

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

May 2020

BPEC continues to operate a full working week. We are contactable Monday to Friday 08:30 – 16:30. Temporarily, we are operating with reduced staff numbers who are working remotely, so we politely request you bear with us and thank you for your patience in these challenging times.

NOTE: All Government guidelines and regulatory requirements must be adhered to at all times.

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How can I contact BPEC during the current situation?

Training courses and materials (BPEC Services): services@bpec.org.uk

Certification Body: cbadmin@bpec.org.uk

Awarding and End-point Assessment Organisation: aoadmin@bpec.org.uk

BPEC Services Ltd (Training Courses & Training Materials)

My current certificate is due to expire soon, is there any extension to the certificate, or what happens now?

Where possible engineers should take all reasonable steps to update their expired certification, including planning ahead where possible. Where this is not possible engineers should continue to work safely.

Where engineers are registered with Competent Person schemes we would expect some dispensation from them in this current situation until engineers are able to attend centres to update their certificates.

It must be mentioned that this is a temporary measure and does not remove the standing requirement for certificated/registered engineers to maintain their certification and renew certification every 5 years or where stated.

I have a training course booked soon, what happens now?

In the first instance call the centre/college to find out if they are still open and rearrange to suit both parties. Leave any messages and contact details for them to contact you on their return.

The centre I was going to attend has closed due to COVID-19, can I go to another BPEC centre?

Yes, you can attend another BPEC centre near you (if open) please follow the link to [Find a Centre](#)

Can centres still register staff for delivery and assessing of training courses and apply for extension of scopes?

Yes, BPEC are still operating and will be able to approve staff and any extension of scopes for all centres. Please send in the relevant paperwork to services@bpec.org.uk and this will be picked up and processed. If we have any questions we will get back to you.

Are you still able to approve new centres?

Yes, please contact services@bpec.org.uk requesting someone to contact you and explain what will be required and how we will go about this.

Can I still purchase training materials?

Yes, BPEC are currently still taking orders for delivery. If the situation changes where orders and delivery cannot be met, we will inform you and once the situation changes we will fulfil all orders asap. We are in constant communication with our printers. We appreciate that this is an unsettling and worrying time for our customers and appreciate your cooperation and patience.

I have placed an order on the BPEC shop - will it still be delivered?

Where possible these orders will be met; however, we appreciate that this is an unsettling and worrying time for our customers and appreciate your cooperation and patience. If the situation changes where orders and delivery cannot be met, we will inform you and once the situation changes we will fulfil all orders asap. We are in constant communication with our printers.

BPEC Certification Body

Where possible we have managed to set up a work from home operation, aiming to maintain a normal delivery for all our customers that are still operating, answering enquiries, centre approval, extension of scopes as well as providing a certification process to all of our approved centres that are still operating.

I have completed my ACS assessment and am awaiting my ACS certification to come through to me, are you still certifying completed assessments.

At this time, we are still operating a reduced throughput of certification products, as a result our times for producing certificates will be extended.

I need my ACS certificate to be able to stay on the Gas Safe Register; will this stop me from operating?

Please follow the link below for Information from Gas Safe Register regarding their registration requirements:

www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/covid-19-advice-and-guidance/

I need my OFTEC certificate to be able to stay on OFTEC's Register; will this stop me from operating?

Please follow the link below for Information from OFTEC regarding their registration requirements:

www.oftec.org/technicians/covid-19-contingency-planning

I have an assessment booked with my local BPEC assessment centre will the assessment still be able to go ahead?

First call the centre/college to find out if they are still open and rearrange to suite both parties. Leave a message and contact details for them to contact you on their return.

Can you give me any information regarding any BPEC assessment centres that are still open?

Yes, you can attend a BPEC centre near you (if open) please follow the link to [Find Centre](#).

BPEC Awarding Organisation (AO)

What assurances can BPEC provide to centres and learners concerned about completion of their BPEC qualification?

BPEC are working closely with Ofqual and the Regulatory bodies to provide advice and guidance for centres during this period and will communicate all updates to Centres via the BPEC website and/or Centre Management Representative. Qualification requirements **must** continue to be met as per the qualification specification, however, BPEC is taking a flexible and pragmatic approach wherever possible to support you whilst also maintaining the quality of qualification delivery standards.

(please see - What can we do if a learner is unable to attend the training elements of their qualification at our Centre?)

Learners and centres can be reassured that EQA monitoring will continue remotely and that alternative arrangements have been put in place to support centres and learners.

Are BPEC still accepting learner registrations and issuing certificates for its qualifications?

Yes. We can confirm that the learner registration and certification services for qualifications are not affected and you will continue to be able to register learners and request certification.

Can we have certificates delivered directly to a learner's home address if our centre closes due to COVID-19 disruption?

Yes. Although this is not standard practice, we will allow for a learner's certificate to be sent directly to their home address. To allow for this to happen, please email your request, detailing the learner's full name and address to aoadmin@bpec.org.uk. Please note you will need to submit your request with as much notice as possible to allow BPEC to make the address change as once certificates are issued we will not be able to re-direct them.

Our Centre is closing and we will not be able to deliver future planned examinations, what should we advise BPEC?

Where centres are closing due to COVID-19 disruption and its contingency arrangements have been exhausted, BPEC would recommend that centres re-schedule learner examinations when their premises are due to re-open.

What can we do if a learner is unable to attend the training elements of their qualification at our centre?

BPEC appreciates that face to face delivery will be impacted at present. We encourage all delivery centres to adapt their resources to offer digitally where face to face is not possible, using creative tools to ensure that learners are still able to continue their programmes of learning. Centres can consider remote delivery, deploying e-portfolios, Skype, Zoom and/or Microsoft Teams. Centres must liaise with learners to agree alternative arrangements are appropriate for their needs and ensure alternative arrangements do not place a barrier to entry.

For some qualifications distance learning may be appropriate. When utilising distance learning centres must detail within their centre quality management processes each of the following:

- Whether some, or all, of the permitted learning outcomes from the qualifications/program are to be delivered by distance learning
- The reason for the arrangements

- The method of distance learning to be used
- The training content to be covered with distance learning
- The number of hours to be covered by the distance learning material
- A robust and auditable method for determining that learners have undertaken distance learning

Training materials must clearly show learners how many hours learning they are expected to undertake, and that they are given sufficient time and support to allow them to complete the distance learning. Centres must be able to check and evidence that the learner has completed the distance learning to ensure that appropriate learning has occurred. Records must be maintained for review by your external quality assurer and show how the qualification requirements are met including the guided learning hours (GLH).

How can BPEC help centres to support their learners with their ongoing learning?

BPEC is an industry leading specialised provider of qualifications, assessments, training courses and learning materials.

To support learners and Centres a range of free delivery resources are available via the BPEC website including a downloadable Plumbing Textbook.

www.bpec.org.uk/shop/free-learning-resources

Centres can also purchase tutor support delivery resources to support phase 1 & 2 of the new Level 3 Diploma in Plumbing and Domestic Heating qualification. The resources can be used to aide remote delivery and include:

- Schemes of Work for all units
- Underpinning knowledge packs
- Practical workbooks
- Practical guides
- PowerPoints covering all units, learning outcomes and assessment criteria

The link below provides a short video of the Plumbing tutor support resources available

www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNU9FXzw

Please follow the link below to the BPEC website for further information on the Phase 1 & 2 tutor support resources

www.bpec.org.uk/product/tutor-support-resources-plumbing

Phase 1 & 2 Textbooks can also be purchased by following the links below

www.bpec.org.uk/product/plumbing-textbook-level-3-phase-1

www.bpec.org.uk/product/level-3-plumbing-and-domestic-heating-qualification-textbook-phase-2

Is the AO still carrying out external quality assurance visits?

External quality assurance activities are continuing remotely. Contingency arrangements include remote external quality assurance sampling to a full remote visit model. This will be determined on a case to case basis with centres.

BPEC will continue to carry out external quality assurance activities and support its centres via remote methods. The below options will be available and the most suitable option arranged:

Remote Sample: Some qualifications allow for remote sampling activities. Where remote sampling is already planned, or where the qualifications allow, remote sampling could be planned as an interim measure.

Remote EQA Visit: Where a centre requires a visit, or where a Centre Approval is required, a Remote EQA Visit will be arranged.

Postpone the visit: In some cases, it may be appropriate to postpone the visit to a later date, for example a familiarisation or support visit which is not immediately required.

EQAs continue to offer a supportive role and continue to be contactable should you have any external quality assurance queries, or should you wish to arrange an EQA activity. Centres can also contact assurance@bpec.org.uk should you have any queries about remote visit arrangements.

[We do not have Direct Claims Status, can we still request learner certificates upon achievement?](#)

Yes, your EQA will arrange a remote EQA visit via Microsoft Teams or Skype, or a remote sample to externally quality assure portfolios and supporting evidence. Your EQA will make you aware before the engagement what evidence will be required for the monitoring activity. BPEC would recommend recording live assessments or observations of learners to assist with this process. There should be no impact to DCS/certification claims.

[Can I still request and receive a replacement certificate?](#)

Yes, we are happy to receive a request for replacement certificates.

[Can I still make a complaint or appeal?](#)

Yes, we will still respond to and deal with complaints and appeals, however due to the exceptional circumstances any subsequent investigation and findings may be delayed.

[Latest news – Statement from Ofqual on an awarding approach for Vocational and Technical Qualifications, 25 March 2020](#)

www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-on-vocational-and-technical-qualifications-in-2020

BPEC End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)

We understand and appreciate the challenges you are facing with the recent outbreak of COVID-19, and we are committed to providing a positive experience during this disruptive period. Currently some face to face engagements are postponed please see FAQs below.

Registrations

End point Assessment registrations can continue to be made by contacting aoadmin@bpec.org.uk.

Disruption to training - breaks in learning

Apprenticeship funding rules already make provision for disruption in learning:

- less than 4 weeks – in these circumstances neither the employer, nor the training provider, needs to report the interruption, the end-date for the apprenticeship remains the same and there is no change to the payment of funding
- more than 4 weeks – in these circumstances, employers and/or training providers must report a formal break in learning. Where a break in learning is reported, the payment of funding to the training provider will be suspended for the duration of the break in learning.

What is the maximum delay in learning allowed for End-point Assessment?

Apprentices who are deemed ready for assessment, and cannot be assessed due to COVID-19 related issues, are able to have their EPA rescheduled. Where there is a specified time limit for EPA post gateway, a further pause of 12 weeks is allowed.

Who do I need to inform about breaks in learning?

For breaks in learning pre gateway, exceeding four weeks, requests should be made to ESFA. For a break in learning during EPA of 12 weeks or less BPEC will need to log each instance and share with their EQAPs on a timely basis.

Can training providers still support a furloughed worker where this apprentice is still being supported on their apprenticeship?

Yes, training can still be completed for a furloughed worker.

If EPA is currently unable to be commenced due to COVID-19 measures should apprentices be put through gateway or wait?

If apprentices have met gateway requirements they should still be put through gateway where possible.

What other options are there regarding Gateway sign off?

Gateway sign-off can be conducted remotely, with the agreement of the apprentice, employer and provider. This can be done via an electronic signature, via email, or via scanning documents and emailing them.

Is there going to be any relaxation regarding the achievement of Functional Skills and other pre-requisites for gateway?

No. All qualifications that an apprentice is required to achieve in order to move through gateway will still need to be achieved.

Some Awarding Organisations (AOs) are not printing certificates. What alternative evidence of achieving a mandated qualification can be accepted?

If an AO is unable to print certificates at this time as required for gateway, an email confirming achievement is sufficient evidence to enter gateway.

If an apprentice has already completed one component of the EPA, for example a knowledge test, but then cannot progress to the next stage – how long can the break be between each part?

Some EPA elements may have been completed but it is not possible to complete the remainder before the break in learning is required. A break in learning can be applied at any point but cannot last longer than 12 weeks.

Can an apprentice have more than one break in learning during EPA?

A pause in learning can be taken at any point post gateway, including between end point assessment methods. The maximum break in learning is 12 weeks.

Can assessment methods be changed – e.g. swapping an observation for a professional discussion?

No. Assessment methods must be used as per the assessment plan. The way in which the stated assessment methods are conducted may be amended if approved by the EQAP. Authority to change an assessment method remains with IfATE.

If an apprentice is furloughed, can they still undertake their end-point assessment?

Yes. Where an apprentice has passed gateway, EPA continues where it is possible to do so (in line with all guidance issued).

We are determined to make it 'business as usual' as much as we possibly can, and we are still answering every call and every email as quickly as possible. For any questions or queries relating to BPEC End-point Assessment please email aoadmin@bpec.org.uk.