End Point Assessment (EPA) Briefing for Line Managers/Employers

Digital & Technology Solutions Professional (Level 6)
Degree Apprenticeship

RECORDING

Welcome & Introductions

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Agenda

1. Degree Apprenticeship Standards and End Point Assessment (EPA)

2. Overview of EPA Methods

3. Synoptic Project & EPA

4. Your role as an Employer Representative ('Line Manager') at the EPA

5. Final Assessment and Grading

6. Other important information

7. Q&A

Degree Apprenticeships Standards and End Point Assessment (EPA)

What is a Degree Apprenticeship?

- A fully-integrated degree, involving both academic learning, professional development and work-based training;

- Co-created by a 'trailblazer group' of leading technology employers and universities;

- Designed to increase the flow of skills into the technology industry and meet the skills gap in IT;

- Business-focused projects and assessments;

- Final Synoptic Project to 'showcase' occupational competence at the End Point Assessment (EPA).
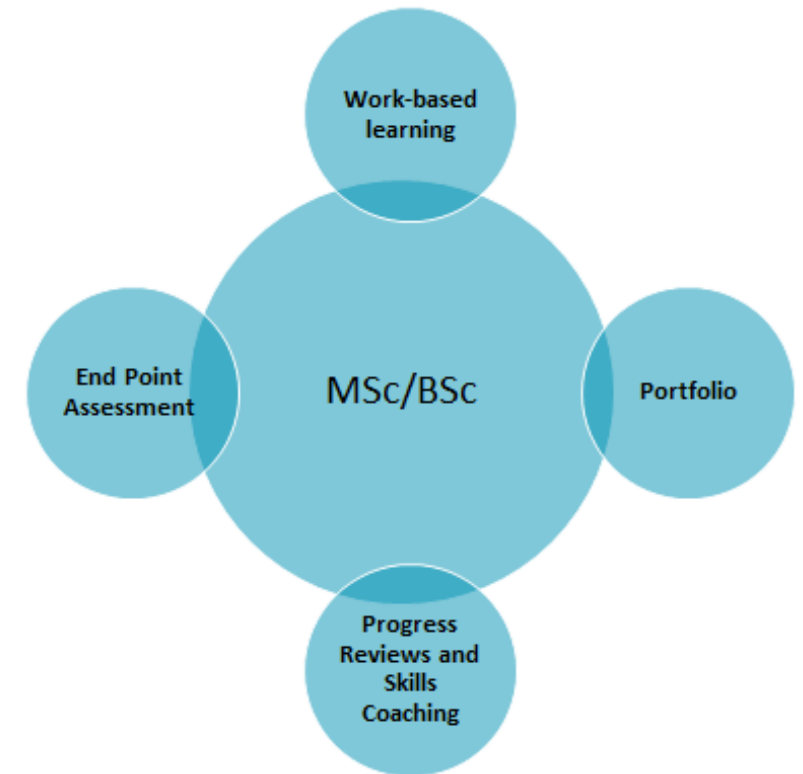
Apprenticeship Standard & End Point Assessment

Apprenticeship standard developed by the 'Trailblazer Group'.

Outlines the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) that apprentices must develop throughout the apprenticeship programme.

Assessment Plan outlines how the apprenticeship should be assessed (formative and summative).

The End Point Assessment (EPA) confirms the apprentice's occupational competence through the Synoptic Project.

Digital & Technology Solutions: The KSBs

Knowledge
Technical detail and 'know-how' that an apprentice needs to both attain and understand to carry out their duties.

Skills
Apprentice's knowledge is applied in a practical manner. Skills will have been learned through both experience, and on-the-job training from a senior member of staff.
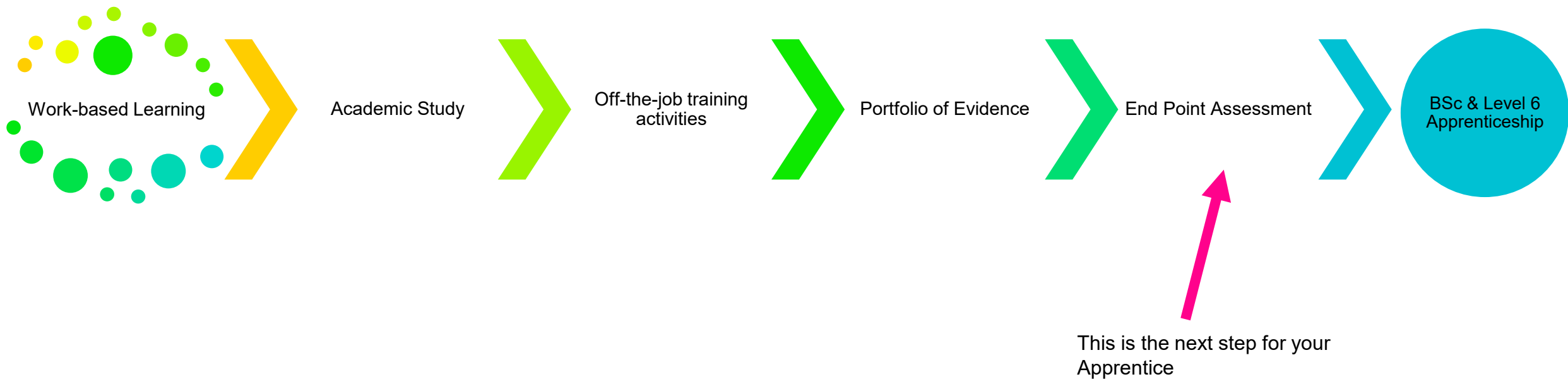
Behaviours
Refers to the 'mind-set' that the apprentice has. Do they think in a way that is required for the duties they are expected to carry out? These do not just have to be instinctive; they can be learnt too. These are transferable.
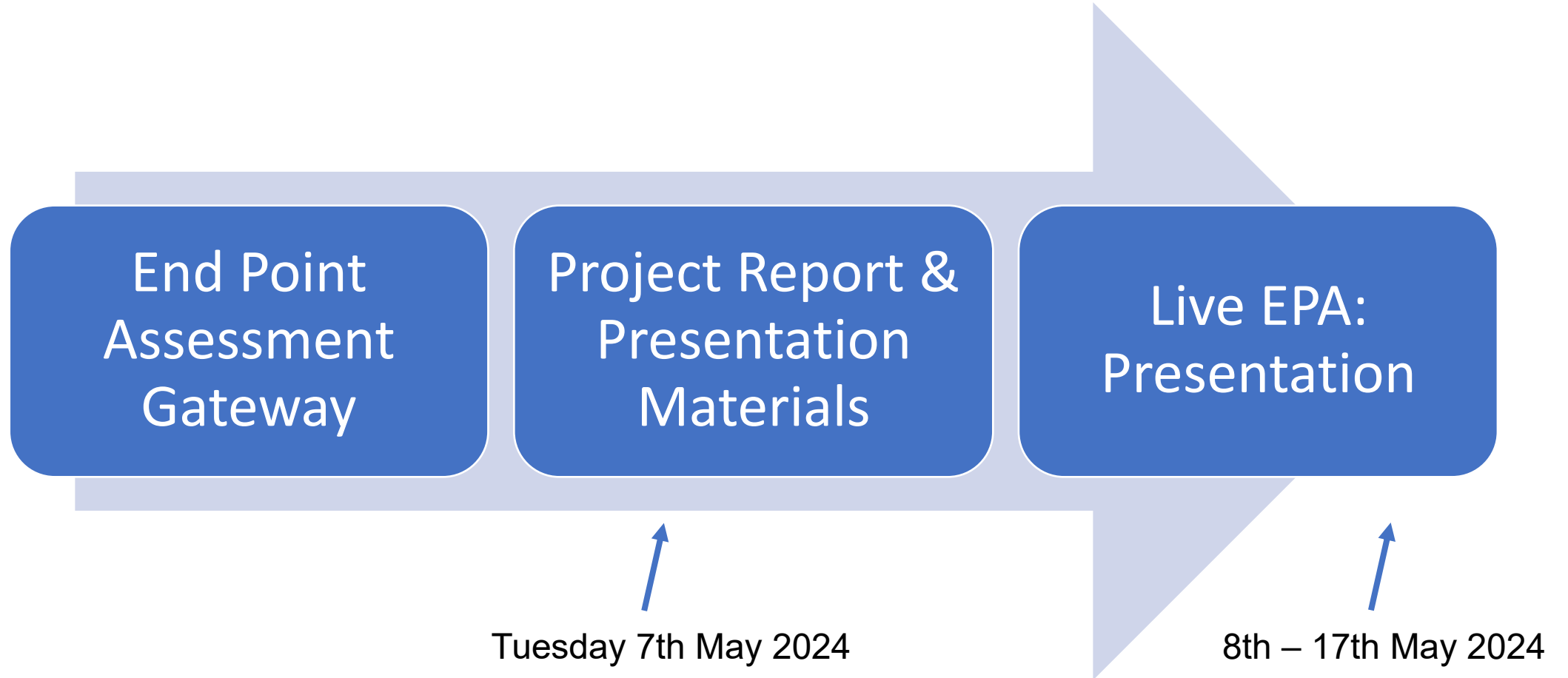
Programme Structure

Year	Core units for all pathways	Pathway-specific units			
		IT Consultant	Data Analytics	Software Engineer	Cyber Security Analyst
1	» Introduction to Programming » Introduction to Business Systems » Introduction to Web Development	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	» Computing Fundamentals » Technology Management	» Customer Lifecycle Management	» Statistics and Visualisation	» Advanced Programming	» Computer Security Fundamentals
3	» One pathway-specific project	» Applied Web Design & Development » Business Intelligence & Strategy	» Advanced Databases » Data Analytics	» Computer Networks and Operating Systems » Enterprise Programming	» Computer Networks and Operating Systems » Security Auditing and Incident Response
4	» **Synoptic Project** » Portfolio » Elective unit				

Degree Apprenticeship Journey: A Visual Representation

Work-based Learning → Academic Study → Off-the-job training activities → Portfolio of Evidence → End Point Assessment → BSc & Level 6 Apprenticeship

This is the next step for your Apprentice

Gateway and EPA Process

End Point Assessment Gateway	Project Report & Presentation Materials	Live EPA: Presentation

Tuesday 7th May 2024

8th – 17th May 2024

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Overview of EPA Methods

EPA Overview: DTSP

'Comprehensive project-based End Point Assessment'

The end point assessment has two elements:

1. The Project Assessment: *The Synoptic Project Report*

2. Presentation Assessment: *The Synoptic Project Presentation*

'The end point assessment integrates the project outcomes and presentation into the overall synoptic project assessment. It is this end point assessment which will be judged against the standard, and test the skills, knowledge and behaviours together as applied through the project'

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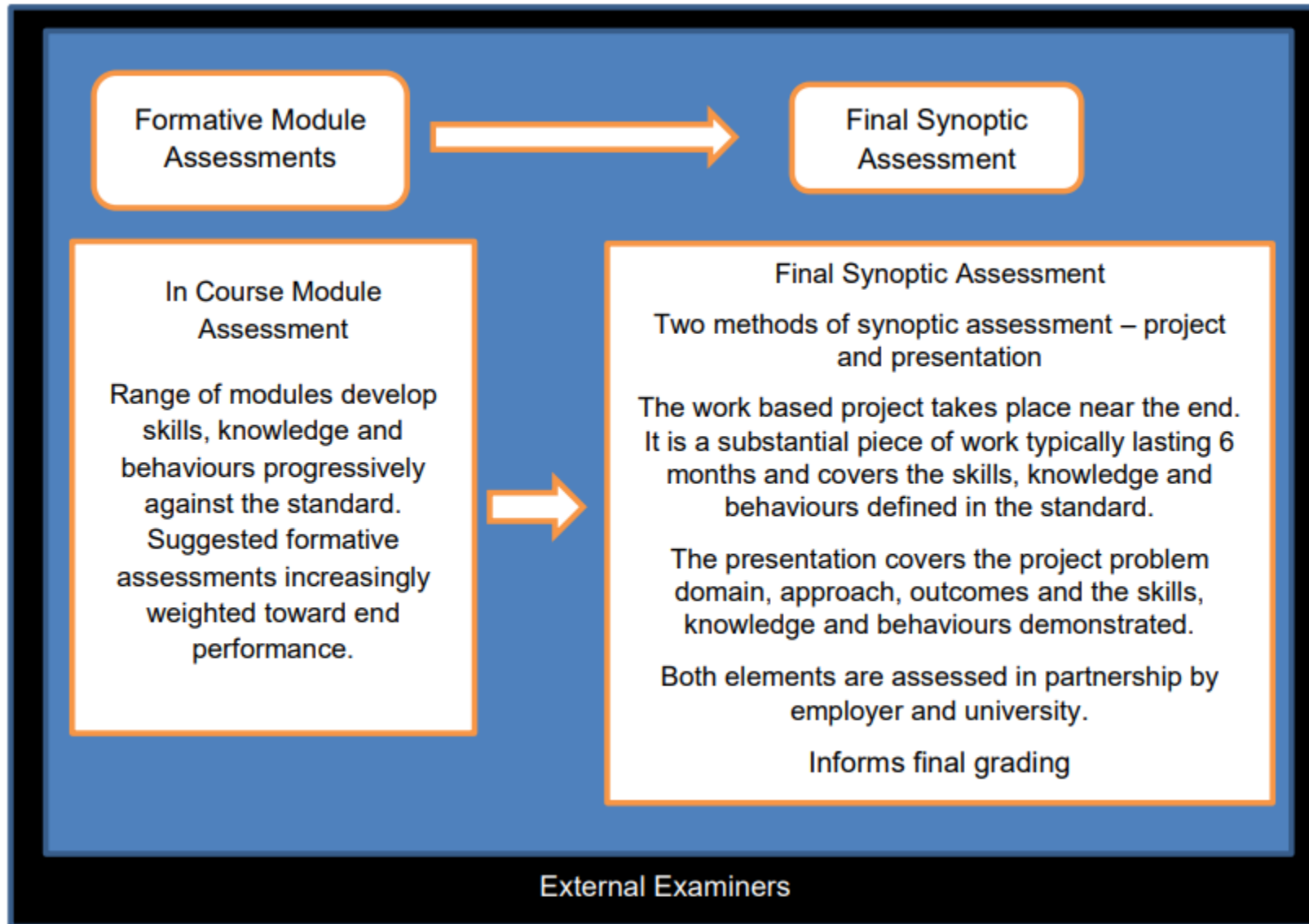
Synoptic Project Overview: DTSP

The Synoptic Project broadly represents the skills, knowledge and behaviours (KSBs) in the standard.

The project provides substantive evidence from a business-related project to demonstrate the application of skills and knowledge.

The Synoptic Project is designed to assess the apprentices in a consistent way, irrespective of their particular workplace and university

Every project assessment is required to incorporate employer contribution in addition to normal university project assessment.

Synoptic Project and
End Point Assessment (EPA)

Synoptic Project:

Context: The Synoptic Project is a key part of the End-Point Assessment (EPA).

- The Synoptic Project is akin to a final year dissertation but there are some <u>key</u> differences from a typical full-time student's final year project. The Synoptic Project is workplace-based, the project idea is usually provided by the employer, plus some other differences in the structure of the report;

- Duration: 6 months *Apprentices have full-time jobs, so usually one day per week;

- Total of 300 hours of independent, work-based learning (WBL);

- Approximately 9,000 - 11,000-word report plus 100–150 hours of 'technical' work - although this is highly dependent on the pathway, type of project;

- The remaining time is spent on project management, the write-up of the report, and preparing for the presentation/End Point Assessment (EPA).

Unit Specification:

"The Synoptic Project involves undertaking a longer-term piece of work in which you will engage in the planning, analysis, specification, design, implementation and evaluation of a non-trivial product or process and produce a substantial deliverable."

Assessment weightings:

30% Presentation

70% Report

NB: The Presentation element is part of the EPA live 'event' but both elements are part of the EPA 'validation' by the Independent Assessor (IA).

Presentation/EPA:

The EPAs are scheduled from **Tuesday 8th May** to **Friday 17th May**. This is within the University's formal Semester 2 assessment/examination period.

Attendees:

- The apprentice;

- Line manager (or a suitable employer representative (**one only**))**;**

- The academic supervisor (MMU);

- The Independent Assessor (IA) **= Chair**.

Duration: 60 minutes*

*The meeting invites will be scheduled for 75 minutes for contingency reasons and/or reasonable adjustments.

The Role of the Independent Assessor (IA)

- The Independent Assessor (IA) **chairs** the End Point Assessment (EPA) including the Synoptic Project presentation and professional discussion;

- Facilitates the questioning (academic supervisor and employer representative) for the Synoptic Project;

- Leads the professional discussion for the Degree Apprenticeship standard;

- *In summary:* Reviews the Synoptic Project marking (alongside the employer feedback) to ensure the marks are **'appropriate'** and **'fair'**;

- *In summary:* Confirms that the apprentice has met the requirements of the Degree Apprenticeship standard and appears **'competent'** and **'professional'**;

- Signs the IEPA validation form to recommend the apprentice for the Degree Apprenticeship award.

Presentation:

- Duration of the Presentation itself: **30 minutes** (<u>individual</u>).

- May include some form of 'demonstration', walkthrough, or examples of the deliverables that have been produced. However, this is <u>not compulsory</u>*.

- If a 'demonstration' is included, there should be a suitable balance between demonstration vs. presentation = not all demonstration e.g., 5-10 minutes max.

- A recorded video-based demonstration / walkthrough is acceptable if required due to technical (e.g., security) and/or time constraints.

- Some discretion is allowed but, after 35 minutes, the IA will need to stop (an embarrassing 'hard stop') the presentation and move on to the professional discussion.

Less likely for IT Consultancy, Data Analyst, and some Cyber Security projects.

Project Q&As / Professional Discussion:

- REMINDER: The Independent Assessor (IA) will <u>facilitate</u> the questioning for the Synoptic Project and then <u>lead</u> the professional discussion for the Degree Apprenticeship standard.

- The IA will ensure that <u>both</u> the academic supervisor and line manager/employer representative have an opportunity to ask questions.

- The questioning will be <u>equally</u> split between project-based questions and questions based around the Degree Apprenticeship standard. However, it may be a 'soft' transition.

- It is acceptable to ask 'leading' questions for the apprentice to convey a specific point e.g., business benefits. NB: We cannot prevent this happening anyway! Try not to make it sound too obvious...

Marking / Degree Apprenticeship Award

- The academic supervisor marks the presentation and the report taking into consideration the employer's feedback (if received in time).

- The Report is also subject to a secondary review (marking). This is usually undertaken by the apprentice's Pathway Leader.

- The marking is internally moderated following the standard University process. This will be undertaken by the Deputy Head / Head of Department.

- Finally, the Independent Assessor (IA) validates the marking and recommends the degree apprenticeship award.

- The programme is also externally examined (by Professor Faisal Mustafa at Ravensbourne University London in 2024) to review academic integrity/process.

Due to the time constraints, the above processes are partly undertaken in parallel.

Your role as an Employer Representative ('Line Manager') at the EPA

Your Role: As stated in the assessment plan

- 'The Synoptic Project will be assessed in partnership with the employer against the standard' *(see Employer Representative Form)*

- 'The assessment of the Synoptic Project should include the employer's assessment against the common criteria for the project' *(see Employer Representative Form)*

- 'Employers will contribute to the assessment of the synoptic project and presentation against the standard. This will include the employer contributing a short-written report of the apprentices' project performance against defined assessment criteria' *(see Employer Representative Form)*

Your Role

- *'Represent your organisation';*
- Be supportive of your apprentice;
- Respond when prompted to ask questions by the Independent Assessor (IA). These should be 'genuine' questions. However, the questions can be tailored to help the apprentice demonstrate the best aspects of their project;
- Be honest but not overly critical of the apprentice's project, general performance. The IA does not expect every project to be perfect but instead a learning opportunity for the apprentice's continuing professional development (CPD);
- Respond if the IA asks to confirm the whether the apprentice did something, how well they did something. NB: Evidence-based degrees also includes 'witness testimony' - which you will be acting as one at the EPA.
- Complete the Synoptic Project Employer Representative Form (see next slides).

Your Contribution: Employer Representative Form

Synoptic Project Employer Representative Form

Name of Apprentice:	
Name of Organisation (Employer):	
Name of Representative:	
Date of End Point Assessment (EPA) Presentation:	

This form will enable the Independent Assessor (IA) to take into consideration the employer's feedback of the apprentice's performance (on the Synoptic Project) during the degree apprenticeship validation process. Please note that we will not share this specific feedback with the apprentice as it will contribute to the IA informing their overall decision only. For the criteria below, **please tick the grey box** which represents your opinion of the project most accurately. All forms must be returned within <u>5 working days</u> from the date of the End Point Assessment (EPA) for consideration by the Independent Assessor. In general terms, the first category is a 'fail', the second a 'pass', the third 'good', and the final category 'excellent'. As there are a large number of projects on different pathways, the category descriptors are generic. Please use the comments field to add context, further details. Thank you.

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Project outcome and deliverables:	No project implemented or very inadequate as per the business requirements e.g., unusable, critical/major elements left unfinished. Project report not submitted or inadequate.		Project successfully delivered that generally meets the business requirements but has some issues and/or is limited in its complexity. An adequately structured and written project report, able to be followed, but with some deficiencies within the content.		Project successfully delivered that meets the business requirements. Although at an appropriate level of complexity, has some minor issues outstanding. A well-structured and clearly written project report, easy to follow, with a few minor deficiencies within the content.		Project successfully delivered that meets the business requirements A high level of complexity without any issues. An excellent report, very well structured, very easy to follow, and written to a high professional standard with no deficiencies within the content.	
	Comments:						

Project management:	No or minimal evidence of any project management incl. planning and/or being followed.		Adequate project management incl. project planning, which has some evidence of being followed.		Clear project management incl. planning with a good level of detail and evidence of being followed.		Clear project management incl. planning with an excellent level of detail and evidence of being followed, and evidence of the plan driving the project.	

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	Comments:							
Presentation:	The presentation material is either not submitted or of a poor design and difficult to follow. Not presented or the presenter fails to communicate adequately the project delivered. The presenter fails to answer questions related to their project adequately, showing a lack of understanding of the topic.		The presentation material is of an adequate design and able to be followed. The presenter communicates the project delivered reasonably well. The presenter answers the questions related to their project reasonably well., demonstrating some understanding of the topic.		The presentation material is well designed and easy to follow. The presenter communicates the project delivered well. The presenter answers questions related to their project well, demonstrating a very good understanding of the topic.		The presentation material is very well designed, of a high professional standard, and very easy to follow. The presenter communicates the project delivered to a high professional standard. The presenter answers questions related to their project extremely well demonstrating an excellent understanding of the topic. Please refer to the feedback form for further details.	
	Comments:							

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I confirm that:

1. The above-named apprentice has met the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the apprenticeship standard and assessment plan (Presentation and Report). See Appendix 1 for details of the knowledge, skills and behaviours mapped to this assessment method.

2. The End Point Assessment (EPA) has been carried out to confirm that the above-named apprentice is occupationally competent in their job role.

Signature of Employer Representative: …………………………………………………………………………   Date: …………………………………………………………………

Please email the completed form to epa-apprenticeships@mmu.ac.uk within 5 working days of the End Point Assessment Presentation.

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Timeline:

Tuesday 8ᵗʰ – Friday 17ᵗʰ May – End Point Assessments (EPA)

Post-EPA – Please return the employer feedback form within **5 working days** after the EPA for it to be considered by the academic supervisor (marking) and IA (validation). All forms to be returned via **epa-apprenticeships@mmu.ac.uk**

For info:

4th June – Synoptic Project marks released*.

27th June – Notification of apprenticeship award and degree classification.

18th July – Graduation!

Sometimes a delay as relying on the Independent Assessor – expectation up to 14th.

Timeline *(Alternative):*

The End-Point Assessment (EPA) is classed as a formal examination. Therefore:

- If the EPA is significantly disrupted so it must be suspended e.g., technical issues; the EPA will be re-arranged at the next mutually agreed slot within the first assessment window (8th – 17th May).

- If the apprentice is absent (e.g., short-term illness etc.), the EPA will be re-arranged at the next mutually agreed slot within the first assessment window (8th – 17th May) - depending on return date.

- If the apprentice has an approved extension (default 3rd June), the EPA will be arranged for the second assessment period (4th – 7th June).*

The apprentice will still be able to attend the graduation if passed at least two L6 units as will be eligible for at least a Pass Degree at the time of graduation.

Final Assessment and Grading

Final Grading

- It is the achievement of the Honours Degree that demonstrates that the standard has been met and which provides the grading.

- Apprentices will only know their result following the awarding board on **27th June 2024**

Degree Award Class	Grading Equivalence	Marks Level
First-Class Honours (1st)	Distinction	70+
Second-Class Honours, upper division (2:1)	Merit	60-69
Second-Class Honours, lower division (2:2)	Pass	50-59
Third-Class Honours (3rd)	Pass	40-49
Fail	Fail	Below 40

Resits/Retakes

- If an apprentices fails to achieve a pass standard for either element (report or presentation), they will be required to complete a reassessment of the failed element.

- Only one reassessment attempt is permitted.

Other important information

Reasonable Adjustments

- If the Apprentice you work with requires any reasonable adjustments for their EPA, they are encouraged to speak to the Inclusion and Disability Service at Manchester Met as soon as possible (if they do not currently have a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) in place - <u>Inclusion and Disability Service at Manchester Met</u>

- If they do have a PLP in place, and have any questions regarding the EPA, they have been advised to raise this with their Skills Coach who will be able to confirm any arrangement have been applied for/requested with the Manchester Met EPA Team.

Appeals and Complaints

- The EPA is viewed as an exam and so Apprentices can submit an Academic Appeal should they wish to in line with the academic appeals policy/process. This will be handled through the standard appeals process at the university - Academic Appeals | Manchester Metropolitan University (mmu.ac.uk)

- If there are any concerns or complaints relating to the EPA, please contact the EPA Lead for this programme (Jess East – j.east@mmu.ac.uk) or call the Apprenticeship Unit helpline on 0161 247 3720

- If the apprentice would like to make a more formal complaint, you should advise them to follow the student's complaints procedure

Quality Assurance

- The Live EPAs will be recorded for moderation and internal quality assurance purposes.

- Please note that all EPAs are recorded for the above reasons and stored securely in accordance with university information governance policy.

- This is to ensure that assessment is fair and consistent across all EPAs.

Q&A