

## COVID-19 Update Statement

07-04-2020

### Latest Guidance for Employers with an Apprentice

Since our last statement on the 25.3.2020 the government has introduced some new measures intended to make it easier for apprentices to continue with their learning and achieve their End Point Assessment (EPA). The latest announcements endorse the approach that has already been adopted by the College which has been to support employers and apprentices to stay in learning and be ready to complete their EPA. The key update has been the confirmation from government to ***allow furloughed apprentices to continue their training***, as long as it does not provide services to, or generate revenue for, their employer. The College has reviewed the latest update and would like to issue the following guidance to its employers at this time.

1. Apprentices will continue to receive training from the College whilst they are working, furloughed or have a temporary change in their working practice e.g. working from home. Each apprentice will have a clear plan of learning for April and May. This plan will be uploaded to the Learning Plan section of SMART assessor. Whilst the College is closed training will be delivered through a number of electronic platforms including Skype, Microsoft Teams and SMART Assessor. Assessors and the Training and Development Managers for each industry sector will be working with you and your apprentices to ensure all parties know what they should be doing, how they can access learning and how they can get further support should they need it. It is likely that apprentices will be working on a range of knowledge and skills based activities online that link to their standard or framework. Maths, English and digital skills development will also be a focus. It may be possible for an apprentice to get ahead during this period and complete a significant proportion of the off the job training helping to reduce this requirement once they return to their normal working pattern.
2. Progress reviews of apprentices will continue and we would ask that employers remain an active participant in this process albeit remotely in many cases.
3. Apprentices who are due to have their EPA in the next two months may face a delay. If this applies to any of your apprentices the assessor will update you on the timescales involved and whether a break in learning can or should be applied.
4. The Government has announced that where there is a specified time limit for EPA post gateway, a further pause of 12 weeks is now allowable. The College will work directly with employers and apprentices on the scheduling of these assessments and any associated implications or logistics.
5. The government has confirmed that apprentices whose gateway is delayed can have an extension to the assessment timeframe. The College will work directly with employers and apprentices on the scheduling of these assessments and any associated implications or logistics.
6. There are likely to be a range of instances where an apprentice's employment could be disrupted. The announcement that apprentices can continue in learning whilst 'furloughed' means that where the job retention scheme is being accessed by an employer we will work with you and your apprentice(s) to keep them in learning and moving towards their gateway assessment. We want to help employers and apprentices avoid any unnecessary breaks in learning that could impact on their progress and completion timeframe. The College will work with you to review each circumstance and endeavour to find solutions whereby the learning of the apprentice can continue and any unnecessary 'breaks in learning' can be

avoided. If you are a Levy employer, please do not cancel your monthly payments, but speak with us at the College so we can advise of the correct action to take. Payments will automatically stop when the College sends its monthly return to the ESFA. In the unlikely event any overpayments are made, these will be credited back to you via your Digital Account. If you are a Non-Levy employer, the funding received from the Government will automatically be put on hold.

7. In the unfortunate event that an apprentice is made redundant from your business we will provide the apprentice with support to find a new employer. Please liaise with us at your earliest convenience if you think that this may be an outcome for all or any of your apprentices.

The College recognises that some approaches will need to be adapted to different sectors. Our main objective is to support your apprentices to maintain their learning during this difficult period. We recognise that companies working practices will be adjusted over the next few months and this will impact on many employees including apprentices. We would ask that you work with us so that we can support you and your apprentices to maintain their learning and to successfully complete once the COVID-19 crisis subsides. We will continue to update you as and when further information and guidance is released by government.

Please use the following contact list to access any support and guidance you might need regarding your apprentice and their training during this period.

#### **Apprenticeship Team – Key Contacts**

Apprenticeship Account Management	Tracie Leahy	<a href="mailto:Tracie.leahy@weston.ac.uk">Tracie.leahy@weston.ac.uk</a>	01934 411725 or 07795032799
Apprenticeship Delivery and Smart Assessor access	Barney Willis	<a href="mailto:barney.willis@weston.ac.uk">barney.willis@weston.ac.uk</a>	01934 411751 or 07905 177616

#### **Apprenticeship Delivery – Sector Contacts**

Emma Hoyal	Engineering	<a href="mailto:Emma.Hoyal@weston.ac.uk">Emma.Hoyal@weston.ac.uk</a>	07583 078582
Fran Dowle	Early Years and Teaching Assistants	<a href="mailto:Francesca.Dowle@weston.ac.uk">Francesca.Dowle@weston.ac.uk</a>	07966 322633
Julie Schoner	Hair, Barbering and Beauty	<a href="mailto:Julie.Schoner@weston.ac.uk">Julie.Schoner@weston.ac.uk</a>	07973 917338
Louise Perkins	Management and Housing	<a href="mailto:Louise.Perkins@weston.ac.uk">Louise.Perkins@weston.ac.uk</a>	07976 771781
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