# Ofqual External Quality Assurance

**Steve Walker**

Associate Director
Apprenticeship External Quality Assurance
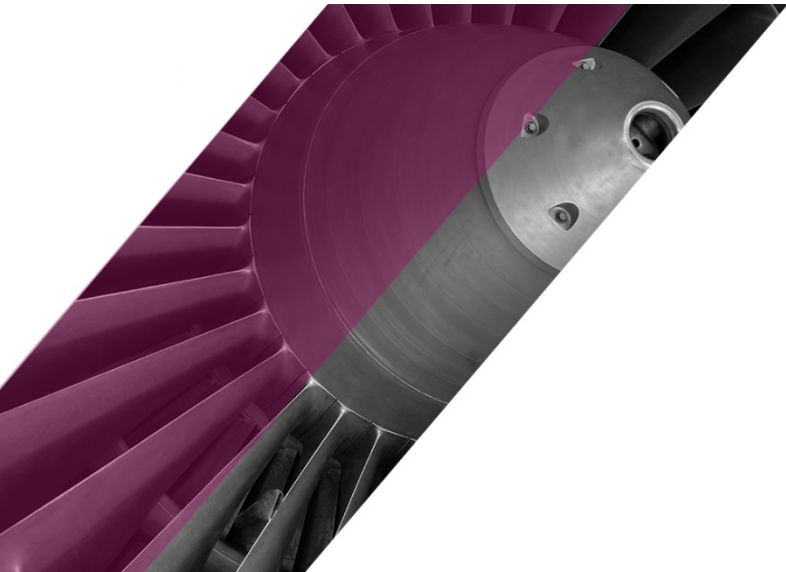
June 2019

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1. Landscape
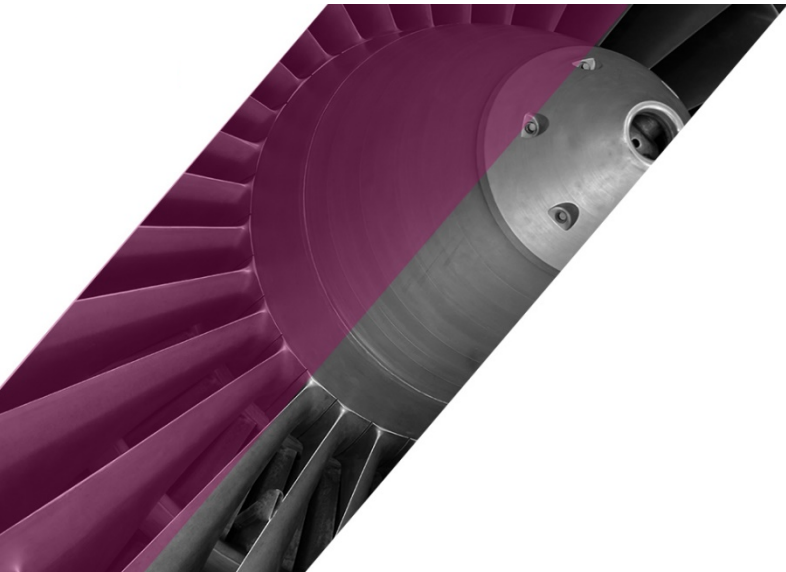
2. Ofqual's approach ('validity')

3. EQA Tools

Technical Advisory Group ('sufficient validity')

Technical evaluation
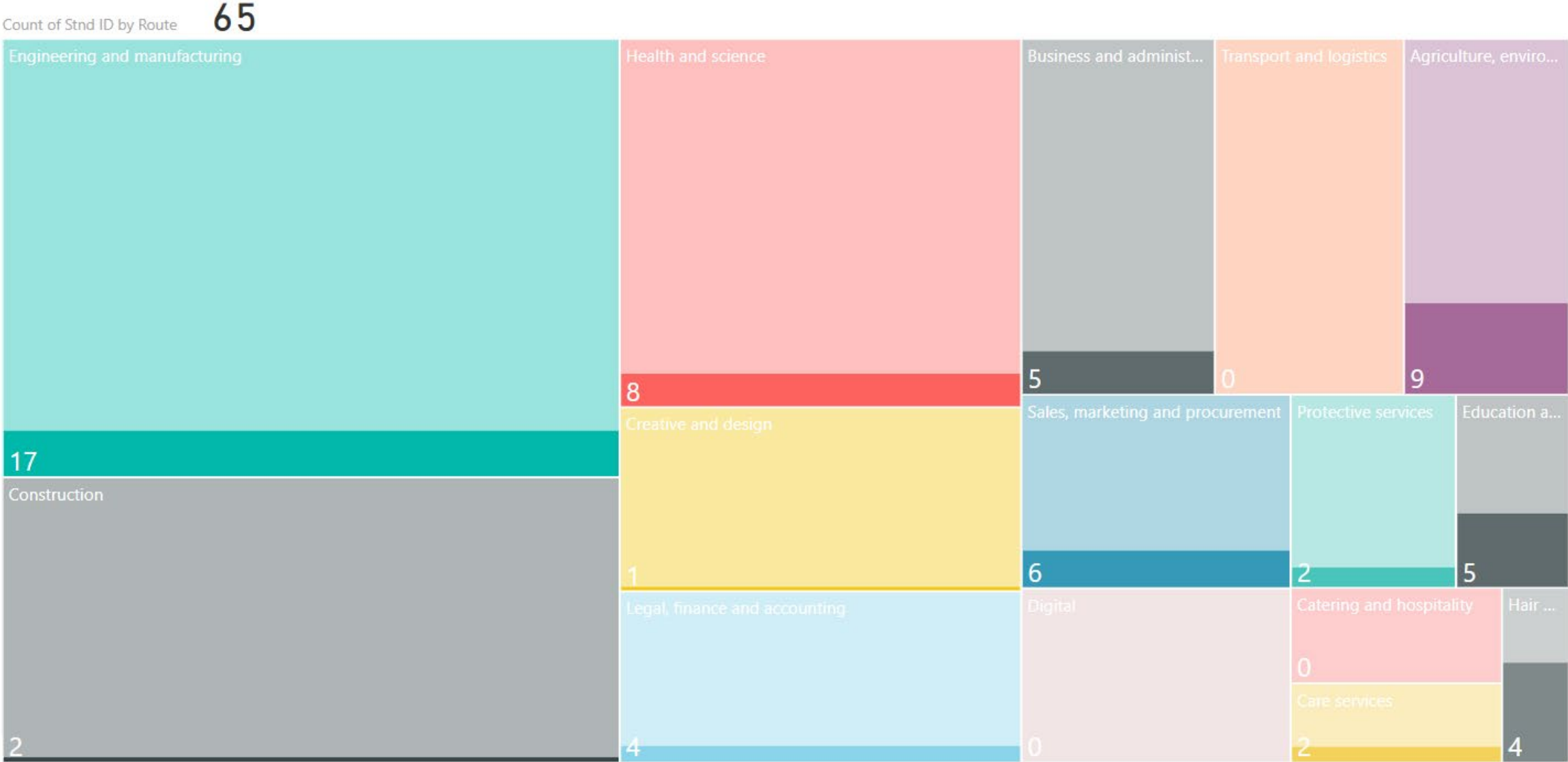
Ongoing regulation

# Landscape

# Apprenticeship landscape
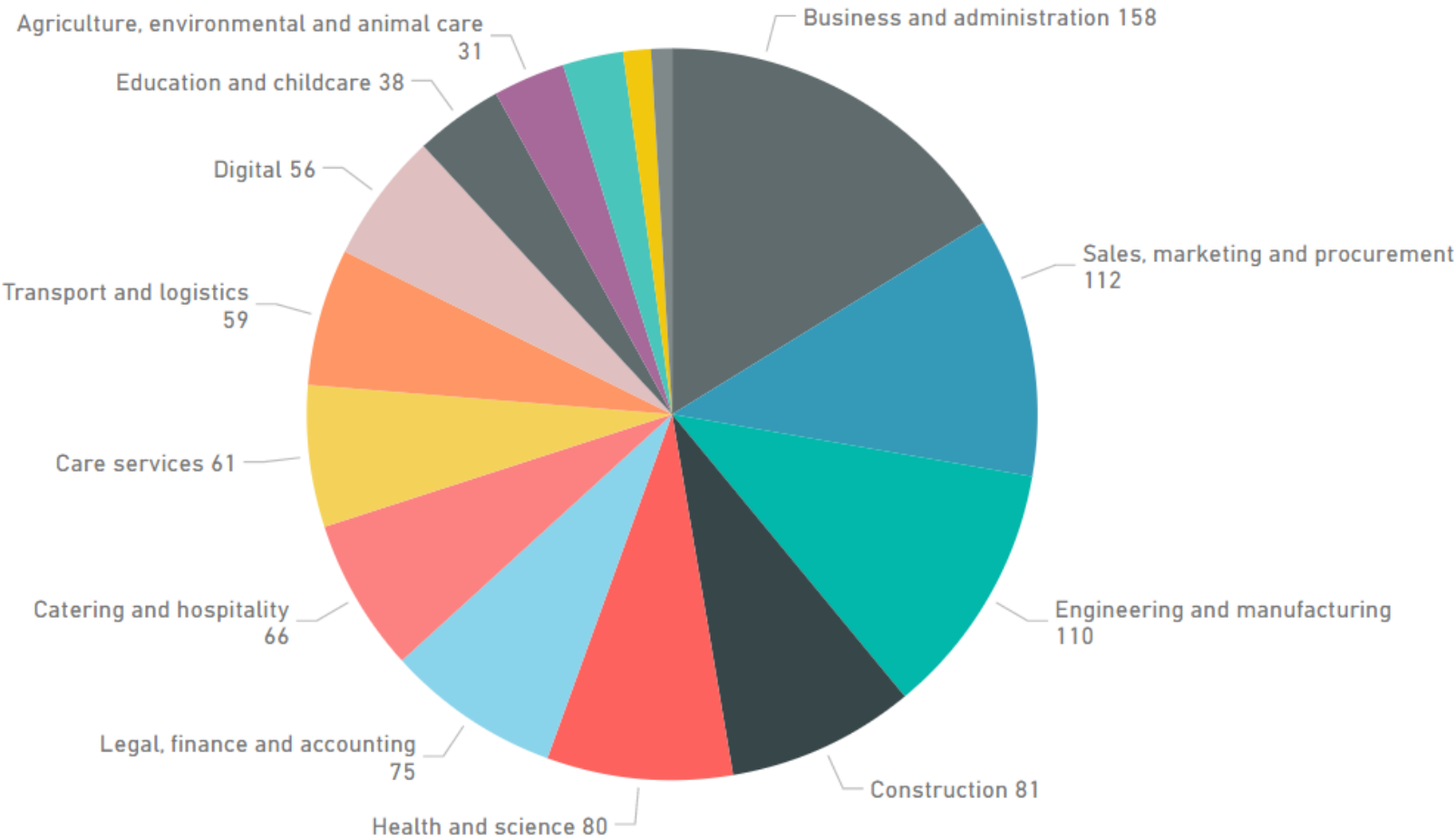
Count of Stnd ID by Route  **675**

# Apprenticeship landscape



Count of Stnd ID by Route    65

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Engineering and manufacturing | Health and science | Business and administ... | Transport and logistics |
| | | | Agriculture, enviro... |
| 17 | 8 | 5 | 0 |
| Construction | Creative and design | Sales, marketing and procurement | Protective services |
| | | | Education a... |
| | 1 | 6 | 2 |
| | Legal, finance and accounting | Digital | Catering and hospitality |
| | | | Hair ... |
| | | | Care services |
| 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | 2 |
| | | | 9 |
| | | | 5 |
| | | | 4 |

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# EPAs from approved standards

Currently a potential **964** EPAs from **454** approved Standards

Count of EPA ID by Route **964**



- Business and administration 158
- Sales, marketing and procurement 112
- Engineering and manufacturing 110
- Construction 81
- Health and science 80
- Legal, finance and accounting 75
- Catering and hospitality 66
- Care services 61
- Transport and logistics 59
- Digital 56
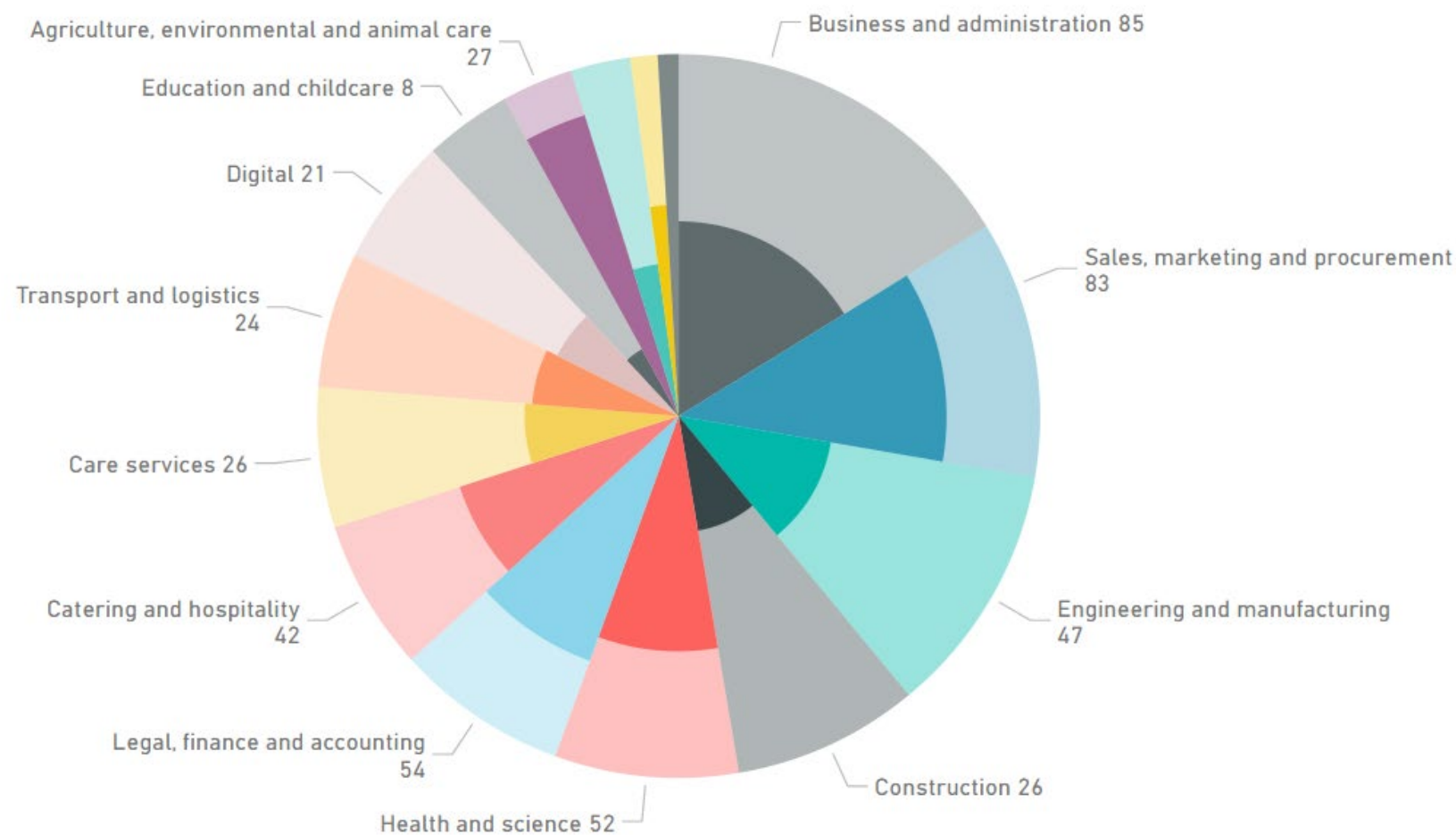- Education and childcare 38
- Agriculture, environmental and animal care 31

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# EPAs from approved standards

Currently a potential **964** EPAs from **454** approved Standards

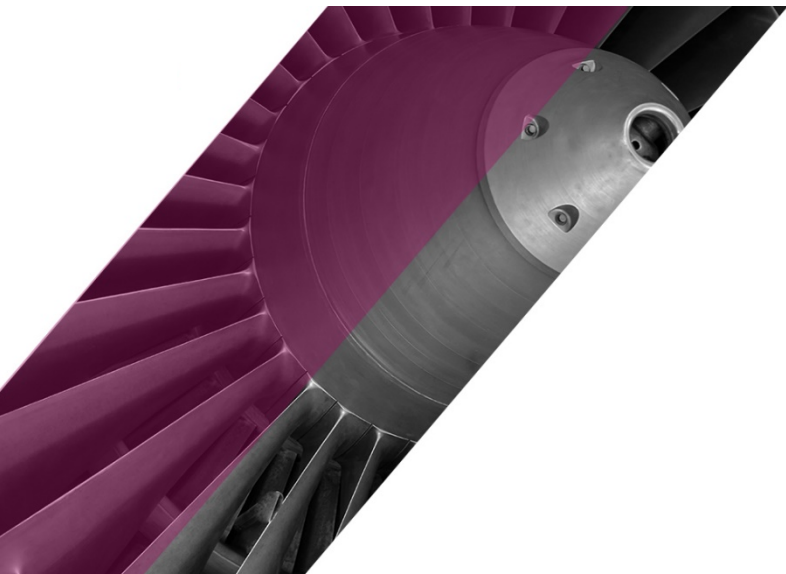Regulated community accounts for **512 (53%)** of potential EPAs



Count of EPA ID by Route  512

Business and administration 85

Agriculture, environmental and animal care 27

Education and childcare 8

Digital 21

Transport and logistics 24

Care services 26

Catering and hospitality 42

Legal, finance and accounting 54

Health and science 52

Construction 26

Engineering and manufacturing 47

Sales, marketing and procurement 83

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# EPA 'Readiness'

| Expected from standards with Ofqual EQA | |
|---|---|
| **65** Standards | **139** EPAs |
| | **35** Organisations |
| **33** Standards with starts up to 2017/18 | **28,830** Starts 2017/18 |

| Actual (on the register) | |
|---|---|
| **29** Standards | **71** EPAs |
| | **21** Organisations |
| **26** Standards with starts up to 2017/18 | **27,280** Starts 2017/18 |

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# Ofqual and our approach to EQA

# Two high level objectives



Gain assurance from assessment materials

Gain assurance from assessment delivery

Ofqual/18/6343

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We have **five statutory objectives,** which are set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. In brief, they are:

- To secure qualifications standards
- To promote National Assessment standards
- To promote public confidence in regulated qualifications and National Assessment arrangements
- To promote awareness of the range and benefits of regulated qualifications
- To secure that regulated qualifications are provided efficiently.

# Regulatory Framework



**The Recognition Process**

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We invite Ofqual to talk about

**Criteria for Recognition**

May 2011

GOV.UK

Home

**Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition**

From: Ofqual
Published: 12 October 2017
Updated: 10 June 2019, see all updates

Search this manual

Contents

Rules and guidance for all awarding organisations regulated qualifications

This document sets out Ofqual's General Conditions of Reco... set for all the qualifications and organisations we regulate. It... rules.

All regulated awarded organisations have a legal obligation t...

- comply with these rules on an ongoing basis
- have regard to this guidance

**Using the Ofqual Handbook**
How to use this handbook

**EPA Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements**
July 2018

Ofqual/18/6402/2

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**EPA Qualification Level Guid...**
July 2018

Ofqual/18/6402/3

GUIDANCE

**Apprenticeship end-point assessments: guide for employers**

Ofqual's approach to external quality assurance

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# Validity

It's whether we're assessing the right thing, in the right way, to produce **accurate** and **useful** assessment results

- The validity of a particular assessment is
  - the degree to which it is possible to **measure**
  - whatever that assessment **needs** to measure
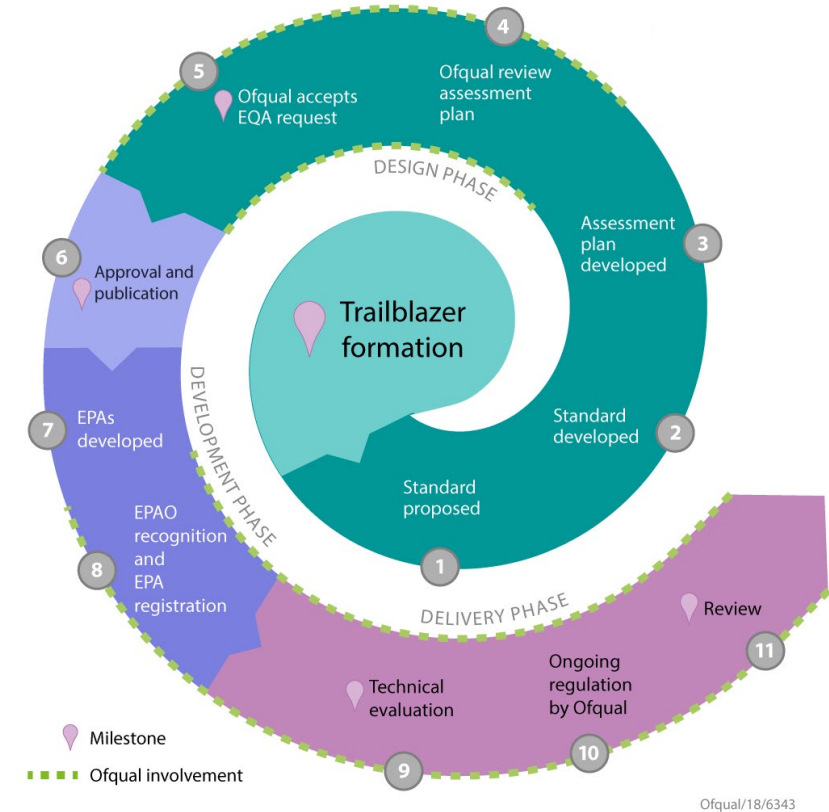  - by implementing its assessment **procedure**.

"*We are putting validity at the heart of what we do. And clearing out any rules and processes that get in the way of that.*"

(Stacey, G: Oct 2014 Putting validity at the heart of what we do.  Speech to the Federation of Awarding Bodies National Conference)

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# At every stage

It's whether we're assessing the right thing, in the right way, to produce **accurate** and **useful** assessment results

- The validity of a particular assessment is
  - the degree to which it is possible to **measure**
  - whatever that assessment **needs** to measure
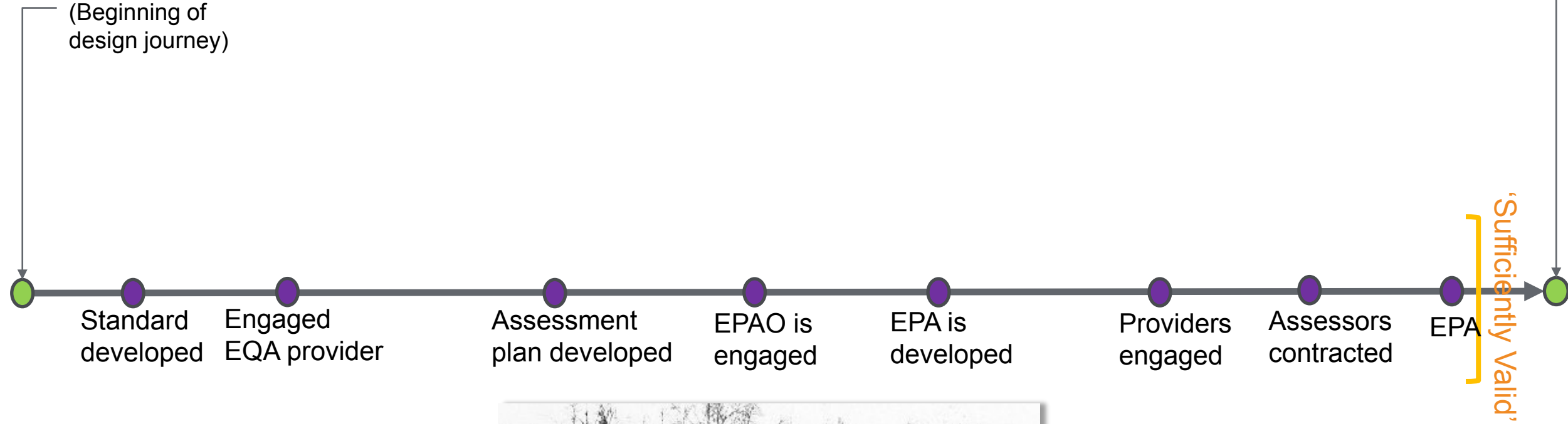  - by implementing its assessment **procedure**.



*"A good assessment procedure comprises features and processes which are designed to capture signal (concerning the proficiency of each candidate) and eliminate noise."*

(Paul Newton)

# The development journey

Starting point
(Beginning of
design journey)

Destination point
(Confidence that Pass
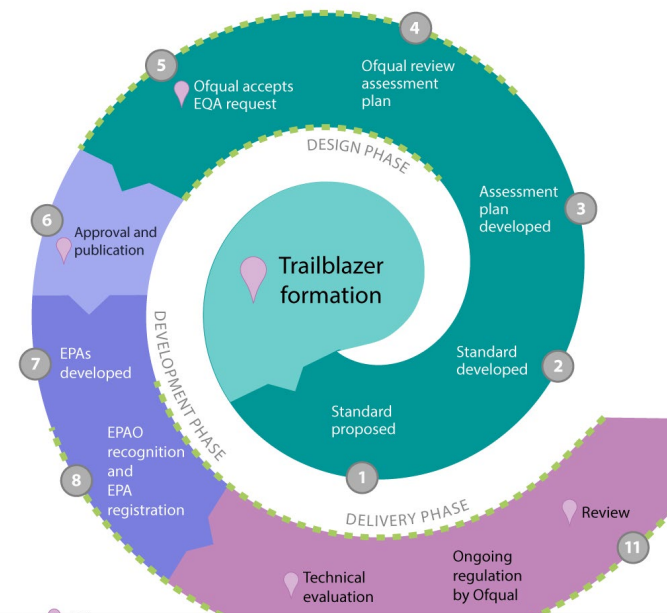represents Occupational

Competence: Proficiency)

'Sufficiently Valid'

Standard
developed

Engaged
EQA provider

Assessment
plan developed

EPAO is
engaged

EPA is
developed

Providers
engaged

Assessors
contracted

EPA



Fire Bucket Brigade by Monroe Historical Society

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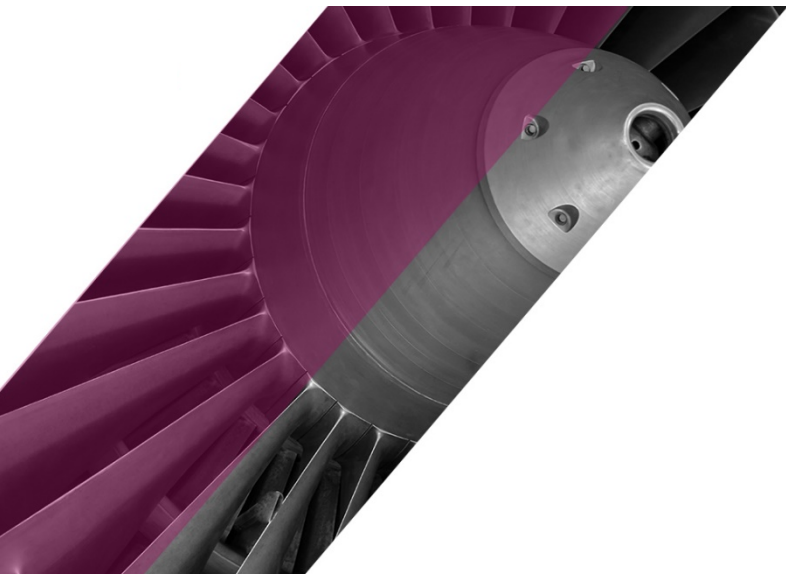
# The development journey

# The development journey



Starting point
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Destination point
(Confidence that Pass
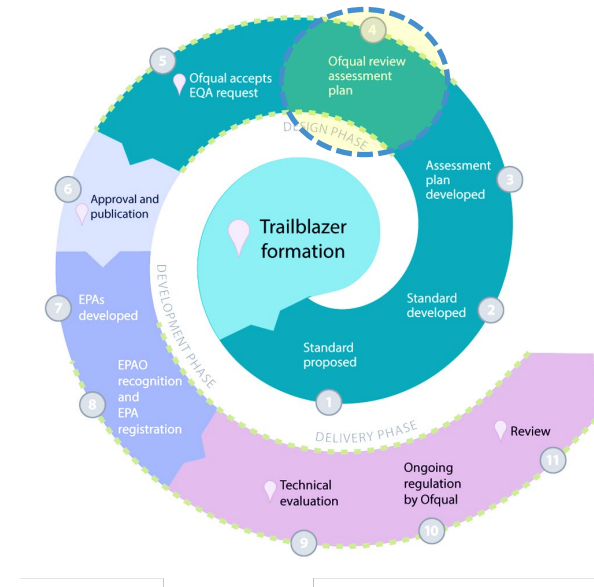represents Occupational
Competence: Proficiency)

Reducing the likelihood of assessment invalidity

Reducing the likelihood of assessment invalidity

Reducing the likelihood of assessment invalidity

'Sufficiently Valid'

Trailblazer formation
Standard
developed

Standard
Proposed
Engaged
EQA provider

Assessment
plan
developed
Assessment
plan developed

Ofqual review
of assessment
plan
EPAO is
engaged

Approval and
publication
EPA is
developed

EPAs
developed
Providers
engaged

EPAO
Recognition
Assessors
contracted

Technical
Evaluation
EPA

Ongoing regulation
Review

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EQA Tools

# Technical Advisory Group

*"Is there anything in the assessment plan that would cause an awarding organisation to develop an EPA that wasn't sufficiently valid?"*

What are we looking for?

Assessment plan
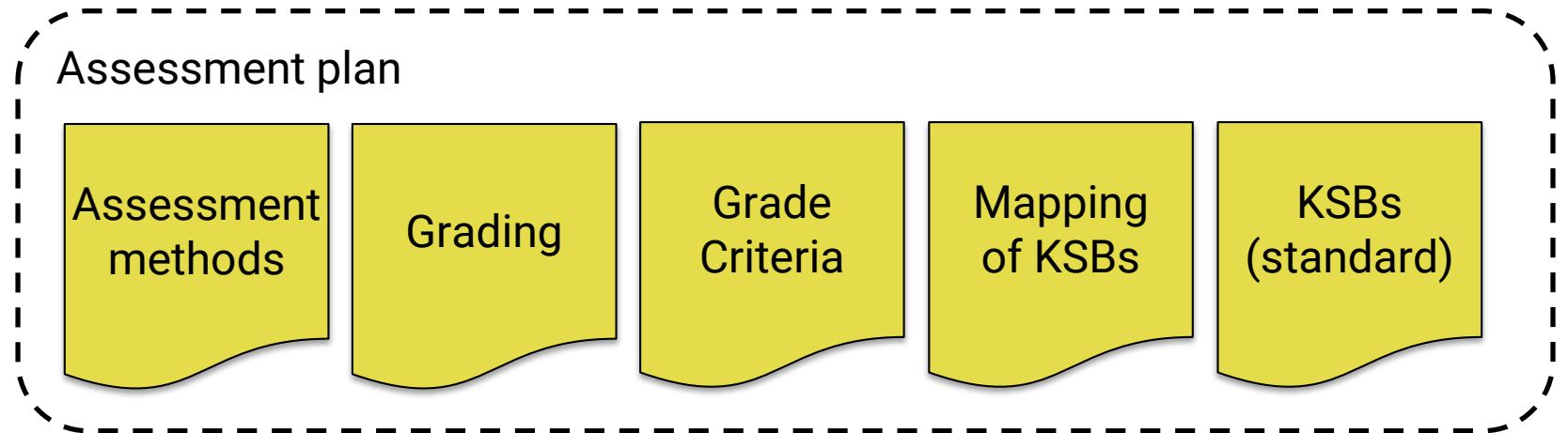
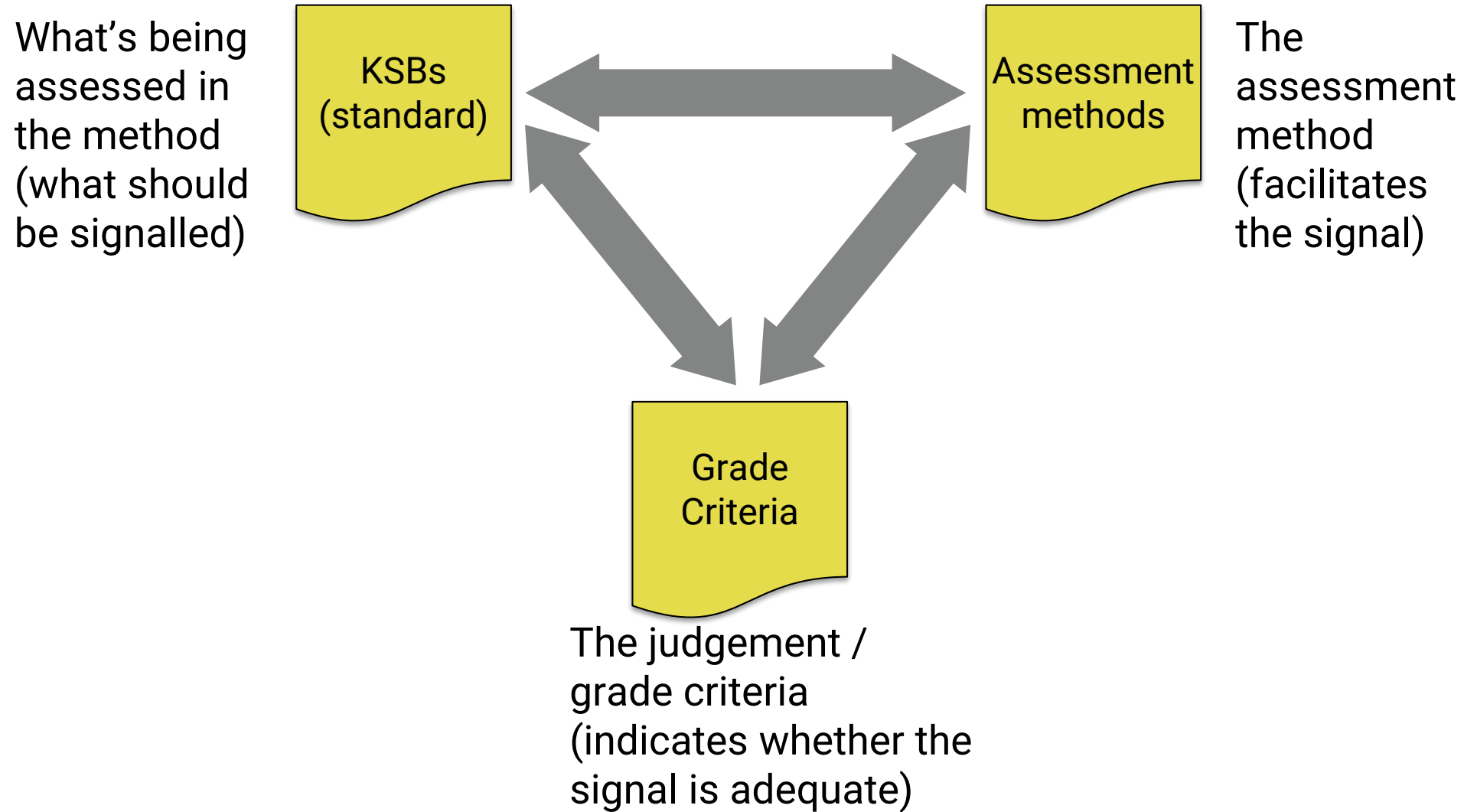| Assessment methods | Grading | Grade Criteria | Mapping of KSBs | KSBs (standard) |

# Interrelation of assessment features and processes

*"A good assessment procedure comprises features and processes which are designed to capture* **signal** *(concerning the proficiency of each candidate) and eliminate* **noise**.*"* (Paul Newton)

Assessment plan

| Assessment methods | Grading | Grade Criteria | Mapping of KSBs | KSBs (standard) |

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# Interrelation of assessment features and processes



What's being assessed in the method (what should be signalled)

KSBs (standard)

Assessment methods

The assessment method (facilitates the signal)

Grade Criteria

The judgement / grade criteria (indicates whether the signal is adequate)

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# An example...

**Team Working**

**Interacts well with others,** understands limits of their own role in relation to others' roles, can identify the challenges and benefits of team working.

(Skill/Behaviour?)

Grade Criteria

- communicates verbally with others in the team
- both initiates, and responds to, questions and scenarios faced by others and themselves in a group context
- can both lead and be led in considering a situation faced by their team.

Assessment method

Observation/Practical?

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# Team Working

Interacts well with others, **understands limits of their own role in relation to others' roles, can identify the challenges and benefits of team working.**

## Grade Criteria

- demonstrates where their responsibility in a task starts and finishes
- displays understanding of how and when to seek the authority of others in the completion of a task
- Identifies more than one challenge and benefit of working with others in a group context

**Assessment method** Discussion, Knowledge test?



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# What's a good Grade Criteria?

Is there **a Measure?**

Is **the Measure clear?**

**Is it Measureable,** in the assessment method?

Assessment method:
**professional discussion**

What's being assessed: **Skills**

- Model and promote positive behaviours expected of children such as turn taking and keeping reactions and emotions proportionate.

- Support children to manage their own behaviour in relation to others.

**Pass Criteria**:

Model and promote positive behaviours within day to day practice.

Demonstrate at least one method of managing children's behaviour in relation to others.

**Suggested Pass Criteria**:

Provides evidence of the ways positive behaviours have been modelled and promoted in their day to day practice.

Evidence at least one method of managing children's behaviour to achieve a positive outcome

# Grade Criteria example 2

Assessment method: **Observation**

What's being assessed: **Skills**

- The ability to communicate effectively on all levels, in various formats, both internally and externally, particularly during crisis management, incident reporting, liaising with other providers, such as Emergency Services .

**Pass Criteria**:

- Demonstrates use of appropriate methods of verbal and non-verbal communication relevant to the situation **in order to ensure that risk does not escalate and all parties are aware of their responsibilities and updated continually.**

# A good grade criteria…

Facilitates **accurate** and **useful** assessment results by clarifying the measure that needs to be measured

- Is there a measure? (or is it just a learning outcome)

- Is the measure clear? (objective, well defined)

- Is it measureable? (appropriate to the assessment method)

  .

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# A good assessment procedure…is a balance

- comprises features and processes which are designed to capture **signal** (concerning the proficiency of each candidate) and eliminate **noise**.

- will <u>never</u> be a **perfect** assessment procedure, because assessment design is <u>always</u> a matter of **trade-off and compromise**.
  - e.g. tolerating a lower-quality signal to keep noise levels manageable
  - e.g. tolerating less validity to keep the assessment burden to a minimum

- is one that has **sufficient validity** and is **trusted**.
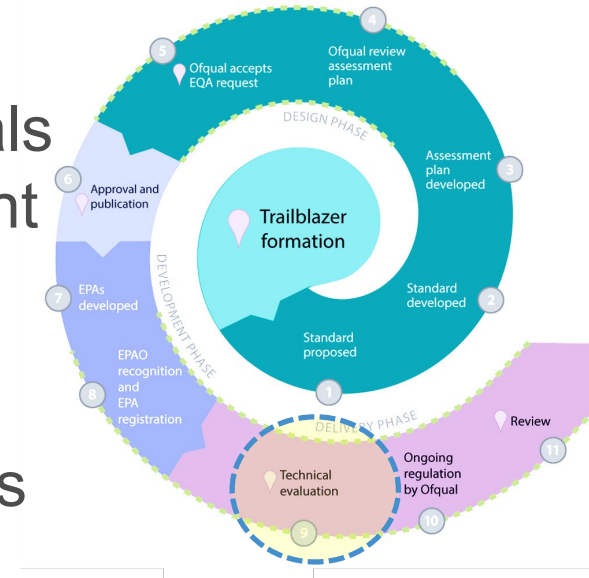
# Technical Evaluation

6 tranches to date

- 57 EPAs
- 17 EPAOs
- 20 standards

An in-depth look at EPA materials from EPAOs by both assessment experts and subject specialists
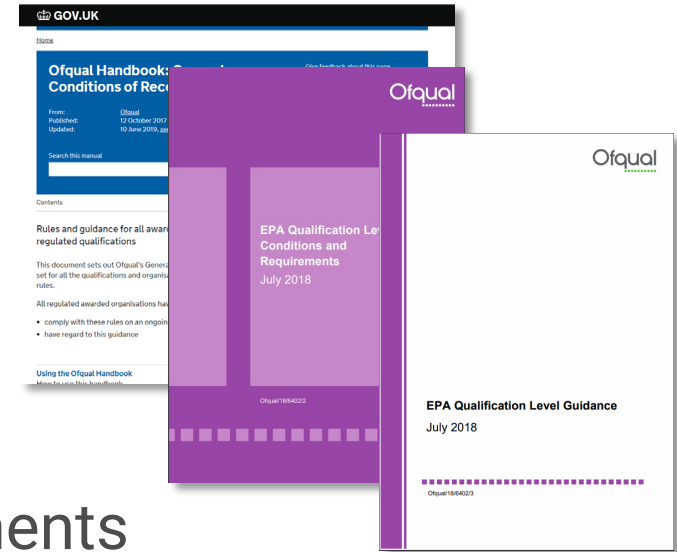
- question papers
- assessor guidance documents
- apprentice guidance documents
- standardisation procedures and guidance
- grading exemplification
- specifications
- malpractice and reasonable adjustment policies

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# Technical Evaluation outcomes

Resulting from our technical evaluation feedback to AOs.

- amended errors of interpretation in relation to the assessment plan

- amended documentation to ensure assessment requirements were clearer for apprentices and assessors

- changed processes to increase efficiency and manageability for assessors

- clarified assessment parameters for EPAs (e.g. timings)

- clarified guidance around ensuring the authenticity of apprentice evidence

- requested results data to verify the comparability of, and to justify the rationale behind, some assessment approaches

# Assessment Plan Queries (APQ)

- To consider queries from EPAOs as a result of operationalising assessment plans
  - □ Errors
  - □ Ambiguities
  - □ Issues that effect standards (e.g.. of consistent interpretation, fairness for apprentices)
- Gather evidence
  - □ Differences of interpretation that do not effect standards
  - □ Adds to our intelligence base, our view of risk
  - □ Amalgamation of evidence taken forward to review or for further investigation (e.g. evidence of manageability at scale)

- Actions
  - □ Liaise with trailblazers
  - □ Collaborate with Institute to change plans
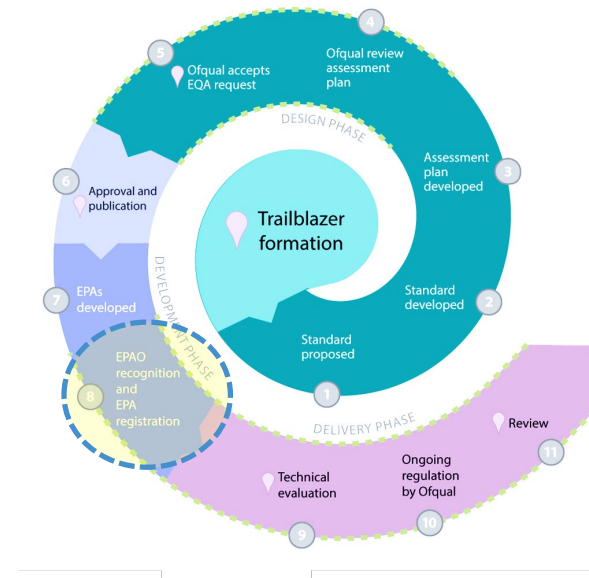  - □ Communicate with all EPAOs involved

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# Recognition – our new approach

- **Early engagement**
  - ☐ 33 enquiries from EPAOs
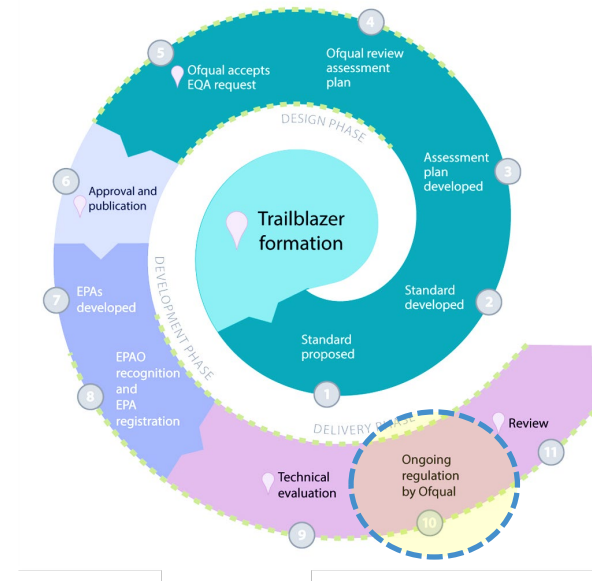  - ☐ Changes have improved applications and streamlined the process
- **Recognition**
  - ☐ Panel discussions with all applicants
  - ☐ We consider in depth a number of issues:
    - ▪ financial standing
    - ▪ sector relevant assessment expertise
  - ☐ Proportionate and flexible approach
    - ▪ Some EPAOs recognised with special conditions
    - ▪ Some EPAOs approved with no issues



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# Ongoing regulation

- Event notifications

- Employer engagement and intelligence

- Relationship management of EPAOs

- Case management of incidents

- Annual statements of compliance

- Synergy with monitoring of the wider qualifications landscape (SVR)

- Readiness reviews

- Proactive and reactive audits



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# Regulation: What have we seen?

- Monitoring of employer intelligence has enabled us to safeguard the delivery of assessment for some apprentices

- Relationship management has led to clarification of publicised EPAO material

- Event notifications have led to the strengthening of assessment processes for apprentices

- Audit findings
  - our Conditions can strengthen the IQA approaches in some assessment plans
  - AOs are facing considerable difficulty in planning their EPA delivery

- Enforcement action where required

# EQA to date

- **Materials assurance**
  - ☐ Technical Evaluation, Technical Advisory Group and queries from EPAOs have reiterated our belief that scrutiny of assessment materials is crucial as early as possible in the process – **assessment design is paramount**.

- Our **recognition process** gives us strong assurance of EPAO capabilities

- **Delivery Assurance**
  - ☐ Relationship management working together with our regulatory framework provides us with
    - ▪ the rules against which to test and hold EPAOs to account,
    - ▪ the flexibility to use our regulatory tools proportionately to achieve compliance.

EQA

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# Our objective is confidence

Trailblazer formation → Standard Proposed → Assessment plan developed → Ofqual review of assessment plan → Approval and publication → EPAs developed → EPAO Recognition → Technical Evaluation → Ongoing regulation → Review

Beginning of design journey)

*"A good assessment procedure comprises features and processes which are designed to capture* **signal** *(concerning the proficiency of each candidate) and eliminate* **noise**.*"*

(Paul Newton)

Confidence that Pass represents Occupational Competence: Proficiency

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# Links

- Our [EQA approach](#), and the [apprenticeship standards](#) we regulate

- Apprenticeship specific enquiries

  [apprenticeships@Ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@Ofqual.gov.uk)

- Find out more about becoming an Ofqual external expert:

  [http://bit.ly/ofqual-experts](http://bit.ly/ofqual-experts)

- Sign up to our employer newsletter for the latest news on qualifications changes:

  [http://eepurl.com/dw67ur](http://eepurl.com/dw67ur)

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