Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Assessment (AA) Policy and Procedure

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Quality Management Office (QMO)

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Summary of what this policy covers:

See also the Glossary for information about definitions and abbreviations.

Apprenticeship Assessment (AA) responsibilities
This policy sets out the University's approach to delivering and managing the quality of Apprenticeship Assessments (AAs) for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HDAs). It ensures compliance with the Department for Education (DfE), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Skills England. It clarifies roles and responsibilities in relation to AAs.

Choosing an Assessment Organisation for University staff who are apprentices
Where our staff are studying an HDA and the AA is not integrated, the University, as the employer, is required to choose an independent third-party Assessment Organisation (AO) to deliver AA. The policy explains how we approach this.

Supporting employers seeking an Assessment Organisation
Where the AA is non-integrated, we provide employers with information about AOs that are on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). The employer chooses the AO.

Recruiting and maintaining records of Independent Assessors
The University ensures that appropriate Independent Assessors (IAs) are appointed where an integrated AA requires this role. The IAs can be permanent University staff or individuals recruited by the University specifically as an IA. As part of the HDA approval by the University, the Faculty states which of these two approaches it intends to follow. The policy explains the process for recruiting staff for an IA role.

Training and ensuring the CPD of Independent Assessors
For integrated AAs, the University is required to ensure IAs keep their occupational expertise up to date. Faculties are responsible for ensuring their IAs understand the specific requirements of the AA and that evidence of this is logged with the IA records maintained by QMO.

Ensuring potential conflicts of interest are identified and managed
AAs must be conducted impartially with a clear separation between the teaching on the programme and those carrying out the AA. This policy explains how we manage and mitigate any potential or real conflict of interest in the delivery of AAs.

Conducting AAs and applying for Completion Certificates
The University carries out AAs ensuring adherence to internal and external quality assurance requirements. This policy addresses the issues that arise due to some AAs being slightly different to the University's more traditional assessments.

1. Foreword

This policy sets out the University of Salford's (University) approach to delivering and managing Apprenticeship Assessment for apprentices enrolled on revised apprenticeship standards from September 2026.

The apprenticeship reforms introduced by Skills England have resulted in changes to apprenticeship standards and assessment requirements. This policy has been developed to reflect those changes and should be used by University staff, apprentices, employers and Independent Assessors involved in the delivery, administration and quality assurance of Apprenticeship Assessment for revised standards (now called Occupational Standards).

During the transition from existing apprenticeship standards to Occupational Standards, the University will operate two policies relating to the assessment of apprentices. This policy applies only to apprentices enrolled on Occupational Standards (i.e. revised apprenticeship standards). Apprentices enrolled on standards that continue to operate under existing EPA arrangements should refer to the University's *Higher and Degree End-Point Assessment (EPA) Policy and Procedure*.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the approach the University will take to deliver and manage the quality of AAs for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships (HDAs). HDAs are structured training programmes where the main learning is at level four or above (including higher education qualifications).

To deliver Apprenticeships in England, the University had to join the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). The APAR is a record of organisations eligible to receive government funding to train apprentices.

AAs include a synoptic assessment of the knowledge and skills that have been learnt throughout the apprenticeship, and the verification of behaviours that have been consistently demonstrated by the apprentice. The purpose of the AA is to make sure the apprentice meets the standard set by employers and is fully competent in the occupation.

AAs can be integrated or non-integrated. An integrated AA is incorporated into the University qualification. There are two types of integrated AAs:

1. **Integrated Apprenticeship:**
   The integrated AA will operate as set out by Skills England and meet the typical requirements of AAs (including the recruitment of Independent Assessors).

2. **Fully/ Statutory Integrated Apprenticeship:**
   This type of apprenticeship covers occupations that are regulated by law. Statutory regulators usually prescribe how new entrants to the occupation should be assessed. They will set out the level of competence needed to be able to practise the occupation. The assessment prescribed by a statutory regulator can constitute the apprenticeship's AA. Thus, achieving the apprenticeship leads to attainment of the regulator's requirements. The apprenticeship is then referred to as being a 'statutory integrated apprenticeship' or 'fully integrated apprenticeship'.

A non-integrated AA is a separate assessment carried out by a third-party organisation after the apprentice has completed the University qualification.

The policy ensures the University's approach to AAs complies with Apprenticeship funding rules, published by the DWP and Skills England. It clarifies roles and responsibilities in relation to AAs for University staff, apprentices, employers and IAs.

There are sometimes differences in terminology and language used at the University compared to Skills England documentation and language. A summary of the differences can be found below:

- **'Resit', 'reassessment' and 'retakes':**
  As per the University's academic regulations, students have a first attempt at passing a module, followed by a reassessment (second attempt), followed by a module retake (this requires payment because the student must attend lectures, seminars etc. again as part of the module retake).

  Skills England language refers to a 'resit' when the apprentice is resitting one or more of the assessments without further training. Skills England refers to a 'retake' when the apprentice requires further training before they do the assessment again.

- **'Special Considerations' 'Reasonable Adjustments', 'Extenuating Circumstances' and 'Personal Mitigating Circumstances'**
  Whilst Skills England refers to Special Considerations, the University uses the term 'Reasonable Adjustments'. Similarly, whilst Skills England refers to 'Extenuating Circumstances' the University refers to 'Exceptional Circumstances' (formerly 'Personal Mitigating Circumstances').

- **'Exam Board' and 'Assessment Board'.**
  The University uses the term 'Assessment Board' to refer to the ratification of AA marks. However, the legacy term used was 'Exam Board' so you may see this terminology in some documentation.

3. Scope

This policy covers the following scenarios:

- Apprentices who are employed by other organisations and are on a University of Salford apprenticeship with a non-integrated AA.

- Apprentices who are employed by the University and are on an apprenticeship either delivered by the University or by another provider, with a non-integrated AA.

- Apprentices who are employed by the University and are on an apprenticeship either delivered by the University or by another provider, with an integrated or fully integrated AA.

- Apprentices who are employed by other organisations and are on a University of Salford apprenticeship with an integrated or fully integrated AA.

The policy does not cover the scenario whereby a Faculty wishes to act as a third-party AO for other institutions. The University Management Team considers the business case for any proposals for such activity on a case-by-case basis.

4. Planning for Apprenticeship Assessment (AA) at Programme Approval Stage

The AA is incorporated into the 'Apprenticeship Completion' aspect of the University's Six Fundamentals and is embedded in the programme from the programme approval stage.

Programme teams plan how the programme will prepare apprentices for the AA. For integrated AAs, this includes completing an Apprenticeship Assessment Operational Plan, which sets out details of the AA including its delivery plan, and producing an AA Handbook to be used as a resource for apprentices, employers, Independent Assessors (IAs) and internal staff.

5. Appointing a third-party Assessment Organisation (AO) (Non-integrated AAs)

5.1 The section applies to apprentices who are employed by other organisations and are on a University of Salford apprenticeship with a non-integrated AA. It relates to the University's obligations as the training provider.

The apprentice's employer decides which AO they wish to use. The University, as training provider, ensures that employers are informed about the possible AOs that are on the Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register (APAR). In addition, where we have knowledge of AOs and the quality of their AA delivery, we may highlight to employers those which we consider particularly suitable.

Where possible, the choice of AO is included in the initial contract with employers. This may not be possible at the point of agreeing the initial contract because there is no appropriate AO on the APAR. In such cases the University liaises with employers to ensure that they appoint the AO as soon as practicable, so as not to delay the AA being delivered to apprentices.

The Faculty will initiate and manage the contracting process with the AO working with the Legal and Compliance Team.

All contracts with AOs are logged on the University's HDA contracts database. Contracts are monitored by the Apprenticeships Services Unit (ASU) in liaison with other relevant professional services, Faculties and employers. If concerns are raised, the ASU liaises with the third-party AO. If concerns persist, the University may terminate the contract with the AO. In such cases, the ASU, employer and Faculty will develop and implement continuity arrangements to transfer the AA to another organisation and to support apprentice learners.

5.2 The section applies to apprentices who are employed by the University and are on an apprenticeship either delivered by the University or by another provider, with a non-integrated AA. It relates to the University's obligations as the employer of the apprentices in relation to the AA.

The process is led and coordinated by the University's Human Resources (HR) division which acts as "the employer". HR is responsible for selecting the AO, regardless of whether

the apprenticeship is delivered by the University or by a third-party organisation. If the HDA is delivered by the University of Salford (UoS) the Faculty will lead on the contract with the AO on behalf of HR. If the HDA is delivered by a third-party organisation the external training provider will lead on the contract with the AO, however HR ensures that the ASU is informed about proposed contracts with third-party AA organisations.

If concerns are raised about third-party AOs, the ASU liaises with the third-party AO. If concerns persist, the University may terminate the contract with the AO. In such cases, the ASU, HR (acting as the employer) and the apprenticeship provider – which may be a Faculty or another organisation – will develop and implement continuity arrangements to transfer the AA to another organisation and to support apprentice learners.

6. The role of External Examiners (EEs) during Apprenticeship Assessment (AA)

For both integrated and fully integrated AAs, the EE is required to comment on how well apprentices had been prepared for AA, Gateway to Completion requirements and employer involvement in Gateway to Completion decisions.

For integrated AAs, the EE must complete an additional report which comments on the quality of AA delivery.

Please refer to the External Examining for Taught Programmes Policy and the Assessment Board Policy for further details of the External Examiner role for apprenticeship programmes.

7. The role of the Independent Assessor (IA) (Integrated AAs)

The functions of an IA vary depending on the AA but include:

- Carrying out the AA as set out in the Apprenticeship Assessment Plan (AAP) for the programme. This involves ensuring national comparability of academic standards, that the assessment processes are reliable, fair and transparent, and operate in line with:
    - University regulations, policies and procedures.
    - UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
    - Office for Students' guidance on the external quality assurance of apprenticeship AA.
    - Characteristic Statement for Apprenticeships.
    - DWP Apprenticeship Funding Rules.
    - Relevant Apprenticeship Standard and AAP.
    - Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements (where applicable).
- Understanding the AAP for the assessment of the apprenticeship.
- Participating in annual assessment training and assessment standardisation events.
- Annually submitting evidence of relevant CPD records completed in the last two years to enhance knowledge of specialist subject and/or higher education to QMO within the agreed timescale.
- Annually reviewing their conflicts of interest declaration within the agreed timescale and declaring any actual or potential conflicts to the Assessment Board.
- Completing reports within University timescales.

The University appoints IAs who demonstrate appropriate evidence of the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality.
- Competence and experience in the fields covered by apprenticeship.
- Relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience, where appropriate.
- Competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures.
- Sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic and, where appropriate, professional peers.
- Familiarity with the AA performance expected of apprentices to achieve the award being assessed.
- Fluency in English.
- Meeting applicable criteria set by PSRBs, where applicable.
- Understanding of skills assessment either through a minimum of one year work-based assessment experience or through an appropriate assessor or teaching qualification.
- Appropriate and up to date occupational and assessment skills and any specific requirements as set out in the AAP.
- Awareness of the standard to be expected of apprentices to achieve the award that is to be assessed and have the capability to assess the apprentice at this level.
- An awareness of current industry standards, developments and practice and the design and delivery of relevant curricula.

8. Recruiting and maintaining records of Independent Assessors (IAs) (Integrated AAs)

Where the AA is integrated (but not fully integrated), the University ensures it has suitable IAs who meet the requirements stipulated. IAs can either be permanent University staff or individuals recruited by the Faculty specifically for an IA role. The Faculty should inform the QMO which of these two approaches it intends to follow a year in advance of the AA. To ensure independence, the University's Head of Academic Quality and Partnerships makes the final decision on the appointment of IAs.

For every Integrated AA there shall be at least two IAs to support the moderation and calibration of marks. The total number of IAs for any AA must be enough to cover the number of AAs expected. Case-by-case basis advice is provided by QMO.

QMO maintains records for six years (or longer, if required by the University's Data Retention Schedule) of:

- The approved assessments for integrated AAs on apprenticeships delivered by University.
- IAs (both permanent University Staff and staff recruited specifically for the role).

Faculties appointing existing full-time, fractional or hourly-paid staff to be IAs

- Faculties log the details of existing full-time, fractional or hourly-paid staff who will act as IAs with QMO.
- The IA must not engage with any aspect of the programme (including teaching, assessment verification, marking, moderation) apart from conducting the AA.

Recruiting temporary staff specifically for the IA role

QMO coordinates the process for recruiting temporary staff specifically for the IA role, working closely with the Faculty to ensure the IA has appropriate knowledge and skills.

The appointment of IAs should be informed by the principle of "balance" e.g., to avoid a high proportion of IAs from a single institution or type of institution or to avoid an imbalance between the numbers of academic and practitioner IAs on a particular apprenticeship. To take account of the balance of appointments, Faculties should consult the University's list of current IA appointments.

A nomination form is used to ensure that IAs have appropriate academic and, where relevant, other professional expertise, and that potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointment. The nomination form covers the criteria for appointment.

The length of an IA appointment will vary in accordance with the needs of the programme. Initial appointments under the Fees and Expenses (F&E) route are usually four years. The University Apprenticeship Operations Group (UAOG) has oversight of the IA role, reporting to the University Skills Sub-Committee.

Remuneration of IAs
IAs can be employed through F&E or as Hourly Paid Academics (HPAs). The employment pathway depends on the number of instances of engagement per year (see Appendix 1 for further information about the process).

IA hourly rates for F&E are published annually by the QMO in liaison with Faculty Finance Managers. Remuneration rates for IAs appointed as HPAs are to be agreed between QMO, the programme team and the Faculty Finance Manager prior to roles being advertised. Hourly remuneration rates should align to University grades and be in line with AA budgets. When using hourly paid contracts for IAs, the ZH6 free rate may be used. The QMO deals with IA claims via the F&E and recharges the Faculty. The Faculty deals with IA claims submitted via the HPA rate pathway.

Independent Assessor Sickness and Last-Minute Absence
IAs should notify both QMO and the Programme Leader as soon as possible if they cannot assess AA due to sickness or other circumstances outside of their control. Where an apprenticeship programme has employed several IAs, AA planning should include contingency measures to mitigate the impact of last-minute sickness (e.g., back-up assessors on standby). Where an AA can no longer take place due to IA absence, programme teams should inform QMO and the Faculty Head of Apprenticeships as soon as possible.

Termination of appointment of temporary staff recruited as IAs

Where an IA wishes to terminate their contract of appointment early, normally a minimum of three months' notice is required. The Dean of Faculty considers the request and reports terminations to QMO. A new IA must be appointed as soon as possible.

Where the University wishes to terminate the appointment early, e.g., where a programme is due to close, a minimum notice period of three months will be given to the IA.

Where a Faculty considers an IA has failed to fulfil their obligations satisfactorily this must be reported to the Dean of Faculty. The Dean will take appropriate steps to contact the IA and resolve the matter. If it is felt necessary to terminate the appointment, then this shall be formally undertaken by the Dean and reported to the Faculty Executive.

Examples of an IA failing to fulfil their obligations include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to take part in required training.
- Failure to update their records of CPD and conflicts of interest annually.
- Failure to carry out AAs in line with expectations.
- Failure to provide any marking, moderation or standardisation reports required by the Faculty as part of AA delivery.

Where a conflict of interest arises during the IA's employment, and where the conflict cannot be resolved satisfactorily, normal practice is that the IA resigns. However, as a last resort the University will terminate the IA's contract.

9. Conflicts of Interest

The University's Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Policy (Declaration and Management of Conflicts of Interest) applies to all aspects of HDAs. The University makes every effort to manage and mitigate any potential or real conflict of interest in the delivery of AAs. Members of staff, including affiliated staff, will complete the online Declaration of Interests form available on the internal Declaring Interests hub site.

All IAs are required to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest at the time of their nomination. In addition, approximately three months prior to the AA, the IA are given a list of the names of apprentices (and their employers) that they are due to assess, and the IA must declare any real or potential conflict of interest. If real or potential conflicts of interest are declared and they cannot be resolved, the Faculty, with advice from QMO, will decide how they should be dealt with. In some situations, it may be appropriate to appoint a different IA. Faculties should maintain records of conflicts of interest declarations and make these available to the QMO on request. As part of Gateway to Completion the apprentice completes the AA Gateway to Completion Declaration form and indicates if there is a conflict of interest with the named IAs.

To ensure IAs are impartial in judgement and "do not personally benefit from any student outcomes, nor have any connection to any student being assessed" (UK Quality Code for HE, Advice and Guidance: External Expertise) the University does not appoint as IAs any individuals in the following categories or circumstances:

- Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with an apprentice on the HDA in question.
- Anyone with a close personal relationship with a member of staff involved with the HDA in question.
- Anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as apprentices to the HDA.
- Anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to significantly influence the future of apprentices on the HDA in question.
- Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the HDA in question.
- Anyone involved in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another higher education provider.

The University also avoids appointing more than one IA for an HDA from the same department of the same higher education or apprenticeship provider.

During the Assessment Board, where it is stipulated in the AAP that EEs must be in attendance, EEs are required to declare any conflicts of interest with apprentices as part of the Assessment Board agenda, which is formally logged in the minutes. Further details can be found in the Assessment Boards for Taught Programmes Policy.

Where a Skills England AAP requires AA Panel Members to be involved in the assessment, all panel members must ensure that they have not been involved in on-programme teaching of apprentices and that there is no conflict of interest with the apprentices going through AA.

10. Training and ensuring the CPD of Independent Assessors (IAs)

To ensure consistency of approach and in-depth understanding of the Apprenticeship Standards and AA, all IAs are required to undertake training to support them in the assessor role.

At induction, the University ensures that all IAs are informed about relevant institutional procedures, practices and regulations, the expectations of the IA role and the apprenticeships to which they are appointed.

Ongoing training is provided by Faculties to ensure that all requirements are met and to ensure that all assessments conducted are valid, fair and reliable and in line with the relevant AAP.

All IAs are expected to participate in briefings, verification, standardisation, moderation and calibration activity as directed by the Faculty. These events are to ensure the fair, consistent and reliable grading of all assessments. They also allow the Faculty to update the IAs on any changes to the apprenticeship or standard. Programme teams are expected to communicate with IAs during the year and provide updates as appropriate.

QMO ensures that the CPD and training records of IAs are updated annually and retained for six years.

11. Apprenticeship Assessment (AA) Gateway to Completion (Integrated and Non-integrated AAs)

Employer verification of behaviours

It is the employer's responsibility to verify that the apprentice has met the behaviours. There is discussion of behaviours in Progress Review Meetings (PRMs). Formal employer verification is through the Gateway to Completion (see following section). If an apprentice moves employer, it the apprentice's responsibility to secure a reference or written statement about their behaviours from their current employer before leaving and moving to a new employer.

Gateway to Completion

For integrated AAs, the Faculty, as the AO, verifies that the apprentice has completed any prerequisites to AA, including any mandatory qualifications. The Faculty liaises with the employer to determine whether the apprentice has met the Gateway to Completion requirements. The Gateway to Completion refers to the requirements that need to be met for the employer to put forward their apprentice for the AA. It ensures that all apprentices have completed the mandatory aspects of the occupational standard and that employers believe an apprentice is occupationally competent at the point they enter the Gateway to Completion.

When an apprentice has completed their practical period and is ready to enter the Gateway to Completion, the Faculty AA coordinator/Apprenticeship Administrator contacts the Apprenticeships Services Unit (ASU). The ASU cross-reference the apprentice's last day of learning from their final Off-the-job training (OTJT) entry on OneFile with their actual OTJT hours and update Aptem. The apprentice's status on Aptem and OneFile changes to 'entered AA'. The ASU are responsible for ensuring apprentices have appropriate learner status within the University during the AA period.

For non-integrated apprenticeship programmes, the Faculty manages AA Gateway to Completion evidence that is submitted to the AO. The Faculty will submit this to the AO as evidence that the AA can go ahead for each individual.

The role of EEs in relation to AAs and the Gateway to Completion process is described in the External Examining for Taught Programmes Policy. The Assessment Board policy describes the documentation requirements for Assessment Boards considering Gateway to Completion and, where applicable, for integrated and fully-integrated AAs. The Faculty is responsible for checking AA Gateway to Completion documentation.

The Faculty is informed of the outcome of AA and is responsible for informing the ASU.

Further details of AA Gateway to Completion processes and responsibilities for integrated and fully integrated apprenticeships can be found in Appendix 2a and 2b.

12. Conducting Apprenticeship Assessments (AAs) and applying for Completion Certificates (integrated AAs)

Faculties maintain records for six years (or longer, if required by the University's Data Retention Schedule) of the integrated AA for the apprenticeships that they deliver. Where delivery is across more than one Faculty, the lead Faculty maintains the records.

A minimum of two IAs are appointed to each apprenticeship to ensure independence in assessment verification and moderation. Verification and moderation are undertaken in line with University's Assessment and Feedback Policy..

The available grades for AA are 'pass' and 'distinction.' Exceptions to this are set out in the AAP. To achieve a pass, an apprentice must demonstrate all assessment outcomes to the level described in the performance descriptors, given in the AAP. An apprentice must achieve a pass in all assessments to achieve a pass in their apprenticeship.

Where an apprentice has not met the requirements of a pass, the AO records a 'fail' grade. If the University as the training provider delivers and marks the assessment, the University records a 'fail' grade and provides that information to the AO.

Apprentices are issued with a transcript of their performance, i.e. Academic Award, in line with standard University procedures.

The Faculty as the AO is responsible for claiming the apprenticeship certificate from the Government Apprenticeship Service as soon as possible, following the apprentices' grade being confirmed at Assessment Board. This is typically within 20 days.

13. Resits and Retakes

Reassessments and re-takes are undertaken in line with the University's Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes and the Assessment and Feedback Policy.

14. Applying Reasonable Adjustments to Apprenticeship Assessment (EPA)

Where the University is the AO, and an apprentice has a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) in place, the adjustments outlined in the RAP will be applied to the AA.

When the AO is a third-party organisation, and an apprentice has a RAP in place, the apprentice should apply to the AO for Reasonable Adjustments to their AA. Each AO has their own policy on Reasonable Adjustments, with guidance on how to apply. E.g.,

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Access Arrangements
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations
- Chartered Manager Institute (CMI) EPA Adjustment Application
- National Open College Network (NOCN) Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

15. Feedback in relation to Apprenticeship Assessments (AAs) and Assessment Organisations (AOs)

To develop the University's understanding of the experience of AAs and use this information to improve provision of services, the QMO, in conjunction with Faculty Apprenticeship Administrators/Officers, coordinate a confidential Apprenticeship Completion survey. The purpose of this survey is, where appropriate for that standard, to capture feedback from the apprentice, post-AA. The Apprenticeship Completion survey collects data on both non-

integrated programmes where there is an external AO and integrated programmes where the University is the AO.

The results of the Apprenticeship Completion Survey are redacted and reported quarterly to UAOG or its delegated Delivery Team. Feedback is also shared with the relevant Faculty (i.e. the training provider/AO). If the survey highlights poor quality in AA provision for non-integrated programmes, the University may use this as evidence as to why an AO should not be used in future. If the survey highlights issues in AA provision for integrated programmes where the University is the AO, the feedback will feed into internal AA quality assurance processes. A summary of the results of this survey are included in an Annual Report to the Skills Sub-Committee.

Apprentices are also invited to complete an Early Withdrawal survey, should they exit their apprenticeship before completing their AA. This survey also provides opportunities to collate feedback relating to AA for both non-integrated programmes where there is an external AO and integrated programmes where the University is the AO.

16. Complaints and Appeals

With regards to complaints and appeals relating to AA, the following University Policies and Procedures are followed:

- Student Complaints Procedure
- Academic Appeals Procedure
- Exceptional Circumstances (formerly Personal Mitigating Circumstances) Procedure
- Examinations Rules and Regulations Policy

17. Assessment Software

When assessment software is used for AA, the software is thoroughly tested and used in line with the University's Information Security Policy and Data Protection Policy. Detailed guidance is made available for apprentices, internal staff, IAs and EEs on how to use the assessment software and what to do if something goes wrong.

18. Equality and diversity

The appointment of IAs is monitored in relation to protected characteristics and reported annually as part of the Overview of Apprentice External Examiner (EE) Reports to the University Apprenticeships Operations Group (UAOG).

The University ensures that apprentices with Individual Learner Circumstances (ILCs) are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in AAs, so that all achievements in AAs are fair. ILCs include learners:

- from disadvantaged backgrounds
- with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities' (LLDD)
- that are Care Experienced
- below 19 years old on entry
- from minority backgrounds
- who join their apprenticeship with BTEC Higher National Qualifications
- who do not hold a Level two qualification in Maths and/or English

Data in relation to the outcomes of AAs and apprentices with ILCs will be monitored.

19. Internal Quality Assurance Strategy for Integrated Apprenticeship Assessment (AA)

The University has developed rigorous quality assurance processes to ensure the integrity of AA for integrated programmes.

The University's Internal Quality Assurance Strategy for integrated AA consists of the following processes:

- Faculty-led verification, standardisation and moderation of AA results to ensure all learners are assessed accurately, fairly and consistently.
- ASU compliance checks prior to Gateway to Completion on Level 2 Maths and English qualifications (if these are required by the DWP Apprenticeship Funding Rules) and the minimum off-the-job hours completed.
- QMO oversight of individual programme AA processes and documentation, to ensure that AA is delivered in line with Skills England and Office for Students requirements and University policies.
- Operational oversight of AA delivery across the University by the University Apprenticeship Operations Group (UAOG).
- Feedback from Apprenticeship Completion surveys and Apprenticeship Early Withdrawal surveys, which are reviewed by UAOG and used to inform Programme Action Logs (PALs) as part of the University's Programme Monitoring and Enhancement Procedure (PMEP).
- Feedback from IAs on their experience of conducting AAs, including conflict of interest management, assessment conditions, training materials and standardisation/ moderation processes. This will also be used to inform PALs.

20. External Quality Assurance for Apprenticeship Assessment (AA)

External Quality Assurance for integrated apprenticeship programmes is undertaken by the Office for Students.

External Quality Assurance for non-integrated AA apprenticeship programmes is normally undertaken by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual.)

The University also appoints EEs to assess the quality of AA provision for both integrated and fully integrated programmes. More details can be found in the External Examining for Taught Programmes Policy.

21. Related Documentation

Glossary and Abbreviations

Apprenticeship Provider and Assessment Register
How to apply to join the apprenticeship provider and assessment register (APAR) to receive government funding to train apprentices.

Department for Work and Pensions Guidance to delivering high-quality apprenticeships

Guidance for providers on preparing to offer apprenticeships, starting their delivery, ongoing apprenticeship training, completion of apprenticeships, and Ofsted inspection and accountability.

Requirements and guidance for apprenticeship assessment
This document sets out and explains the features of AAPs, what is required of all apprenticeship assessments, and provides information and guidance to ensure apprenticeship assessments are valid and reliable.

Apprenticeship behaviour verification guidance for employers
This guidance provides a simple, proportionate process for employers to confirm that apprentices have demonstrated the behaviours required for their occupation, as set out in the occupational standard.

University of Salford Governance and Management
The Governance and Management section of the website links to the University of Salford policies and procedure documents that are available for public view.

University of Salford Academic Handbook
The Academic Handbook contains the core policies and procedures that underpin the design, delivery and quality assurance of our taught and research degree programmes. It outlines the principles that guide academic practice and ensures our approaches align with the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Independent Assessor Conflicts of Interest Declaration Form
The form used by Independent Assessors appointed to Integrated Apprenticeship Programmes to declare any Conflicts of Interests prior to the commencement of any AAs taking place.

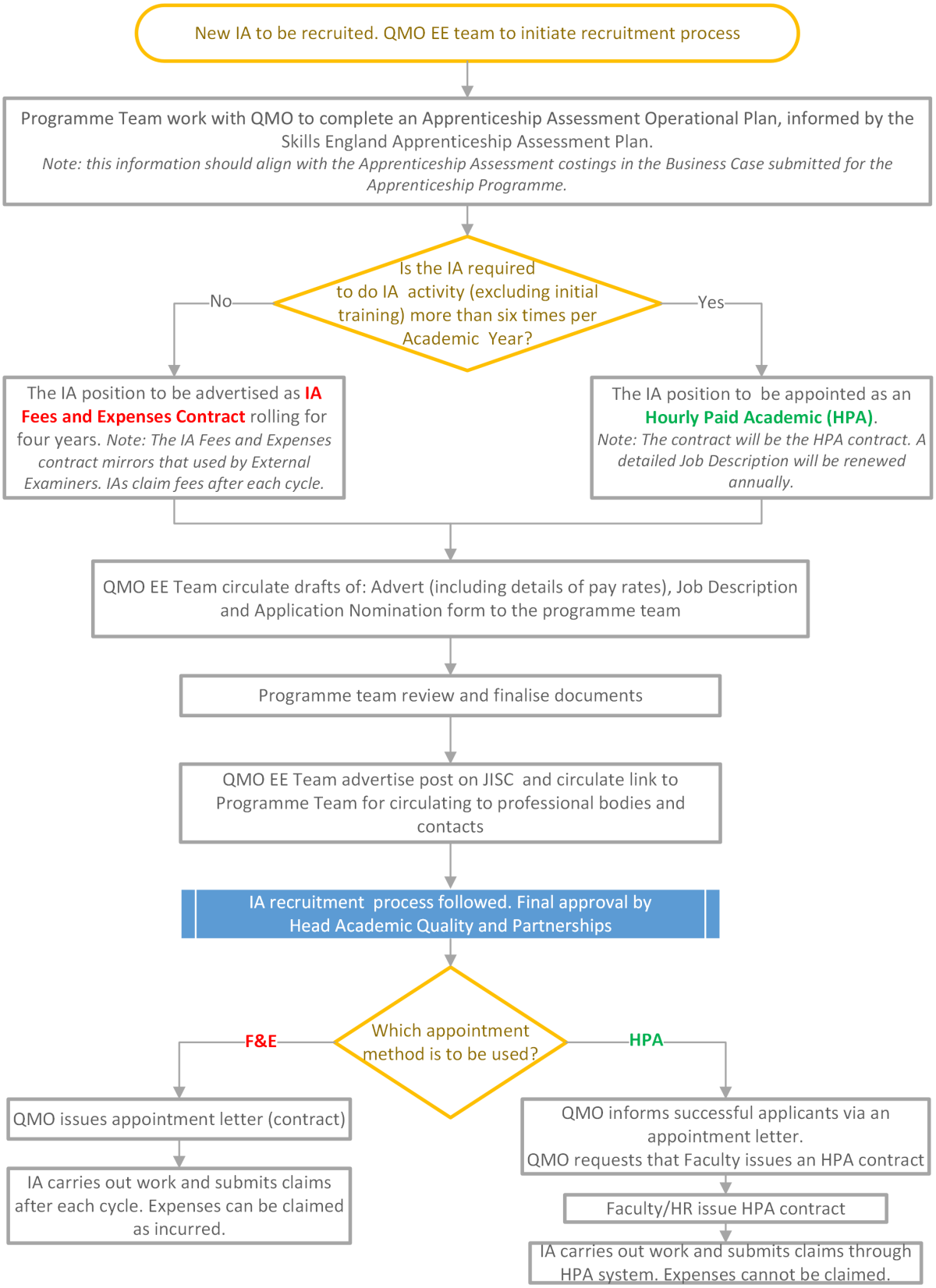
Apprenticeship Assessment Operational Plan Template
A mandatory planning document required for integrated apprenticeship programmes only, which forms part of the University's approval and assurance processes when introducing a new integrated apprenticeship.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Independent Assessor recruitment flowchart

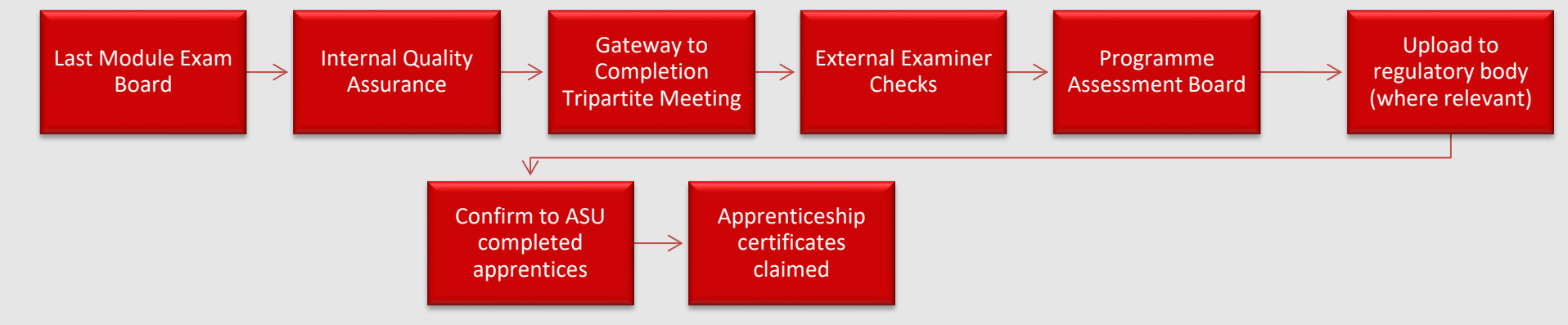
Process to select type of contract for Senior/Independent Assessors (IAs)

v1.2, effective September 2026

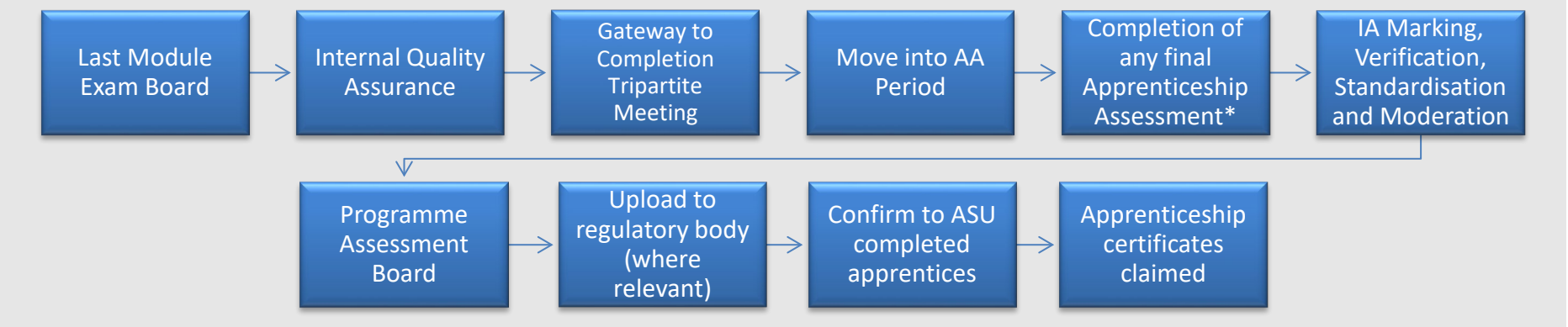


Appendix 2: AA Programme Processes

Appendix 2a: Fully Integrated AA Programme Process, with Assessment Board



Appendix 2b: Integrated AA Programme Process, with Assessment



Apprenticeship Assessment can take place at **any point during the Apprenticeship Programme, not just at the end.*

Appendix 3: AA process responsibilities and accountabilities for integrated and fully integrated apprenticeship programmes.

Process Step	**Action/Documents required**	**Responsible**	**Accountable**
After last Module Assessment Board	Prepare DRAFT programme completion document and send to AA/Programme Lead evidencing achieved credit requirement.	Programme Admin	Programme Lead
Collate Gateway to Completion evidence (IQA)	Collate documentation into teams: - Exam board documents as above - Programme/PSRB requirements (varies by apprenticeship standard) - Off the Job Hours - Practice Assessment Document and/or Portfolio - Maths and English certificates for apprentices under 19 on entry verified by checking spreadsheet owned by the ASU - Complete spreadsheet of completion for each programme	AA/Programme Lead	Programme Lead
Gateway to Completion Tripartite Meeting	Meeting with employer, apprentice and university representative to discuss and agree the apprentice is competent and met all requirements, including behaviour requirements as verified by the employer. Gateway to Completion form is signed by all parties within OneFile/Aptem	CE/LDC/LT	Programme Lead
External Examiner Quality Assurance of Gateway to Completion Requirements	Externally verify 10 or 10% of apprentices per cohort entering Gateway to Completion (select using an online random number calculator). 10 apprentices or 10% of the cohort (whichever is larger) will be chosen at the start of Gateway to Completion. If any of these apprentices do not progress to assessment board at this time, additional apprentices will be chosen to meet the sampling thresholds. The external examiner reserves the right to request checks of more apprentice records if they wish to. Checks: 1) All apprentices have a Gateway to Completion form signed. - Check all Gateway to Completion requirements are met e.g., Maths and English certificates, where applicable due to Apprenticeship Funding Rules, PAD and/or portfolio (where relevant), required credits are achieved.	AA/Programme Lead	Programme Lead

	2) Programme specific checks (if required) e.g., Hours completed		
Move into AA Period	For programmes with Fully Integrated AAs where assessment board is the AA. Ensure access is given to EE to verify the data as per the programme specific AA requirements.	AA/Programme Lead and EE	Programme Lead
	For programmes with integrated EPA ensure assessments are completed and marked in line with AA and within deadlines ready for exam board.	AA Lead and IA	Programme Lead
External Examiner Checks	Any queries raised by the External Examiner can be directed to the Programme Lead.	Programme Lead and LDC	Programme lead
Exam Board (AA and Progression)	AA results presented at the board. Must have an EE, if stipulated in the AAP. Confirmation by the IA or EE at the board. Verification checks completed. ➢ Sign Assessment board verification sheet (PL, EE/IA/Chair) Programme progression results presented at the board. AA results to be presented at the board (ensure calculated as per AAP). Programme and (if applicable) AA result letters sent.	Programme Administrator	Programme Lead
Upload to regulatory body	Upload apprentices to PSRB, if applicable.	Programme administrator/Apprentice	Programme Lead
Confirm to ASU and School Apprenticeship Administrators/AA Coordinator	Programme administrator to email apprenticeships-finance@salford.ac.uk and Faculty Apprenticeship Administrator/Officer a list of apprentices who have completed, to include: 1) Date that the apprentice sat their AA. 2) Outcome of the AA. Note: Faculties record pass, fail, distinction whereas the ILR shows whether AA was achieved or not achieved. 3) Copies of the certificate get sent to ASU to be saved in Aptem. ASU to update ILR, Aptem and OneFile. Faculty Apprenticeship Administrator/Officer to claim certificates and record result within 20 days of Assessment Board.	Programme Admin Compliance co-ordinator (ASU) Faculty Apprenticeship Administrator/Officer/AA coordinator	Learning and Development Coach Team Manager

Document Control Information

Date	Version	Notes	Lead Authors	Approved by
September 2026	1.0 FINAL	First iteration considered by Quality and Standards Committee	Helen Sharman and Hannah Eyre QMO	Quality Standards Committee (QSC) 23/9/26 (with Chair's sign off of minor amendments)