

Best Practices in Interviews and Professional Discussions webinar - frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Q. Can you explain the difference between Continuous Professional Development and Personal Development Plan?

A. Simplistically the key difference between Personal Development Plan (PDP) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is the focus; PDP is about how the apprentice plans their personal learning in support of their apprenticeship, career and professional development and also helps them to plan their CPD, CPD is about learning but also about the relationship between what is learnt, the apprentices' needs the impact on themselves their team and their customers (internal and external).

So the two are very much linked. When apprentices are involved in undertaking their CPD this is part of our PDP i.e. part of their planned learning and development and when they are following through the PDP cycle and doing their planned learning activities then they are doing their CPD.

Q. Is it a good idea to use the 3 'I's' (Intent, Implementation and Impact) as part of the development for the interview and discussion?

A. The STARR approach offered in the webinar is just one example of a structure that the apprentice might use so that they fully respond to questions. The 3 I's you mention offers a similar structure in some ways although the S (situation) in STARR sets the scene. The main thing to provide the apprentice with the tools to enable them to provide structure to their response so they can provide the best answer possible.

Q. For the Level 5 Ops/Departmental Manager: does the presentation need uploading to the Portal two weeks before end-point assessment (EPA) session or is it the report?

A. Ideally the presentation should be included along with the report (and other evidence) and uploaded at least two weeks before the day of the presentation. However, we do understand that the presentation may still be finalised so it's fine to share it later but the IEPA must have it before the day.

Q. Is the Competency Based Interview more about the application of knowledge and skills rather than the need to explain a theory or concept?

A. The Competency Based Interview is most definitely about application of knowledge and skills. Being able to incorporate their knowledge and understanding of appropriate models and theories and how they have applied them, the results etc. is ideal.

Q. Regarding the time limit is there a strict 45 minute time limit then?

A. The IEPAs will be as flexible as possible allowing a few minutes extra and maybe a little more if they feel the answer is there, but you should encourage your apprentices to be as concise as possible and have a structured response (e.g. STARR)

Q. I was under the impression that Functional Skills tests at Level 2 didn't need to be taken prior to entering the Gateway. Is this not correct?

A. It is a gateway requirement that an apprentice needs to have achieved maths and English at level 2 for all standards at level 3 and above. Evidence of achievement is part of the Gateway requirements - which are more flexible currently due to Covid-19 adjustments that we have been able to make.

Q. Are there any pre-recorded mock examples of the Competency Based Interview and the professional discussion? How do we access these?

A. Once you have learners registered for EPA with us, as a centre will have access to a wealth of support resources. These include an audio and transcript of both a CBI and PD. They can be accessed through our SmartScreen platform.

Q. My learner has her EPA booked at the end of June. Is it ok for her to sit the remote discussion / interview before sitting the knowledge exam? (Due to social distancing) Will it be okay to sit the on-line test after the other assessments, when centres start to re-open?

A. Yes this is fine there is no set sequencing of the assessment methods at this time.

Q. Do you have any examples of portfolios and CPD or do you have examples of what sort of evidence should be put into these? Should the knowledge criteria be answered as a separate piece of work within the portfolio? How many pieces of work should be in this? Also, regarding the CPD, how much evidence should be in this portfolio, should it be in the form of reflection, certificates for example?

A. We don't have any exemplars of portfolios, however the EPA Guidance Pack which is available to you once you have registered learners for the EPA provides significant detail of the Assessment Criteria to be met and the types of evidence we would expect to see. You may find it useful to listen to a recent webinar specifically around Best Practice for EPA Portfolios > i-l-m.com/news-and-events/events/best-practice-for-developing-a-portfolio

Q. Is the EPA prep tool the same tool that is on the Get to gateway platform. What's the difference?

A. The **EPA preparation Tool** is available to apprentices once they are registered for EPA. It supports them with the Assessment Methods only so for example if a level 5 learner are not confident with presentations, they can access resources on here to support with how to structure a presentation, keeping to time, calming nerves etc. But it will not cover the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs). **Get to Gateway** is a learning Management System and e-portfolio which contains all of the knowledge learning content for the standard and allows the apprentice to upload their evidence of their KSBs - it is a paid for resource - more details within the recording of the webinar.

Q. Do all IEPA ask questions in the same way? We have noticed that questions are asked in a different way to the examples you have given?

A. We all have a different style and approach however our IEPAs are fully trained and receive regular standardisation training to ensure consistency across the whole IEPA and Lead Independent End Point Assessor (LIEPA) team. We have a robust IQA process in place and this of course is also subject to EQA.

Q. Are you able to provide pass rates for each element, first time passes?

A. We publish percentages of fail/pass/merit/distinction within our LIEPA reports but not by each assessment method.

Q. Where can I find the grading criteria?

A. This can be found in the Assessment Plan on the IfATE website (where it originates) a link can be found within the slides of this webinar. We also include this information in the EPA Guidance Pack.

Q. Does the discussion and interview have to be completed on a laptop? Or can they use a smart phone?

A. Our guidance stipulates that the apprentice has access to a computer with video-conferencing software installed prior to the assessment starting and that it has been set up to allow the apprentice to be clearly heard and seen by the IEPA.

Q. I had my first candidate sit her interview yesterday and wasn't aware it was limited to 45 minutes and that after each questions the IEPA was advising of how much time she had remaining. What if someone provides a lot of detail in their verbal responses?

A. The time allowed for each element is included in the EPA Guidance Pack (link to it from our webinar slides). If an apprentice has a tendency to offer too much detail this should be picked up by the training provider, offered as feedback and they should have the opportunity to practice while on programme and particularly leading up to the EPA. It is difficult for the IEPA to cover the full range of questions if the apprentices is taking too much time over each question. Practice is key.

Q. For the CPD, who will decide which objectives to discuss? Will it be the IEPA or the learner?

A. The IEPA has a range of questions to choose from and they will start the discussion. Most of the talking should come from the apprentice so they should have plenty of opportunity to share their best pieces of CPD.

Q. Can they look at their portfolio on their computer or just on paper?

A. They can look at their portfolio on a PC if they wish - would suggest it is a separate PC to the one being used for the video call. As the IEPA is invigilating they will want to be satisfied that it is not linked to the internet and no other windows are open - so the screen may need to be visible to the IEPA whilst on the video call.

Q. Is there guidance for portfolios on the gateway please?

A. There is comprehensive guidance in the EPA Guidance Pack available on SmartScreen as soon as you have registered your first learner for EPA.

Q. On the Action part of STARR -- does the learner have to share the screenshots for example live?

A. The IEPA has access to the portfolio during the CBI so if the apprentice has documentary evidence within it then they can just signpost the IEPA to it.

Q. Does ALL knowledge have to be evidenced in the portfolio or just the supplementary worksheet?

A. The Portfolio should be as concise as possible and take a holistic approach to cover the Assessment Criteria (AC). It should include evidence that is linked to the ACs and nothing more. The portfolio is focussed mainly on skills (not knowledge) so do not include knowledge unless specifically required. Further details can be found in the EPA Guidance pack. Also, you can download a recording of a recent webinar on Best Practice for Portfolios at i-l-m.com/news-and-events/events/best-practice-for-developing-a-portfolio

Q. When you say two weeks before when exactly do you mean- timing wise will the EPA Portal close? It seems to be inconsistent, which makes it difficult to plan with the learner.

A. The portal will automatically close two weeks before the date of the virtual face-to-face interaction. We do try to be very flexible so if some aspects are not complete or there are errors or (as is quite often the case), there is too much uploaded for the portfolio then we work with you and keep the portal open for a little longer.

Q. I have learners registered; how do I get the apprenticeship assessment strategy which tells me what qualifies as a pass merit distinction

A. If you have learners registered for EPA (and not just for the qualification) then you should already have access to this - it is available on Walled Garden.

Q. If learners have completed a qualification with another awarding body can they use this material for their portfolio linking to their knowledge?

A. It is important that the evidence provided is working to meet the Apprenticeship Standard. There may well be evidence that has been gathered as part of a qualification (ILM or others) whilst on programme, this is perfectly acceptable to use. Please do remember though the portfolio is mainly about skills - make sure you are only providing evidence that is specifically meeting the criteria - it may help to watch the recording of the recent webinar on this which can be downloaded from here i-l-m.com/news-and-events/events/best-practice-for-developing-a-portfolio

Invigilation

Q. Are there plans for the Unit tests (i.e. Leading/Managing People etc) within Level 3 Diploma for Managers and Level 5 Diploma for Leaders and Managers Qualifications to be sat remotely?

A. We are awaiting a decision from Ofqual as to their decision as to whether they will allow this - they did set out a consultation recently. We will publish their decision as soon as we know.

Q. Can the learner's exam be invigilated by the employer if they are taking it in the office?

A. Yes, the Employer can invigilate at their learner's work address. TP must invigilate if it's at the learner's home address

Q. How much success have you had with remote invigilation, seem very tech heavy. Broadband issues having 2 devices running at the same time online what broadband speed do you need?

A. You are correct this is demanding on the learners but centres we have piloted with have picked this up quickly but accept that this relies on learner capability - this is the only approach that we have found that will enable these standards to continue at this time.

Q. Is the current rule to not release results until all components have been completed still standing during this time as exams are very difficult to organise and it could be a while until this is taken?

A. Yes current rules of confirmation will only be released once each aspect has been completed.

Q. WebEx is free at the moment, I don't understand what you mean about a licence in place. I have just registered and can call a meeting?

A. You will need the ability to have a licence agreement, the learner and invigilator will need one each.

Q. I need to lip read, if masks are worn and learners whose communication method is lip reading, will alternative arrangements be made?

A. We don't envisage that our IEPAs will need to wear masks during EPAs - they do not do this currently for these standards (they work from home). We are always considerate of apprentice's accessibility requirements so if any of your learners have particular needs then do let us know and we will work with you.

Q. Do the Level 5 still need a panel for their presentation?

A. At present we have dispensation to go ahead with the project presentation with just the IEPA and the Apprentice so if you are struggling to pull the panel together in the current circumstances this is fine just let us know. This option is available now.

Q. Will the L3 EPA changes take effect on a certain date and all EPAs from that date use the new EPA methodology - or does it depend on start date or gateway date?

A. We are working on this, it is likely that there will be a duration of time where there will be an option for the apprentice to undertake either of the EPAs, before we close the current one. It will not be possible for learners to switch to the new one part way through EPA (i.e. so they can opt for the new one post gateway but not after they have undertaken an element of the current EPA).

Q. For the new Level 3 EPA - will there still be CPD EPA activity?

A. Yes this will be incorporated into the overall Professional Discussion. The standard (i.e. the knowledge skills and behaviours) has not changed it is just the assessment methods that will change. So CPD still needs to be evidenced.

Q. With the new Assessment Plan for the Level 3 standard - will it still be 70% for a Distinction?

A. This information has yet to be published and we will share this with you as soon as we are able.

Q. Why is the merit going, as this is disappointing, as learners have something to aim for?

A. This is not a decision that has been made by City & Guilds and ILM or even the Trailblazer/employer group, this is a decision that has been made by IfATE and is in line with decisions they are making to other standards.