARDS DEFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTSTANDING ASSESSMENT

## 10. References

**CooperGibson Research** *Good practice in Level 4 and 5 qualifications* -Department for Education August 2018.

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