



Level 2 Food and Drink Process Operator (FDPO) Apprenticeship Standard End Point Assessment (EPA)

What is the FDPO EPA?

The EPA is a compulsory component of the Level 2 FDPO Apprenticeship. It is used to confirm that your apprentice has achieved the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by the Standard. As the EPA determines whether an apprentice has succeeded in their apprenticeship it is important to register them only when they are *ready*.

First and foremost the apprentice must have successfully completed all the mandatory requirements of the FDPO apprenticeship itself. These are:

The Training programme

- Which must have exceeded the 12 month Government minimum duration
- Apprentices will need to complete the training programme as set by their employer. This programme will develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours as detailed in the Standard

Mandatory Qualifications

- Level 2 Diploma in Food and Drink Operations
- Level 1 English
- Level 1 Mathematics

Apprentices must also have *attempted* Level 2 English and Maths prior to EPA but are not required to have achieved success at this level. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement the minimum requirement for English and Maths is Entry Level 3. British Sign Language qualification is an alternative to English qualifications for those whom this is their primary language.

The EPA itself

There are two parts to the EPA:

The Gateway this is a vital final review period, which happens once all the mandatory elements of the apprenticeship are complete. Then, provided all agree the apprentice is ready, the employer, training provider and apprentice sign the FDQ Gateway End-Point Assessment Declaration and the training provider applies for EPA via FDQ's online system.

EPA tests – The end-point assessment will include three distinct components:

1. A written knowledge test answered through multiple choice questions
2. A workplace-based practical observation of skills
3. A professional dialogue and interview, which is undertaken after all other end-point assessment components have been successfully completed.

1 Knowledge - Multiple Choice Test (MCT)

- The MCT assesses the underpinning knowledge and understanding and comprises 30 multiple choice questions (MCQs). The MCT will be undertaken under controlled conditions within a 60-minute time limit. The MCT will test understanding across a range of areas including:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	The principles of quality management & good practice in the food industry	Hygiene standards and food safety
Health and Safety in the food industry	Products: how to handle products and the effects of external influences on them	Effective communication skills and team working
How to use relevant tools and equipment in food production	The principles of Continuous Improvement (CI) in the food production industry	Performance data: understanding, interpreting and acting on it.

The apprentice must score 18-23 to pass and can achieve merit with a score of 24-27. Those scoring 28+ will achieve a distinction grade.

2 Practical Observation

Before the practical observation can take place an FDQ Independent Examiner will meet with the training provider and employer to ensure the processing environment is set up for the purposes of observing a controlled assessment. The assessment involves the apprentice undertaking a range of process tasks over an uninterrupted period of 2 hours.

Following a pre-assessment visit, the employer, training provider and FDQ will evaluate the naturally occurring processing environment and map these in to a practical observation test to demonstrate the apprentice's duties and activities. FDQ will ensure the plan covers the necessary standard requirements and the apprentice has sufficient scope to move from one area / function of the business to another. This is in order to best demonstrate how they have applied their knowledge, skills and behaviours in a real-work environment to achieve genuine and demanding work objectives.

During the practical observation there will be opportunities for independent examiner and apprentice to question and answer to clarify knowledge and understanding being applied. The practical observation will cover the following aspects of the standard:

Environmental Management System requirements	Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	Hygiene standards and food safety
Health and safety in the food industry	Products: how to handle products and the effects of external influences on them	Performance data: understanding, interpreting and acting on it

The practical observation will be marked and scored using robust methods of assessment. The observation will result in a pass, merit or distinction grade. The apprentice must score 5-7 points to be awarded a pass, 8-12 points for a merit or 13-15 points to achieve a distinction in the practical observation. FDQ will provide a range of sample materials and specifications for employers and providers that will assist preparations for the apprentices.

3 Professional Interview

The professional interview will take place soon after the practical observation has been completed. It will be conducted by the independent examiner in a quiet area of the workplace. The interview is a structured discussion between the apprentice and their independent examiner.

The professional interview will cover areas of the standard not assessed in the other end-point assessment components; these could include:

Skills

Ensure effective handovers to appropriate colleagues	Actively contribute to optimal production performance, eg line optimisation in the control of yields/stock levels
Contribute to Continuous Improvement (CI) activities	Contribute to effective changeovers

Behaviours

Self-development: seeks learning and development opportunities	Working in a team: builds good relationships with others	Problem solving: participates in problem solving
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Responsiveness to change: flexibility to changing working environment and demands	Company/industry perspective: desire to learn about the company and food industry, acts as an ambassador	Demonstrates and encourages curiosity to foster new ways of thinking and working
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The interview will be structured and typically last 30 to 45 minutes and aim to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence and understanding. The independent examiner will select six questions from a bank of standardised competency based questions to ensure a consistent approach is adopted, as well as ensuring all required areas of the standard are appropriately covered. The professional dialogue and interview will result in a pass, merit or distinction grade. The grade boundaries are, 6-9 points to pass, 10-15 points for a merit and 16-18 points for a distinction.

How can I help prepare my apprentice for their EPA?

The FDQ Food and Drink Process Operator Employer and Training Provider Guide to EPA will explain the assessments in greater detail and is a 'must read.' The guide will specify the EPA requirements offering tips and advice on activities that will best prepare the apprentices to undertake their assessments.

The Guide should be used in the months leading up to the appointed EPA day. It includes a helpful self-assessment checklist to identify any remaining gaps in knowledge or skills which need to be rectified prior to applying for EPA from FDQ.

Where will the assessments take place?

The EPA will usually take place at the apprentice's workplace, following an independent examiner's visit to confirm suitability. EPA tests are conducted in a controlled environment, that means the venue must be fit for examinations and clear from disruption for the duration of the test.

What will my apprentice need to bring with them on the day?

They will need to bring:

- their photo identification document (ID)
- personal protective equipment

Who will mark the assessments?

Your trained FDQ independent examiner (IE) will carry out assessments on the day. IE's then submit their judgements to FDQ and after moderation results will be published through FDQ's online centre management system. This process typically takes up to 4 weeks.

What are the grading criteria?

There are four possible grades: Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction. Apprentices receive a grade for each individual assessment and an overall grade for their apprenticeship. To be awarded their apprenticeship, apprentices must complete and achieve a minimum of a pass in each component of their EPA.

What happens if my apprentice fails their EPA?

Apprentices will be able to re-take their assessment or assessments once within a three month period of their original EPA. It is expected that a further period of learning will be needed before re-taking all or part of the EPA. The maximum overall grade an apprentice can achieve following a re-take is a Pass.

What funding is available for EPA's?

To encourage completion of apprenticeship training, government withhold 20% of the total apprenticeship funding, until the EPA's have been concluded.

This represents the maximum cost of an EPA. FDQ's maximum charge for a FDPO EPA is 15-20% of the £5000 total funding. Providers using the FDQ FDPO EPA Service will also receive a guide for preparing apprentices for EPA as part of the application process. What's more the fee also includes a pre-EPA visit from the independent examiner to ensure the apprentice, employer and provider are completely clear about the EPA and what is required. The visit normally takes place 3 to 4 weeks ahead of the event so that time is available to prepare effectively.

What are the fees for an EPA?

Your apprentices EPA will be priced taking into account variables such as:

- location – how far the independent assessor needs to travel to the apprentices workplace or external EPA centre
- number of apprentices being assessed – where several apprentices can be assessed in one place on the same day, discounts will apply

This is to ensure FDQ can price the assessment fairly and provide the best value for money.

Each EPA is priced individually, so for a detailed quote please call us on 0113 3970 395 or email fdq@fdq.org.uk.

Please note:

The EPA fee must be paid 7 days in advance of the appointed day, this is to cover set up and delivery costs. The Training Provider is charged for the EPA.