

Level 5 Operations Manager

End-Point Assessment Specification



Who is this specification for?

This specification has been created for anyone involved in training and supporting apprentices on this standard and should be read in conjunction with AIM's policies and procedures found on www.aimgroup.org.uk/eparesources

Disclaimer

The information contained in this specification was correct at the time of publication. Whilst we endeavour to keep the content up to date, we would recommend that you also refer to <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/operations-manager-v1-4> for up to date information on the EPA standard and the assessment plan.

To report any errors, please contact: assessment@aimgroup.org.uk

Version history					
Version number	Version code	Date	Description	Changes made with page number(s)	Checked by (initials and date)
1	OM/SP/001/V1/251124/DT	Nov 24	Newly developed	X	HL 25.03.25

Contents

1. An Introduction to AIM Assessment.....	3
Who is AIM Assessment?	3
Role.....	3
2. Why choose AIM for your EPA?	4
3. Standard summary.....	5
4. Assessment methods	7
5. Grading criteria/KSBs	9
6. Regulatory references (internal use)	15

1. An Introduction to AIM Assessment

Who is AIM Assessment?

AIM Assessment is part of the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group, a leading Awarding Organisation (AO) and Access Validating Agency (AVA) offering award-winning qualifications and Access to HE Diplomas for over thirty years.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is an independent, Ofqual recognised, end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) responsible for an apprentice's final assessment to ensure they can do the job for which they've trained.

AIM is regulated by Ofqual, CCEA, Qualifications Wales and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to ensure we maintain quality standards in our delivery and provision.

Role

As an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) we assess apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours learnt throughout their apprenticeship.

The assessment is taken after the training has been completed, and when the apprentice's employer and training provider are satisfied that the apprentice is ready. If the end-point assessment (EPA) is successful, an apprenticeship certificate is issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). We work closely with employers and providers from the start of the apprenticeship to support apprentices and their employer/training provider on their journey towards a successful EPA.

2. Why choose AIM for your EPA?

AIM's exceptional end-point assessments are characterised by ten guiding principles.

By embodying these principles, we not only validate an apprentice's readiness for the industry but also enhance the overall quality and credibility of apprenticeships.

1. Assessments are undertaken by assessors with the **relevant skills, experience** and specific **industry knowledge**.
2. Assessments should produce **consistent results**, no matter who conducts or takes it, ensuring reliability in the evaluation process.
3. Assessments should **accurately measure** what it's intended to assess in order to guarantee that the assessment truly reflects the apprentice's capabilities.
4. The assessment process should be **fair and impartial**, avoiding bias or discrimination against any apprentice.
5. Assessments should be **accessible to all** apprentices, accommodating diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles.
6. Assessments should have **clearly defined criteria and expectations** to ensure apprentices understand what they're being assessed on.
7. All parties (apprentice, employer and training provider) should know how the apprentice will be assessed; the process should be **transparent** to instil confidence in its fairness.
8. Assessment tasks and questions should mirror **real work scenarios** to help apprentices showcase their practical skills, knowledge and behaviours.
9. The assessor should provide **constructive feedback** to help apprentices understand their strengths and areas for improvement.
10. There should be **a close partnership** between the EPAO, and the training provider/employer to ensure the assessment meets everyone's needs.

3. Standard summary

Standard name	AIM Qualifications Level 5 Operations Manager End-Point Assessment
ST code	ST0385 Version: 1.4
Role profile of the apprenticeship* <i>(* this outlines the purpose of the qualification)</i>	<p>The broad purpose of this occupation is to provide leadership, with both operational and project responsibilities. An Operations manager is responsible for managing individuals or a team, offering direction, instructions, and guidance to achieve set goals within an organisation. This typically involves setting, managing, and monitoring the achievement of core objectives aligned with the organisation's overall strategic goals. In smaller organisations, they are also likely to contribute to the execution and achievement of these strategic objectives.</p> <p>They may typically interact with colleagues from various internal departments, including operations, HR, finance, legal, IT, sales and marketing, as well as external stakeholders such as customers, clients, and suppliers. They may work in a wide range of organisations and in diverse environments including offices, onsite locations and remotely.</p> <p>Typical job titles include: Operations manager Area manager, Departmental manager, General manager, Regional manager, Specialist manager.</p> <p>The purpose of the apprenticeship (qualification) including end-point assessment, is to ensure that the apprentice has learnt the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to undertake the role of an Operations manager.</p>
Duration	Typically 24 months training and five months EPA
Apprenticeship process	The apprentice will typically spend 24 months on their apprenticeship. Apprentices working 30+ hours per week will spend a minimum of 20% (ie at least six hours per week) of their time off-the-job, learning with a training provider, college, or with their employer. After their training period the apprentice will begin their end-point assessment (EPA) to check they have the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required for this role. This assessment should be completed within five months and will be conducted by AIM's specialist end-point assessors.
Gateway*/ other requirements	<p>Apprentices must have satisfied the following before Gateway*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spent at least 12 months on their apprenticeship programme Employer confirmation that the apprentice is ready to take EPA Achieved maths and English qualifications at Level 2 (this only applies to apprentices aged 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship training. For apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training, achieving L2 English and maths is not mandatory) Submitted a portfolio of evidence and mapping grid Submitted an approved project proposal form Have completed an on-programme project which will form the basis of the report and presentation assessment. <p>*Gateway is the point at which apprentices enter the end-point assessment period</p>
Assessment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment method one: Project with report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assessment method two: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence		
Overall grading	Grading that is achievable for this standard:		
	Assessment method one: Project with report	Assessment method two: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	Overall grading
	Fail	Any grade	Fail
	Any grade	Fail	Fail
	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Pass	Distinction	Pass
	Distinction	Pass	Pass
	Distinction	Distinction	Distinction
	Appeals	The AIM Results and Appeals Policy can be viewed on the AIM website here: AIM Policies and Procedures	
Reasonable adjustments	AIM can make reasonable adjustments to the way that an apprentice is assessed during their EPA, according to individual circumstances. For example, they may require practical arrangements be put in place to support them in an in-person assessment due to a diagnosed condition. For further information on applying for reasonable adjustments please visit: AIM Policies and Procedures		
Results	AIM anticipates the release of results within 15 working days after the apprentice’s final assessment.		
Preparation and support	Before Gateway, AIM will approve a project’s suitability and establish time frames with the apprentice. For the assessments, AIM will provide guidance and preparation documents, including access to sample questions and suggested project report titles. AIM also runs online clinics to support the employer and apprentice. Details can be found on www.aimgroup.org.uk/epaclinics		

4. Assessment methods

Assessment method one: Project with report

Summary of the assessment:

The apprentice will undertake an appropriate project whilst on-programme that has a genuine business benefit to their employer. The project will typically last six months and be completed pre-Gateway. During the EPA period, the apprentice will then produce a written report based on the project, followed by a presentation and questioning session with the EPA assessor.

Components	Component one: Written project report Component two: Presentation with questions
Timings/duration	Project report: 4,000 words (+/- 10%) excluding annexes Presentation: Typically 20 minutes Questioning: Typically 40 minutes The total time for the presentation with questions component can be increased by 10% for the apprentice to complete their last point or response to a question.
Submission requirements	The project proposal must be approved by the EPA assessor prior to commencement to ensure it is suitable and has the scope to meet the grading criteria. The Employer and Training Provider must also approve the project's scope and suitability. The report and presentation materials submission must include mapping of evidence to the grading criteria, as well as an authenticity declaration by the apprentice and employer. These should be submitted no later than the end of week 12 of the EPA period.
Grading for this assessment method	Fail Pass Distinction
Assessment preparation and support from AIM	For the assessment, AIM will provide detailed guidance and preparation documents, including sample questions, which are available upon contracting with AIM. AIM also runs apprentice clinics to support the employer and apprentice. Details can be found on www.aimgroup.org.uk/epaclinics

Assessment method two: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Summary of the assessment:

A structured discussion with an EPA assessor, supported by a portfolio of evidence

Components	Component one: Professional discussion
Timings/duration	Portfolio of evidence completed on-programme and submitted at Gateway Professional discussion: 60 minutes (+10% at the assessor's discretion to allow the apprentice to respond to their last question)

Submission requirements	The portfolio will typically contain 16 pieces of evidence portfolio is submitted electronically at Gateway along with a portfolio mapping grid.
Grading for this assessment method	Fail Pass Distinction
Assessment preparation and support from AIM	For the assessment, AIM will provide detailed guidance and preparation documents, including sample questions, which are available upon contracting with AIM. AIM also runs apprentice clinics to support the employer and apprentice. Details can be found on www.aimgroup.org.uk/epaclinics

5. Grading criteria/KSBs

During their end-point assessment (EPA), apprentices are assessed against the grading criteria which is underpinned by the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) which have been attained during the on-programme period. These have been listed below and are sourced from the <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/operations-manager-v1-4> EPA assessment plan for this standard [accessed: 25/11/2024].

Grading criteria

Assessment method one: Project with report		
Theme	PASS – apprentices must demonstrate all the pass grading criteria	DISTINCTION – apprentices must demonstrate all the distinction grading criteria
Project scope and planning	Explains how they identify problems and use methods for researching, analysing interpreting, and evaluating data to inform judgements and provide solutions. (K6, S2)	None
	Explains how they manage and prioritise stakeholder relationships and influence and negotiate with stakeholders to shape and agree goals and outcomes when identifying and managing organisational improvement opportunities. (K8, K10, S16)	Evaluates the impact of their approach to influencing and negotiating with stakeholders to shape and agree goals and outcomes when identifying and managing organisational improvement opportunities. (K8, S16)
	Describes the change management concepts and the methods they use to implement change within their organisation in line with the project brief. (K17)	None
	Explains how they identify the current and future needs of the sector and respond to any external factors that may influence the future landscape and evaluates their impact on the organisation. (K11, S15)	Critically analyses the current and future needs of the organisation. (K11)
Project implementation	Explains how they use IT and software tools to support the needs of the organisation, including advances in technology, and use digital tools to analyse information and monitor performance and budgets to drive the implementation and delivery of plans and projects (K5, S8)	None

	Explains how they apply project and financial management tools and techniques to manage and deliver projects within budget and resource requirements, taking accountability and ownership of their own and the team's tasks and workload. (K7, K9, S5, B3)	Evaluates the impact of the project and financial management techniques they have used to deliver projects within resource requirements, suggesting improvements to facilitate the success of future projects. (K7, K9, S5)
	Outlines the problem solving, decision making, influencing, and negotiating models and techniques they used in the project. (K12, K13)	None
	Explains how they work collaboratively with others to research, interpret, and analyse information which informs the implementation of business plans or projects. (S9, B6)	None
	Explains how they work flexibly and adapt to change when managing continuous improvement and change for their team and organisation. (S12, B5)	Evaluates their approach to managing continuous improvement and change within the project (S12)
Evaluation and recommendation	Selects and applies different communication techniques and methods to present information to stakeholders. (K1, K15, S1)	None
	Evaluates the impact of outcomes from organisational plans or projects to drive the decision-making process. (S10)	None

Assessment method two: Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Theme	PASS – apprentices must demonstrate all the pass grading criteria	DISTINCTION – apprentices must demonstrate all the distinction grading criteria
Managing and leading a team	Analyses performance data for individuals and teams to identify areas for improvement, continuous development requirements and learning needs. (K20, S4)	None

	Proactively seeks, manages, and facilitates learning opportunities and continuous professional development for themselves and their wider team. (S19, B4)	None
	Evaluates how their use of leadership and management tools and techniques helps them to lead and manage a team ethically, set goals and accountabilities, and mediate and resolve any conflicts. (K14, K16, K18, S3, B1)	None
	Outlines the people management techniques and collaborative activities they use to coach, mentor, and motivate individuals in their team to achieve organisational goals. (K4, K24, S7, S20)	Critically evaluates their people management approach to motivating team members and individuals. (K4, S7) Evaluates the impact coaching and mentoring techniques have on individuals in their team. (K24, S20)
Organisational governance	Applies organisational policies and procedures, and relevant regulatory and legislative requirements while considering their impact on the team, the individual, their role, and the organisation, and interprets and communicates the practical implications of these for stakeholders. (K2, K22, S11)	None
	Proactively applies organisational policies and legislative guidelines to lead and influence the team and individuals to support an inclusive culture of equity, diversity, and the promotion of well-being. (K3, S6)	Evaluates their approach to supporting, delivering, and promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and well-being in terms of impact on the workplace. (K3, S6)
Operational planning	Analyses and prioritises organisational activities in response to the operating environment and the impact this has on their role. (K19, S13)	None
	Justifies the business continuity principles they apply to ensure the uninterrupted operation of critical functions. (K21, S14)	Evaluates the extent to which business continuity principles they apply have ensured the uninterrupted operation of critical functions. (K21, S14)

	Explains how organisation policies and practices were followed to deliver sustainable services and solutions which enable the organisation to respond to changes in social, economic, and environmental factors. (K23, S18)	Evaluates the extent to which organisation policies and practices followed to deliver sustainable services and solutions enabled the organisation to respond to changes in social, economic, and environmental factors. (K23, S18)
	Evaluates the degree to which operational plans they have developed and implemented align with the strategic direction of the organisation. (K25, S21)	None
Stakeholder relationships	Explains how they manage relationships across multiple and diverse stakeholders, ensuring they are treated fairly, inclusively and with respect. (S17, B2)	Evaluates the impact of their approach to managing stakeholder relationships and recommends improvements. (S17, B2)

Knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs)

Knowledge

K1: Presentation skills and methods.

K2: Relevant regulation and legislation requirements, and their impact on their team, the individual, their role and the organisation.

K3: Legislation and organisational policies relating to equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and their impact on the organisation and stakeholders.

K4: Approaches to people management, for example recruitment, performance management, reward, and talent management and resource planning.

K5: IT and software tools used to support the current and future needs of the organisation, including advances in technology.

K6: Methods for researching, analysing, interpreting and evaluating data to inform judgements and enable decision making.

K7: Financial management techniques and implications of decisions for budgets.

K8: How to identify and manage organisational improvement opportunities.

K9: Project management tools and techniques.

K10: Methods used to identify, manage and prioritise stakeholder relationships.

K11: The current and future needs of the sector and the impact on their organisation.

K12: Problem solving and decision-making techniques.

K13: Influencing and negotiation models and techniques.

K14: Conflict resolution and mediation processes.

K15: Communication techniques and approaches.

K16: Ethics and values-based leadership theories and principles, for example employee wellbeing.

K17: Change management concepts and methods for implementing change within the organisation.

K18: Leadership and management tools and techniques.
K19: The sector in which the organisation operates and its impact on their role.
K20: The continuous development requirements and learning needs of their team.
K21: Business continuity principles, including risk assessment, contingency planning and disaster recovery.
K22: Organisational policies and procedures, for example health and safety.
K23: Responsible organisation policies and practices covering social, environmental, and economic factors, including sustainability.
K24: Coaching and mentoring techniques.
K25: The strategic direction of the organisation and the impact on operational plans.

Skills

S1: Communicate and present information to stakeholders using different types of media.
S2: Identify problems and provide solutions.
S3: Manage and set goals and accountabilities for individuals and teams.
S4: Analyse performance data for individuals and teams to identify areas for improvement.
S5: Manage and influence project activity to deliver within budget and resource requirements.
S6: Lead and influence the team and individuals to support an inclusive culture of equity, diversity, and the promotion of well-being.
S7: Motivate team members and individuals through collaborative activities, for example one-to-one coaching and team meetings, to achieve organisational goals.
S8: Use digital tools to analyse information and monitor performance and budgets to drive the implementation and delivery of plans and projects.
S9: Research, interpret and analyse information to inform the implementation of business plans or projects.
S10: Evaluate the impact of outcomes from organisational plans or projects to drive the decision-making process.
S11: Interpret and implement the practical application of regulation, legislation and organisational policies for stakeholders.
S12: Manage continuous improvement and change for their team and organisation.
S13: Analyse and prioritise organisation activities in response to the operating environment.
S14: Implement business continuity plans, including risk assessment, contingency planning and disaster recovery, to ensure the uninterrupted operation of critical functions.
S15: Identify and respond to external factors that may influence the future landscape and evaluate their impact on the organisation.
S16: Influence and negotiate with stakeholders to shape and agree goals and outcomes.
S17: Manage relationships across multiple and diverse stakeholders.
S18: Deliver sustainable services and solutions which allow the organisation to respond to changes in social, economic and environmental factors.
S19: Manage and facilitate learning and continuous professional development for their team.
S20: Coach and mentor individuals within their team.
S21: Develop and implement operational plans that align with the strategic direction of the organisation.

Behaviours

B1: Acts professionally, ethically and with integrity.

B2: Supports an inclusive culture, treating colleagues and stakeholders fairly and with respect.

B3: Takes accountability and ownership of their own and the team's tasks and workload.

B4: Seeks learning opportunities and continuous professional development for self and the wider team.

B5: Works flexibly and adapts to circumstances.

B6: Works collaboratively with others across the organisation and stakeholders.

6. Regulatory references (internal use)

Ofqual General Conditions of recognition

Design and development of qualifications

Condition E3 Publication of a qualification specification

Contact information

If you need help/assistance from the EPA team, please contact us using the details below.

Tel: +44 (0)1332 224654

Enquiries: assessment@aimgroup.org.uk

More information can be found on: www.aimgroup.org.uk/epa