

End-point assessment plan for Countryside Worker apprenticeship standard

Apprenticeship standard reference number	Apprenticeship standard level	Integrated end-point assessment
ST0408	2	No

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Introduction and overview

This document sets out the requirements for end-point assessment (EPA) for the Countryside Worker apprenticeship standard. It is for end-point assessment organisations (EPAOs) who need to know how the EPA for this apprenticeship must operate. It will also be of interest to Countryside Worker apprentices, their employers and training providers.

Full time apprentices will typically spend 12 months on-programme (before the gateway) working towards the occupational standard, with a minimum of 20% off-the-job training. All apprentices must spend a minimum of 12 months on-programme.

The EPA period should only start, and the EPA be arranged, once the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is deemed to be consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard, all of the pre-requisite gateway requirements for EPA have been met and can be evidenced to an EPAO.

For level 2 apprenticeships, apprentices without English and Mathematics at level 2 must achieve level 1 English and Mathematics and take the tests for level 2 prior to taking their EPA.

The EPA must be completed within an EPA period lasting typically 4 month(s), after the EPA gateway.

EPA must be conducted by an organisation approved to offer services against this apprenticeship standard, as selected by the employer, from the Education & Skills Funding Agency's Register of End-point assessment Organisations (RoEPAO).

The EPA consists of 3 discrete assessment methods.

The individual assessment methods will have the following grades:

Assessment method 1: On-line test

- Fail
- Pass
- Distinction

Assessment method 2: Practical Skills Assessment

- Fail
- Pass
- Distinction

Assessment method 3: Professional discussion

- Fail
- Pass
- Distinction

Performance in the EPA will determine the overall apprenticeship standard grade of:

- Fail
- Pass
- Distinction

EPA summary table

On-programme (typically 12 months)	Training to develop the occupation standard's knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs).
End-point assessment gateway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer is satisfied the apprentice is consistently working at, or above, the level of the occupational standard. • English and mathematics Level 1 achieved • English and mathematics at Level 2 attempted <p>Apprentices must complete:</p> <p>A portfolio of evidence which must be produced by the Apprentice to be used to support the professional discussion.</p>
End-point assessment (which will typically take 4 months)	<p>Assessment method 1: On-line test</p> <p>With the following grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fail · Pass · Distinction <p>Assessment method 2: Practical Skills Assessment</p> <p>With the following grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fail · Pass · Distinction <p>Assessment method 3: Professional discussion</p> <p>With the following grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fail · Pass · Distinction

Length of end-point assessment period

The EPA will be completed within an EPA period lasting typically of 4 month(s), after the EPA gateway.

Order of assessment methods

The assessment methods can be delivered in any order.

Gateway

The EPA period should only start once the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard, that is to say they are deemed to have achieved occupational competence. In making this decision, the employer may take advice from the apprentice's training provider(s), but the decision must ultimately be made solely by the employer.

The apprentice must have completed the following gateway requirements prior to starting EPA:

- English and mathematics Level 1 achieved
- English and mathematics at Level 2 attempted

For the On-line test:

- no specific requirements

For the Practical Skills Assessment:

- no specific requirements

For the Professional discussion, the apprentice will be required to submit:

- A portfolio of evidence to underpin this method.
- The format and structure of the portfolio needs to be agreed between the employer, the apprentice and the EPAO (e.g. hard copy or on-line). However, the content must be sufficient to evidence that the apprentice can apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours required as mapped to the professional discussion.
- There must be at least one piece of evidence mapped to each knowledge, skill and behaviour. One piece of evidence can be referenced against more than one knowledge, skill or behavioural requirement. It is expected that there will typically be a minimum of 10 pieces and a maximum of 15 pieces of evidence.
- The portfolio should cover the KSBs for the assessment method it is underpinning and of activities that have been completed and referenced against the KSBs, supported by appropriate evidence, including photographic evidence and work products, such work instructions, safety

documentation, company policies and procedures as appropriate to the activities. Progress review documentation, witness testimonies, and feedback from colleagues and/or clients should also be included. Self-reflective accounts should not be included as evidence. The apprentice's Manager/Mentor will typically support the development of the portfolio in accordance with company policy and procedures, although the assessment organisation will provide further guidance on the content

- The employer must sign off the portfolio and confirm to the EPAO that this is the apprentice's own work.
- The portfolio will not be directly assessed.

Assessment methods

Assessment method 1: On-line test (This assessment method has 1 component.)

Assessment method 1 component 1:

Overview

The rationale for this assessment method is:

The apprentices have been exposed to a considerable amount of knowledge based information about protected landscapes and conservation activities and this method is appropriate to ensure that this knowledge is embedded.

Test Format

The test can be:

- computer based
- paper based

It will consist of 50 multiple-choice questions each with 4 possible options and only one correct answer.

These questions will consist of:

- Closed response questions (i.e. multiple-choice questions)

Test administration

Apprentices must have a maximum of 75 minutes to complete the test.

The test is closed book which means that the apprentice cannot refer to reference books or materials.

Apprentices must take the test in a suitably controlled environment that is a quiet space, free of distractions and influence, in the presence of an invigilator. The invigilator may be the independent assessor or specialised (proctor) software, if the test can be taken on-line or another external person employed by the EPAO. The EPAO is required to have an invigilation policy that will set out how the test/examination is to be carried out. This will include specifying the most appropriate ratio of apprentices to invigilators to best take into account the setting and security required in administering the test/examination.

The EPAO is responsible for ensuring the security of testing they administer to ensure the test remains valid and reliable (this includes any arrangements made using online tools). The EPAO is responsible for verifying the validity of the identity of the person taking the test.

This assessment method will be carried out as follows:

All KSBs mapped to this assessment method must be tested within the 50 questions.

The EPAO must verify the suitability of the venue for taking the test.

Marking

Tests must be marked by independent assessors or markers employed by the EPAO following a marking guide produced by the EPAO. Alternatively, marking by computer is permissible where questions types allow this, to improve marking reliability.

Any incorrect or missing answers must be assigned 0 marks.

Any correct answers must be assigned 1 mark.

Question and resources development

Questions must be written by EPAOs and must be relevant to the occupation and employer settings. It is recommended that this be done in consultation with employers of this occupation. EPAOs should also maintain the security and confidentiality of their questions when consulting employers. EPAOs must develop 'question banks' of sufficient size to prevent predictability and review them regularly (and at least once a year) to ensure they, and the questions they contain, are fit for purpose.

Required supporting material

As a minimum EPAOs will produce the following material to support this method:

- A test specification
- sample test and mark scheme
- live test and mark scheme
- analysis reports which show areas of weakness for completed tests/exams and an invigilation policy.
- Question bank

Assessment method 2: Practical Skills Assessment (This assessment method has 1 component.)

Overview

Apprentices must be observed by an independent assessor completing 3 practical skills assessment tasks in which they will demonstrate the KSBs assigned to this assessment method. The end-point assessment organisation will arrange for the practical skills assessment to take place, in consultation with the employer. Practical skills assessments must be carried out over an assessment time of 6

hour(s), maximum 2 hours per task. The demonstrations will be held over a maximum of 2 working day(s). The reason for this duration is that different tasks may have to be done in different settings e.g. dry stone walling would be undertaken in a different place to constructing a fence. The independent assessor has the discretion to increase the time of each task by up to 10% to allow the apprentice to complete the last task that is part of this element of the EPA.

The independent assessor may conduct and observe only one apprentice at a time during this assessment method.

The rationale for this assessment method is:

This is a practical skills based apprenticeship and the successful apprentice needs to be able to demonstrate competence to an assessor.

Delivery

Apprentices must be provided with both written and verbal instructions at the beginning of the tasks (before the clock starts), on the tasks they must complete, including the timescales they are working to. These written instructions should be no longer than 300 words.

The practical skills assessment should be conducted in the following way to take account of the occupational context in which the apprentice operates:

The following Skills **(S6)** and **(S10)** MUST be observed during each of the three practical skills assessments.

The following activities MUST be observed during the skills assessment:

Task One: Managing Vegetation

- Manage habitats using a range of specialist techniques using the appropriate tools and equipment.

Task Two: Construction, repair and maintenance

- Construct, maintain or repair boundaries and access ways

Task Three: Construct and Maintenance of site furniture

- Construct and /or maintain site furniture for access and interpretation (in this context, this means an interpretive sign or an information board).

For all three tasks the apprentice will have 20 minutes at the end of each task (this is in addition to the 6 hour timescale) for the Independent Assessor to ask a minimum of 5 questions based on the task to confirm the apprentice's understanding. Independent assessors must use the question bank as a source for questioning but must use their professional judgement to tailor those questions appropriately and are responsible for generating appropriate follow-up questions in-line with the assessor's training

and the EPAO's standardisation process. The questions provide the apprentice the opportunity to cover any gaps. Sufficient questioning should be carried out to ensure that all apprentices have the opportunity to meet pass and distinction requirements.

The Independent Assessor will not be allowed to ask any questions during the tasks and will have the opportunity to ask any questions during the time allocated at the end of the assessment.

There may be breaks during the practical skills assessment to allow the apprentice to have meal breaks. During these periods, provision must be made to manage the apprentice to prevent any collusion or advice from colleagues or the employer.

KSBs observed and answers to questions must be documented by the independent assessor.

The independent assessor will make all grading decisions and these will be finalised by the EPAO.

Questions and resources development

EPAOs will create and set open questions to assess related underpinning KSBs.

EPAOs will produce specifications for a range of activities to outline in detail how the practical skills assessment will operate, what they will cover and what should be looked for. It is recommended that this be done in consultation with employers. EPAOs should put measures and procedures in place to maintain the security and confidentiality of their specifications if employers are consulted. Specifications must be standardised by the EPAO.

EPAOs must develop 'practical specification banks' of sufficient size to prevent predictability and review them regularly (and at least once a year) to ensure they, and the specifications they contain, are fit for purpose. The specifications, including questions relating to underpinning KSBs must be varied, yet allow assessment of the relevant KSBs.

EPAOs must develop a question bank for this method. The 'question bank' must be of sufficient size to prevent predictability and the EPAO must review it regularly (and at least once a year) to ensure that it, and its content, are fit for purpose. The questions relating to underpinning KSBs must be varied, yet allow assessment of the relevant KSBs.

Venue

Practical skills assessments must be conducted in one of the following locations:

- the employer's premises or
- a suitable venue selected by the EPAO (e.g. an employer's premises)

The employer should provide the tools and necessary materials for the practical skills assessment, unless an alternative venue is selected by the EPAO in which case the latter should provide tools and materials. The tools should include a selection of tools such as shovels, hammers, panel saws, levels, drills, strimmer/brushcutter, pruning saw and loppers plus appropriate PPE.

Support material

EPAOs will produce the following material to support this assessment method:

- EPAOs will provide a standard template upon which to record the assessment outcome. EPAOs must review the tasks regularly (at least annually) to ensure they, and the specifications they contain, are fit for purpose.
- The assessment will be marked by an independent assessor appointed by an EPAO following a marking guide produced by the EPAO
- EPAOs must provide training and guidance to independent assessors on how to compile, tailor and ask appropriate questions based on the content of the practical skills assessments that they have observed.
- Practical specification bank
- Question bank of open questions to assess related underpinning KSBs. Independent assessors must use the question bank as a source for questioning but must use their professional judgement to tailor those questions appropriately and are responsible for generating appropriate questions in-line with the assessors' training and the EPAO's standardisation process. The 'question bank' must be of sufficient size to prevent predictability and the EPAO must review it regularly (and at least once a year) to ensure that it, and its content, are fit for purpose. The questions relating to underpinning KSBs must be varied, yet allow assessment of the relevant KSBs.

Assessment method 3: Professional discussion (This assessment method has 1 component.)

Assessment method 3 component 1:

Overview

This assessment will take the form of a professional discussion which must be appropriately structured to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence and excellence and cover the KSBs assigned to this assessment method. It will involve the questions that will focus on analysis of given scenarios, coverage of prior learning or activity, problem solving.

The rationale for this assessment method is:

Some aspects of the apprenticeship can only be determined through this method, for example some of the behaviours required to be successful.

Delivery

The independent assessors will conduct and assess the professional discussion.

The professional discussion must last for 45 minutes. The Independent Assessor has the discretion to increase the time of the professional discussion by up to 10% to allow the apprentice to complete their last answer. Further time may be granted for apprentices with appropriate needs, in-line with the EPAO's Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

During this method, the independent assessor must combine questions from the EPAO's question bank and those generated by themselves.

The professional discussion will be conducted as set out here:

The Professional Discussion will be a structured discussion between the Apprentice and Independent Assessor. It will also cover the Apprentice's achievements, the standard of their work and their approach. The portfolio of evidence will be used to inform questioning and underpin answers given by the apprentice during the professional discussion.

The Professional Discussion will be a length of 45 minutes (+ 10% at the discretion of the assessor, to provide scope for the Apprentice to demonstrate their full abilities) and will be used to assess the Countryside worker on:

- Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, mapped in the mapping table below, using the Apprentice's portfolio of evidence to underpin the discussion. (The portfolio is not directly assessed but reviewed by the independent assessor).

The Professional Discussion will provide the opportunity for the Apprentice to synoptically demonstrate Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.

The portfolio must be reviewed by the Independent Assessor; therefore, it must be submitted at Gateway stage. The portfolio is used as a vehicle for the Apprentice to bring to life their Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours as required during questioning by the Independent Assessor. The portfolio can be used by the Apprentice to refer to, to exemplify a point. Questioning will be used to authenticate evidence, experience and competence.

The Professional Discussion will also test the currency, validity and coverage of the evidence presented in the portfolio in relation to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours. The Independent Assessor will use standardised competency-based questions from an agreed set of questions developed by the EPAO. Questions will be reviewed annually and moderated by the EPAO. The EPAO will also provide a template to record Apprentice responses. In addition, the independent assessor can compile, tailor and ask their own questions based on the content of the portfolio that they have reviewed.

There will be a minimum of 8 competency-based questions asked during the Professional Discussion.

Follow up questions may be used in addition to the competency-based questions during the 45-minute assessment duration to probe further into the detail to satisfy the Independent Assessor of the Apprentices' depth of Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.

The Professional Discussion will be conducted under controlled conditions. The Apprentice responses will be documented by the Independent Assessor.

Video conferencing can be used to conduct the professional discussion, but the EPAO must have processes in place to verify the identity of the apprentice and ensure the apprentice is not being aided in some way.

The Independent Assessor must use the assessment tools and procedures that are set by the EPAO to record the professional discussion.

The independent assessor will make all grading decisions

Venue

The professional discussion should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence.

The professional discussion can take place in any of the following:

- employer's premises
- a suitable venue selected by the EPAO (for example a training provider's premises)

Other relevant information

A structured test specification and question bank must be developed by EPAOs. The 'question bank' must be of sufficient size to prevent predictability and the EPAO must review it regularly (at least once a year) to ensure that it, and its content, are fit for purpose. The specifications, including questions relating to the underpinning KSBs, must be varied yet allow assessment of the relevant KSBs.

EPAOs must ensure that apprentices have a different set of questions in the case of re-sits/re-takes.

Independent assessors must be developed and trained by the EPAO in the conduct of professional discussion and reaching consistent judgement.

EPAOs will produce the following material to support this assessment method:

- outline of the assessment method's requirements
- marking materials
- Test specification and question bank

Reasonable adjustments

The EPAO must have in place clear and fair arrangements for making reasonable adjustments for this apprenticeship standard. This should include how an apprentice qualifies for reasonable adjustment and what reasonable adjustments will be made. The adjustments must maintain the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment methods outlined in this assessment plan.

Weighting of assessment methods

All assessment methods are weighted equally in their contribution to the overall EPA grade.

Grading

Assessment method 1: On-line test

KSBs	Fail	Pass	Distinction
K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 K6 K7 K8 K9 K10 K11 K13 K15 S8	0-29 marks	30-39 marks	40 -50 marks

Assessment method 2: Practical Skills Assessment

KSBs	Fail	Pass (all must be achieved)	Distinction (all must be achieved in addition to Pass)
K3 K4 K13 S1 S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7 S10 B7	Does not meet the pass criteria	<p>Uses and maintains a range of tools and equipment safely (minimum 3 x hand tools, minimum 2 x power tools) and demonstrate an understanding of which tool is appropriate for a particular task and certification requirements and selecting the correct tools. (K13, S6)</p> <p>Selects correct equipment and materials to construct or repair boundaries and construct or maintain access ways. (S1, S2, S3, S4)</p> <p>Demonstrates an accurate understanding of health and safety procedures and requirements to follow on site. (K13 B7)</p> <p>Identifies practical opportunities for habitat enhancement or managing invasive non-native species and can demonstrate how these can be implemented. (S1, S4)</p>	<p>In addition to pass criteria;</p> <p>Pre-empts potential problems and takes action to prevent them before they occur. For example, reviewing work instructions and understanding potential issues. (S7)</p> <p>Proactively identifies additional hazards, assesses risks and implements control measures to produce a risk assessment using a standard format for a countryside task. (K13, S10, B7)</p> <p>Demonstrates compliance with the appropriate British Standards for the piece of work; explains regional differences in the same boundary type e.g. dry stone walls are constructed differently depending upon the locally available stone. (S2)</p> <p>Complies with the appropriate British Standards for the piece of work; adapts standard methods to take account of site specific terrain. e.g. flags used in areas of heavy footfall, boardwalk on</p>

		<p>Produces a simple dynamic risk assessment and is able to use this effectively on site. (S10, B7, K13)</p> <p>Accurately maintains the habitat for task 1 (S1, S4)</p> <p>Constructs or repairs a boundary to a safe functioning standard; e.g. stock fences, post and rail fences, drystone walls and hedges. (S2)</p> <p>Accurately describes the reasons behind using the boundary constructed or repaired (K3)</p> <p>Constructs or repairs a path surface ensuring that it will drain properly and to a safe useable standard from either aggregate chippings, wood chippings, pitching stone/flags or timber. (S3)</p> <p>Explain the reason behind using particular surface type. (K4)</p> <p>At the end of each task, removes all work equipment/materials to leave the site clear and tidy. (B7)</p> <p>Identifies species and type of vegetation requiring control, select methods and equipment used to control and remove unwanted plant material. (S1)</p> <p>Identifies and demonstrate an understanding of the negative impacts of invasive species as well as demonstrate the different methods of control e.g. pulling out, use of chemicals (S1 S4)</p> <p>Constructs or repairs a structure to a safe useable</p>	<p>lengths prone to standing water. (S5)</p> <p>Explains how keeping accurate records integrates with the wider management of access routes e.g. understanding what levels of activity and spend have been undertaken on particular routes. (S5)</p> <p>Explains reasons as to why control is needed and why the method of control has been chosen (S1, S4)</p> <p>Describes negative impacts of invasive species as well as describe their control with clear breadth of knowledge and attention to detail; (S1, S4)</p> <p>.</p> <p>Explains when standards might need to be adapted and what adaptations would be appropriate e.g. installing a stile on a steep slope needs to ensure that the height of the step is appropriate to users. (S7, K13, B7)</p>
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		<p>standard e.g. stiles, gates, bridges, steps, paths, drains. (S5)</p> <p>Finds solutions to any problems that may arise in undertaking the practical task. (S7)</p>	
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Assessment method 3: Professional discussion

KSBs	Fail	Pass (all must be achieved)	Distinction (all must be achieved in addition to Pass)
<p>K5 K7 K8 K12 K14</p> <p>S9 S11</p> <p>B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6</p>	Does not meet the pass criteria	<p>Demonstrates a positive approach to working outdoors and in all weathers to benefit the countryside and environment. (B1, B2,)</p> <p>Communicates work related information logically and professionally in a range of situations using a variety of methods as identified in the standard. (B6)</p> <p>Explains their approach towards professionalism and work ethic including a positive attitude towards work both autonomously and as part of a team, having pride in their work in different work locations and different working environments and be able to identify their own personal developments needs and how these could be met. (B2, B3, B4, B5)</p> <p>Explains how they communicate effectively to a variety of people in different work situations and how they</p>	<p>In addition to pass criteria.</p> <p>Give an example of how the understanding of the farming calendar and communicating this to clients has enhanced the reputation of the organisation and helps users to properly use, look after and enjoy the countryside. How application of this knowledge applies to job role and enhances understanding of why work is being undertaken. (B6)</p> <p>Explain the pros and cons of using a map/compass and GPS equipment. (K12)</p> <p>Describes how teams can contribute to overall goals in different ways. (B3)</p> <p>Describes public queries they have reported and follow up actions they have taken as a result. (B7)</p> <p>Pre-empts potential problems and takes action to prevent them before they occur. For example, reviewing work instructions and understanding potential issues. (S7)</p>

		<p>adapt their approach accordingly. (S11)</p> <p>Describes the farming calendar and its importance in planning work. (K5)</p> <p>Demonstrates an accurate understanding of current environmental, wildlife and health and safety legislation, standards and codes of practice in relation to countryside management e.g. Wildlife and Countryside Act etc. (K8)</p> <p>Explains how at least two surveys methods have been carried out and why those methods were chosen. (K7, S9)</p> <p>Explains how to navigate in the countryside, read a map and use a compass. (K12)</p> <p>Explains how to use first aid to treat simple injuries. (K14)</p>	<p>Demonstrates the ability to successfully make adjustments to practice. (S7)</p>
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Overall EPA grading

All EPA methods must be passed for the EPA to be passed overall.

Apprentices must gain a pass in one method plus a pass or higher in all other methods to gain a pass
Apprentices must gain a distinction in all three assessment methods to gain a distinction

Grades from individual assessment methods should be combined in the following way to determine the grade of the EPA as a whole:

Assessment method 1	Assessment method 2	Assessment method 3	Overall grading
Fail	Any grade	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Fail	Any grade	Fail
Any grade	Any grade	Fail	Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Pass	Pass	Distinction	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Pass	Pass
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Re-sits and re-takes

Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit or a re-take. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does.

Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for the re-sit or a re-take. The apprentice's employer will need to agree that either a re-sit or re-take is an appropriate course of action.

An apprentice who fails an assessment method, and therefore the EPA in the first instance, will be required to re-sit or re-take any failed assessment methods only.

Any assessment method re-sit or re-take must be taken during the maximum EPA period, otherwise the entire EPA must be taken again, unless in the opinion of the EPAO exceptional circumstances apply outside the control of the apprentice or their employer.

Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to distinction.

Where any assessment method has to be re-sat or re-taken, the apprentice will be awarded a maximum EPA grade of distinction.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Apprentice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in development opportunities to improve their knowledge skills and behaviours as outlined in the standard • meet all gateway requirements when advised by the employer • understand the purpose and importance of EPA and undertake EPA
Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the apprentice to achieve the KSBs outlined in the standard to their best ability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determines when the apprentice is working at or above the level outlined in the standard and is ready for EPA • select the EPAO • confirm all EPA gateway requirements have been met • confirm arrangements with EPAO for the EPA (who, when, where) in a timely manner • ensure apprentice is well prepared for the EPA <p>Should not be involved in the delivery of the EPA</p>
EPAO	<p>As a minimum EPAOs should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the occupational role • appoint administrators/invigilators and markers to administer/invigilate and mark the EPA • provide training and CPD to the independent assessors they employ to undertake the EPA • provide adequate information, advice and guidance documentation to enable apprentices, employers and providers to prepare for the EPA • deliver the end-point assessment outlined in this EPA plan in a timely manner • prepare and provide all required material and resources required for delivery of the EPA in-line with best practices • use appropriate assessment recording documentation to ensure a clear and auditable mechanism for providing assessment decision feedback to the apprentice • have no direct connection with the apprentice, their employer or training provider i.e. there must be no conflict of interest • maintain robust internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures and processes, and conducts these on a regular basis • conform to the requirements of the nominated external quality assurance body • organise standardisation events and activities in accordance with this plan's IQA section • organise and conduct moderation of independent assessors' marking in accordance with this plan • have, and operate, an appeals process • arrange for certification with the relevant training provider
Independent assessor	<p>As a minimum an independent assessor should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the standard and assessment plan • deliver the end-point assessment in-line with the EPA plan • comply to the IQA requirements of the EPAO • be independent of the apprentice, their employer and training provider(s) i.e. there must be no conflict of interest • satisfy the criteria outlined in this EPA plan • hold or be working towards an independent assessor qualification e.g. A1 and have had training from their EPAO in terms of good assessment practice, operating the assessment tools and grading • have the capability to assess the apprentice at this level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attend the required number of EPAOs standardisation and training events per year (as defined in the IQA section)
Training provider	<p>As a minimum the training provider should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with the employer to ensure that the apprentice is given the opportunities to develop the KSBs outlined in the standard and monitor their progress during the on-programme period • advise the employer, upon request, on the apprentice's readiness for EPA prior to the gateway • Plays no part in the EPA itself

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

Internal quality assurance refers to the requirements that EPA organisations must have in place to ensure consistent (reliable) and accurate (valid) assessment decisions. EPA organisations for this EPA must:

- appoint independent assessors who have knowledge of the following occupational areas: Should have relevant experience of practical conservation work and also have a relevant assessor's qualification.
- appoint independent assessors who have recent relevant experience of the occupation/sector at least one level above the apprentice gained in the last three years or significant experience of the occupation/sector gained over at least 5 years work experience during the last 10 years.
- appoint independent assessors who are competent to deliver the end-point assessment
- provide training for independent assessors in terms of good assessment practice, operating the assessment tools and grading
- have robust quality assurance systems and procedures that support fair, reliable and consistent assessment across the organisation and over time
- operate induction training and standardisation events for independent assessors when they begin working for the EPAO on this standard and before they deliver an updated assessment method for the first time
- ensure independent assessors attend standardisation events on an ongoing basis and at least once per year

Affordability

Affordability of the EPA will be aided by using at least some of the following practice:

- online assessment
- using an employer's premises
- assessing multiple apprentices simultaneously for the online test

Professional body recognition

Professional body recognition is not relevant to this occupational apprenticeship.

Mapping of knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)

Assessment method 1: On-line test

Knowledge
K1 Conservation; how habitats and vegetation are managed to promote conservation. The different types of management used and which is appropriate depending on the location, for example, woodland/wetland/hedgerow management.
K2 Ecology; the principles behind how our flora and fauna (both native and non-native) live and survive and how this knowledge is used practically when carrying out habitat management work effectively
K3 The principles of boundary management; how the different types of boundaries (hedges, fences, walls) relate to their location and usage; how their management varies depending on the area and their function.
K4 The principles of access management; the legal status of a Right of Way and Open Access to the Countryside legislation. The different types of surfaces (aggregate, paving, woodchip, pitching) and furniture/structures (such as gates, bridges, boardwalks, benches, bins) and their suitability for different areas and usage such as multi user access paths.
K5 Common farming practices; practical conservation work and farming support each other. A knowledge of the farming calendar, for example, lambing and harvest affects both the timing and the nature of conservation work that is carried out.
K6 Land management; how conservation work complements/interacts with other land management uses such as recreation, game keeping, tourism and estate management
K7 Surveys; the common techniques which can be used to carry out a range of surveys to help determine the nature of work on habitat or access management in a particular location
K8 Countryside legislation; the major pieces of legislation that govern the use of the countryside, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Environmental Protection Act and the Countryside Rights of Way Act
K9 Designations; conservation designations in the UK, for example, National Nature Reserves, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
K10 Climate change; the way increased rainfall and higher temperatures impact upon the countryside, conservation practices, habitats, flora, fauna and water levels and how we can go about managing these changes at local/national level
K11 Sustainability; understanding environmental best practice and the importance of using products from the local area or from sustainable sources such as wood from Forest Stewardship Council woodlands
K13 Health and safety; understanding clearly the risks inherent in carrying out tasks such as building a fence, surfacing a footpath and cutting back vegetation. This should be complemented by knowing how to write risk assessments, carry out manual handling safely and when personal protective equipment should be worn. Equally as important is recognising the potential risks to the public and knowing how to mitigate these.

K15 Pollution; the environmental impact of conservation work, for example, the use of vehicles, fuel for machinery, dealing with waste materials and how to improve working practices to benefit the environment.

Skills

S8 Identify a range of British flora and fauna native to the specific local area e.g. commonly seen birds, mammals, insects, herbs, flowers, trees or fungi to determine the appropriate habitat management needed

Assessment method 2: Practical Skills Assessment

Knowledge

K3 The principles of boundary management; how the different types of boundaries (hedges, fences, walls) relate to their location and usage; how their management varies depending on the area and their function.

K4 The principles of access management; the legal status of a Right of Way and Open Access to the Countryside legislation. The different types of surfaces (aggregate, paving, woodchip, pitching) and furniture/structures (such as gates, bridges, boardwalks, benches, bins) and their suitability for different areas and usage such as multi user access paths.

K13 Health and safety; understanding clearly the risks inherent in carrying out tasks such as building a fence, surfacing a footpath and cutting back vegetation. This should be complemented by knowing how to write risk assessments, carry out manual handling safely and when personal protective equipment should be worn. Equally as important is recognising the potential risks to the public and knowing how to mitigate these.

Skills

S1 Manage habitats using a range of specialist techniques such as coppicing, hedge laying, river/stream bank stabilisation and establishing native plants, using appropriate tools and equipment. This could also include new and developing sustainable practices such as using natural materials to manage excessive rainfall (in constructing leaky dams and bale dams) and subsequently manage erosion and flood damage.

S2 Construct or repair boundaries including different fencing types (such as post and rail, stock fencing), hedging (establishing a new hedge or laying an existing hedge) and dry stone walling depending on the geographic location/landscape and local natural materials

S3 Construct or maintain access ways, for example a path surface using aggregate, stone pitching, slabs, bark, concrete or tarmac. This will include the skills to ensure that the path surface drains properly

S4 Manage vegetation in a range of different situations, for example strimming pathways, using pesticides, managing trees and hedgerows, eradicating invasive species in order to conserve native flora and fauna
S5 Construct and /or maintain site furniture for access and interpretation. For example, bridges, gates, stiles, boardwalks, signs/waymarks or information boards using sustainable materials where possible. This will involve both following standard methods and also undertaking site specific design. For example, installing a gate on a sloping field will involve modifying the standard method, while every river or stream crossing while require a different design
S6 Use a range of hand tools and powered tools safely such as hammers, panel saws, levels, drills, trimmers or chainsaws, hold the relevant certification for powered equipment and undertake the routine maintenance of the tools used
S7 Problem solving; be resourceful in finding solutions to problems that may arise in day to day work and know when to ask a supervisor for advice
S10 Write a simple dynamic risk assessment and be able to use it on site. Use the risk assessment as the basis of working safely; understanding the hazards on the site and involved in the wide range of practical tasks undertaken by Countryside Workers. Know how to reduce these risks to an acceptable level for themselves, the public and colleagues through using safe working practices and wearing personal protective equipment.

Behaviours

B7 Safety conscious; promoting safe working practices for themselves and others

Assessment method 3: Professional discussion

Knowledge

K5 Common farming practices; practical conservation work and farming support each other. A knowledge of the farming calendar, for example, lambing and harvest affects both the timing and the nature of conservation work that is carried out.

K7 Surveys; the common techniques which can be used to carry out a range of surveys to help determine the nature of work on habitat or access management in a particular location

K8 Countryside legislation; the major pieces of legislation that govern the use of the countryside, such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act, Environmental Protection Act and the Countryside Rights of Way Act

K12 Map reading; navigating in the countryside using a map and compass in areas where satellite navigation is unreliable.

K14 First Aid; practical first aid techniques for use in outdoor situations.

Skills
S9 Undertake surveys which feed in to site management plans and work plans, for example, survey habitats and species, numbers of visitors, the condition of Rights of Way or structures/furniture.
S11 Communicate effectively in a range of situations e.g. through face to face interaction, electronic communication, telephoning or presenting to members of the public, contractors, colleagues or landowners.

Behaviours
B1 Enthusiasm for the countryside and environment; a positive approach to working outdoors, and undertaking practical tasks in all weathers
B2 Work ethic; reliability and punctuality, commitment, diligence and a pride in doing a job well
B3 Work constructively; both within a team environment and be self-motivated as a lone worker; be comfortable working both with other paid colleagues as well as unpaid volunteers
B4 Flexibility and adaptability; to working locations, hours and requirements, including changes in weather conditions, situations and working environment
B5 Skills development; responsibility for continual personal skills development
B6 Communication and behaviour; appropriate behaviour with a wide range of people including colleagues, landowners, contractors and other professionals and the public