

New assessment approach is 'fresh start' for apprenticeships

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The [Building Engineering Services Association](#) (BESA) has formed a partnership with a specialist End Point Assessment Organisation to secure the future of high-quality apprenticeships across the building services sector.

It has handed over responsibility for 'end point assessment' (EPA) of building services engineering (BSE) apprentices to the [Construction EPA Company](#) (CEPAC), which already assesses a wide number of construction-related apprenticeships.

This will free up BESA to focus on its core strengths of developing qualifications and courses, with particular emphasis on the forthcoming review of England's building services engineering apprenticeship standards.

EPA is the crucial final stage of an apprenticeship programme when candidates are given a test to ensure they have developed the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours to equip them for the 'real world' of work. BESA was an accredited EPA organisation but now recognises the need to extend this service by working with a specialist provider.

"This partnership gives us a fresh start by allowing us to focus all our efforts on understanding the skills needs of the industry, developing the right qualifications and courses to drive the competence of the future workforce," said BESA's director of training and skills Helen Yeulet.

"We will then continue to partner with colleges, training providers and assessors to deliver the best outcomes for employers across our sector."

Delivery

As a specialist assessor, CEPAC can deliver EPAs on a much greater scale and more cost-effectively than an individual trade bodies combined with expertise in delivery of high levels of quality assurance. EPA gateways will be available for the Level 3 BSE Craftsperson standard from November 1, the Level 2 BSE Installer from December 5, and Level 3 BSE Service & Maintenance Engineer from January 30.

BESA also said that details for ductwork and related standards would be announced soon and that CEPAC is developing a full suite of assessment materials for all building services standards.

It has, however, been able to “hit the ground running” for the sector because of its existing wide experience of EPAs in construction, according to Yeulet.

“They will help us maintain the momentum towards modern standards where qualifications are regularly re-assessed to ensure skills and competency are keeping pace with technical and regulatory changes,” she added.

“Setting new standards in apprenticeships, backed up by meaningful end point assessment, is the starting point for a qualification for life that can be regularly refreshed via continuous professional development (CPD) and targeted specific short courses for upskilling.

“Working with CEPAC means we know exactly the quality of the standards each candidate will be assessed against assuring a competent workforce for employers,” said Yeulet.

CEPAC chief executive Samuel Riley thanked the training and skills team at BESA for their hard work and support during the handover process.

“We will be building on the excellent work BESA has done to develop a suite of newly enhanced building services EPAs,” he added. “CEPAC is committed to supporting the sector as the only Ofqual recognised, specialist construction EPA Organisation. We look forward to supporting all the sector’s apprentices, employers, and providers.”

CEPAC is also hosting a briefing session for the building services sector on 28 October which will be followed by a series of webinars for each of the BSE apprenticeship standards. More information can be found on the CEPAC website: www.constructionepa.com

For more information about BESA training go to: www.theBESA.com/academy