

Registered Nurse and Nursing Associate Apprentices End Point Assessment – FAQs

[New flexibilities for nursing apprenticeships](#) have been announced by the Institute of Apprenticeships. The measure reflects the alignment of professional registration and end point assessment (EPA) for the Registered Nurse (RN) and Nursing Associate (NA) apprenticeship programmes. This change to the EPA process will only be applied to qualifying apprentices during the Covid-19 pandemic. More guidance aimed at training providers and End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) will be following soon.

1. To whom does this apply?

This applies to RN and NA apprentices who are on registered apprenticeship programmes (paid by levy) who have met all NMC requirements and are at gateway and are therefore occupationally competent and for whom undertaking the EPA as set out in the assessment plans is not possible during C19. **Note:** this is strictly for the duration of the Covid 19 crisis and does not apply to any other occupation/apprenticeship.

2. Can apprentices still choose to complete their EPA as set out in the assessment plan?

Yes - Some apprentices want to complete their planned EPAs and their TP/EPAO and employer can support them to do so - if at all possible.

3. How will this work?

Further guidance will be issued but we believe that HEI' and EPAOs will have a process set out which will release the funding. We would encourage HEI's to still engage with their chosen EPAO and ensure they are named on the ILR.

4. Does the EPA dispensation apply to the HEE Quality Assured NA programmes?

This guidance only applies to apprenticeships and not the first waves of traditional foundation degree NA programmes.

Both V1 (ref ST0508) and V3 (ref ST0827) of the NA apprenticeship standard are NMC approved, so the guidance applies to **all** NA apprentices who have completed in alignment of professional registration for the nursing associate apprenticeship programmes.

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The below is taken from the NA apprenticeship standards:

V1 (ref ST0508) NA standard states (this is the standard many are calling the 'HEE' standard):

A regulated level 5 qualification such as a Foundation Degree or Level 5 Diploma of Higher Education delivered by an institution approved by the NMC to provide pre-registration nursing education.

V3 (ref ST0827) NA standard states:

Foundation Degree approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council

******The 'HEE' (V1) validated programmes are an apprenticeship, and still need an EPA. The first wave of providers didn't have to be approved by the NMC (although all were NMC approved providers of nursing programmes) in addition to this the HEE teams still had to QA that the level of education and experience met NMC standards for people on those earlier waves to join the register. Therefore they are both essentially NMC approved programmes and both lead to NMC registration.

5. What is the definition of 'at Gateway'?

Learners at gateway are classed as those who have met all NMC programme requirements and are therefore occupationally competent but cannot undertake EPA as set out in the assessment plan due to Covid-19 restrictions. Learners must be identified on the ILR as at Gateway. They must also have completed their Functional Skills.

6. What should I do about Nursing Associate/Registered Nurse apprentices who are due to complete later this year?

At present, we do not know how long the Covid-19 crisis will last. Therefore, training providers should concentrate on getting their apprentices through their qualification (degree or foundation degree) and ensuring that they have met all requirements for the NMC professional registration. If the exemption still applies later in the year, then they will be awarded their apprenticeship via the flexed EPA process. If we are out of the crisis, the worst case scenario is that they will have to undertake their EPA as set out in the assessment plan, which should be quite straightforward and at worst, would need them to extend their programme to allow for a short EPA preparation gateway period.

Organisations will be aware of this IFATE guidance, but apprentices may not be, so it is up to you what you inform your apprentices of, but please agree this with the employers so that they don't tell the apprentices something different.

Any apprentices who are at gateway now, or in the next month or so, should be informed and completed as quickly as possible so that they can become registered staff within their organisation. For those completing later in the summer, it may be sensible to continue as normal for now and assess again closer to the time, with a focus on completing the qualification and NMC registration.

7. Are the same flexibilities to placements being applied for Nursing Associate and Registered Nurse apprentices as for direct entry students, as per NMC guidance?

This is something that we have raised with the NMC and are seeking to clarify as soon as possible, as we understand that final placements may have been affected for apprentices.

For apprenticeship updates, resources and guidance related to Coronavirus (Covid-19) please visit [HASO](https://haso.org.uk).

