

Correspondence Business Update - Issue 54 (April 2020)

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1. Coronavirus (COVID-19): apprenticeship programme response

These are difficult times for employers, apprentices and providers of apprenticeship training and assessment. As part of the cross-government efforts to respond to the impact of COVID-19, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is implementing new measures, for the duration of the pandemic, to make it easier for apprenticeships to continue and complete in a different way if they need to, or to break and resume an apprenticeship later when that becomes possible.

[This document sets out guidance](#) and some temporary flexibilities that we are introducing to the programme during the pandemic, and provides answers to questions related to these changes and other common questions. Our information should be read alongside the [support to business page on GOV.UK](#).

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) has also published [new guidance on the delivery of assessment](#).

This guidance includes information on:

- delivering apprenticeships flexibly to those working at home
- continuing training and end-point assessment for furloughed apprentices
- applying the policy on breaks in learning
- delays to end-point assessment (EPA)
- alternative arrangements for EPA and external quality assurance

Specifically, we are:

- introducing flexibilities to allow furloughed apprentices to continue their training, as long as it does not provide services to, or generate revenue for, their employer
- encouraging training providers to deliver training to apprentices remotely and via e-learning as far as is practicable
- allowing the modification of end-point assessment arrangements, including remote assessments wherever practicable and possible in order to maintain progress and achievement for apprentices
- clarifying that apprentices ready for assessment, but who cannot be assessed due to COVID-19 issues, can have their end-point assessment rescheduled. Apprentices whose gateway is delayed can have an extension to the assessment timeframe
- enabling employers and training providers to report and initiate a break in learning, where the interruption to learning due to COVID-19 is greater than 4 weeks
- clarification on how to record breaks in learning so that funding is not unnecessarily disrupted
- confirming that, where apprentices are made redundant, it is our ambition to find them alternative employment and continue their apprenticeship as quickly as possible and within 12 weeks

Our objective for these measures is to support all employers, and apprenticeship training and assessment providers, to retain their apprentices and to help them plan with more certainty through this difficult period of disruption.

[Read more on GOV.UK](#).

2. Route reviews update

Current route reviews

Stakeholder engagement and effective consultation with employers is at the heart of the Institute’s approach to Route Reviews. They are also committed to providing as much stability as possible whilst the apprenticeship system responds to the disruption brought about by COVID-19.

It has therefore been decided to pause the on-going Route Reviews and to postpone the announcement of any outcomes. When the circumstances ease, it is their intention to return to the on-going reviews and they will continue to make preparations for this in the meantime.

The Institute had announced that the Care Services and Health and Science Reviews would be expected to launch during Summer 2020. The impact of COVID-19 makes this inadvisable, so they have made the decision to delay the launch until further notice.

The outcomes of the Digital Route Review are now complete, so they will continue to work with Trailblazer Groups, where possible.

If you have any further queries about a specific Route Review, please refer to the [route review section of the website](#).

If you have any questions on COVID-19 and the Institute’s response please contact Enquiries.IFA@education.gov.uk.

If you have a question about a specific route review please use:

- IFAREVIEW.AGRICULTUREENVANDANIMALCARE@education.gov.uk
- IFA.CARESERVICESREVIEW@education.gov.uk
- IFA.CREATIVEANDDESIGNREVIEW@education.gov.uk
- IFA.ENGINEERINGANDMANUFACTURING@education.gov.uk
- IFA.HAIRANDBEAUTYREVIEW@education.gov.uk
- IFA.HEALTHANDSCIENCE@education.gov.uk

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[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support](#)

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