

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

**April 2021**

BPEC continues to operate a full working week. We are contactable Monday to Friday 08:30 – 16:30.

**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](mailto:services@bpec.org.uk)

Certification Body: [cbadmin@bpec.org.uk](mailto:cbadmin@bpec.org.uk)

Awarding and End-point Assessment Organisation: [aoadmin@bpec.org.uk](mailto: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?

Most centres are now open, where possible engineers should take all reasonable steps to update their expired certification, including planning ahead where possible. Where this is not possible due to centres being overloaded 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?

Most centres are now open, in the first instance call the centre/college to find out if they are open if not then 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](mailto: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](mailto:services@bpec.org.uk) requesting someone to contact you and explain what will be required and how we will go about this. Centre approval visits are still following government guidelines until the 21st June 2021 when the situation will be re-looked at.

Can I still purchase training materials?

Yes, BPEC are now operating a full service for all orders for delivery. We are in constant communication with our printers to maintain delivery times.

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

Yes these orders will be met, we are in constant communication with our printers to maintain delivery times.

## BPEC Certification Body

**We are now operating a full operation from the BPEC office for the certification process and answering enquiries to maintain our standards of service for delivery for to all our customers that are still operating. Centre approvals are still dependant on following government guidelines, this will be looked at again after the 21st June 2021 while some extension of scopes can be undertaken remotely.**

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

At this time, we are now operating a full certification process.

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/](http://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](http://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?

Most centres are now open, in the first instance call the centre/college to find out if they are open if not then rearrange to suit both parties. Leave any messages 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 <https://bpec.org.uk/covid-19-information-page/> and/or Centre Management Representative.

BPEC is taking a flexible and pragmatic approach wherever possible to support you whilst also maintaining the quality of qualification delivery standards. Learners and centres can be reassured that EQA monitoring is continuing remotely and that alternative arrangements have been put in place to support centres and learners.

Are BPEC 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.

What arrangements should we put in place for qualification delivery?

It is important to note that the starting point for all centres should be to plan, deliver and assess qualifications in line with usual BPEC and qualification requirements, ensuring that government guidelines regarding COVID-19 prevention are adhered to at all times. Only where it is not safe or practicable to do so should centres consider the mitigations put in place by BPEC. Depending on the qualification, mitigation may include adaptation to assessment, delaying assessment until safe to do so, or the awarding of qualification by Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG).

What can we do if a learner(s) is unable to attend due to the Impact of COVID-19?

BPEC appreciates that face to face delivery has been impacted and we encourage all delivery centres to continue 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. BPEC recognises that the majority of its centres have successfully overcome the challenges posed by national and localised lockdowns by transferring to a remote and online delivery model. BPEC encourages centres to regularly review these arrangements along with lesson and delivery plans. This includes the use of communication tools such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom for delivering training and conducting the assessment of learners. Centres may also wish to make use of VLE platforms or e-portfolio systems.

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](http://www.bpec.org.uk/shop/free-learning-resources)

Centres can also purchase tutor support delivery resources to support phases 1, 2 & 3 of the 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=SNUpnU9FXzw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNUpnU9FXzw)

Please follow the link below to the BPEC website for further information on the Plumbing Phase 1, 2 & 3 tutor support resources.

<http://bpec.org.uk/product/tutor-support-resources-plumbing/>

Phase 1, 2 & 3 Plumbing Textbooks can also be purchased by following the links below

<https://bpec.org.uk/product/plumbing-textbook-level-3-phase-1/>

<https://bpec.org.uk/product/level-3-plumbing-and-domestic-heating-qualification-textbook-phase-2/>

<https://bpec.org.uk/product/level-3-plumbing-and-domestic-heating-qualification-textbook-phase-3/>

### Is BPEC's Awarding Organisation 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](mailto: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.

## BPEC End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)

**We understand and appreciate the challenges you have all faced this last year regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**Following the latest government advice and guidance, BPEC are pleased to offer and undertake face to face end-point assessment.**

**Please see FAQs below for further information.**

### Registrations

End point Assessment registrations can continue to be made by contacting [aoadmin@bpec.org.uk](mailto:aoadmin@bpec.org.uk).

### Disruption to training - breaks 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 an apprentice is unable to undertake EPA due to COVID-19 issues should the apprentice be put through gateway or wait?

If apprentice has met gateway requirements they should still be put through gateway where possible.

### What 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. Functional skills assessments are allowed to take place whether in-centre or by secure remote delivery. So 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 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).