

**ofqual**  
**conference**

## **Ofqual's regulation of end-point assessments**

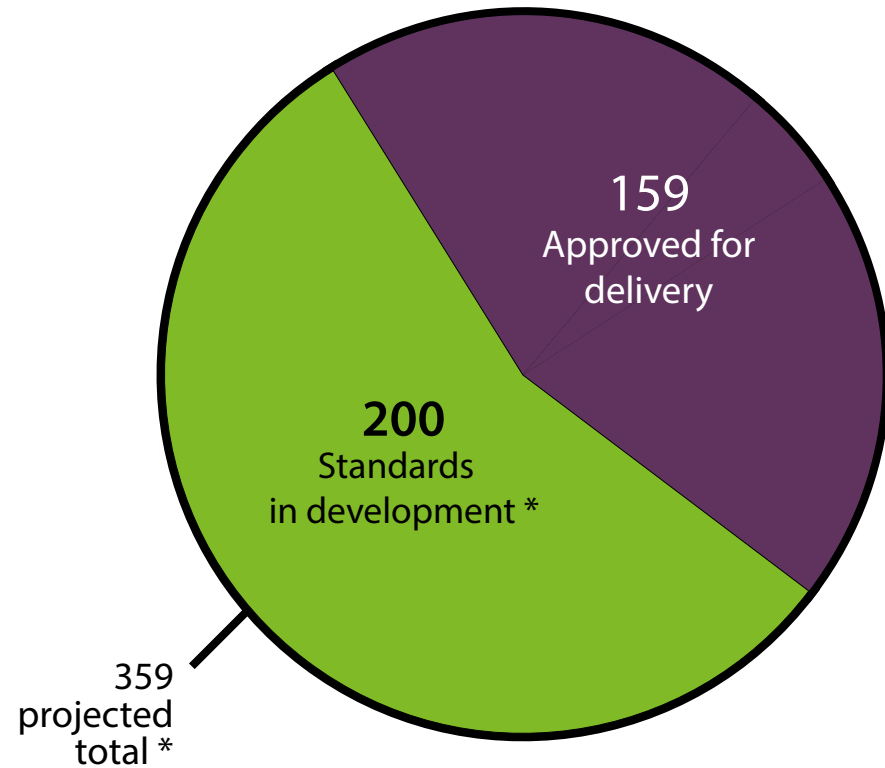
Phil Carr, Associate Director, VTQ Standards for Design and Development

Emma Leary, Associate Director, VTQ Policy

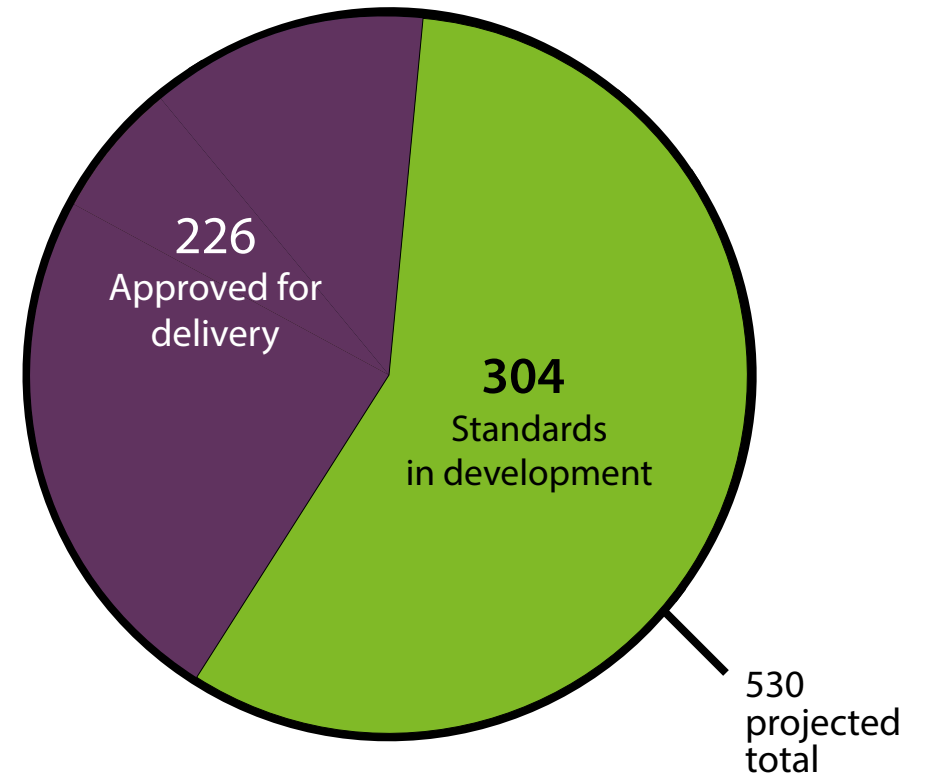
Steve Walker, Senior Manager, VTQ Standards for Design and Development

# CHANGING LANDSCAPE

## February 2017



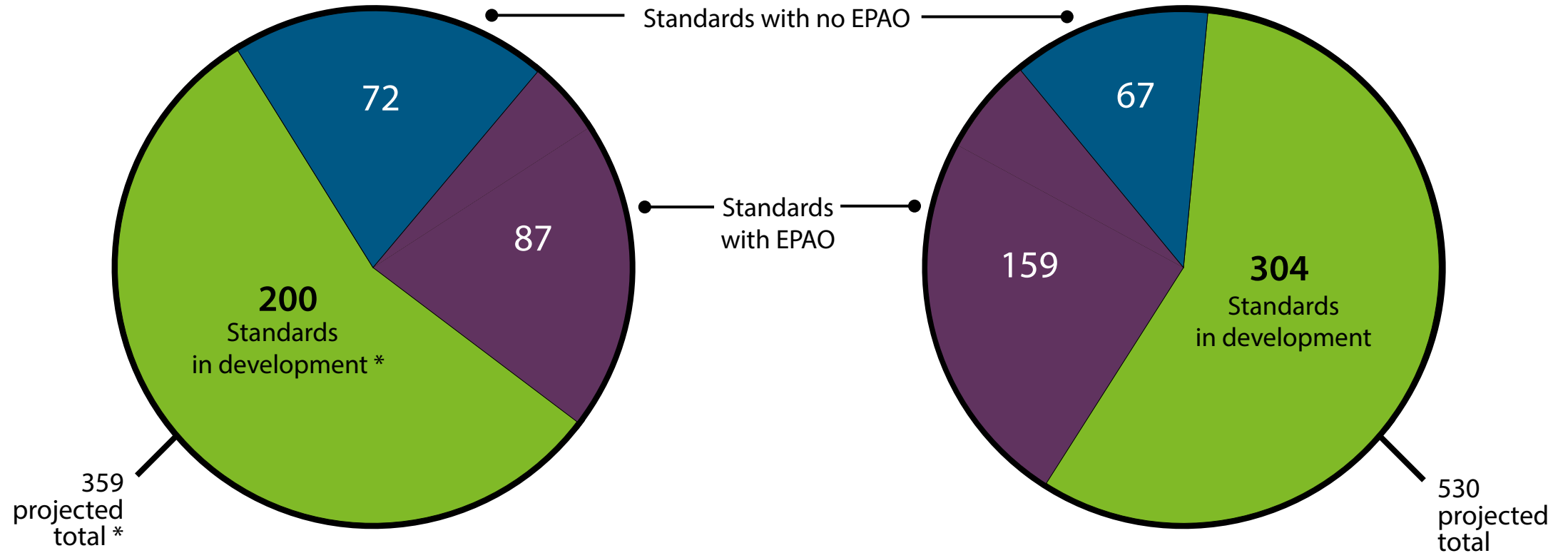
## February 2018



\* Estimated figure

February 2017

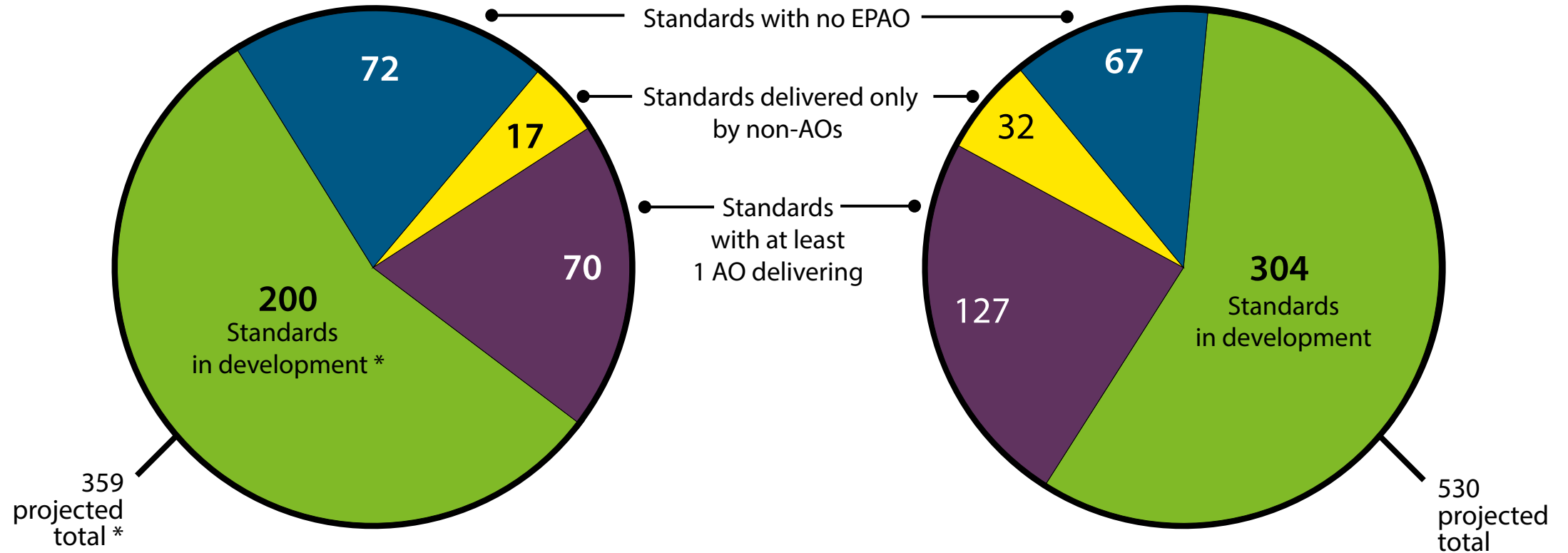
February 2018



\* Estimated figure

## February 2017

## February 2018

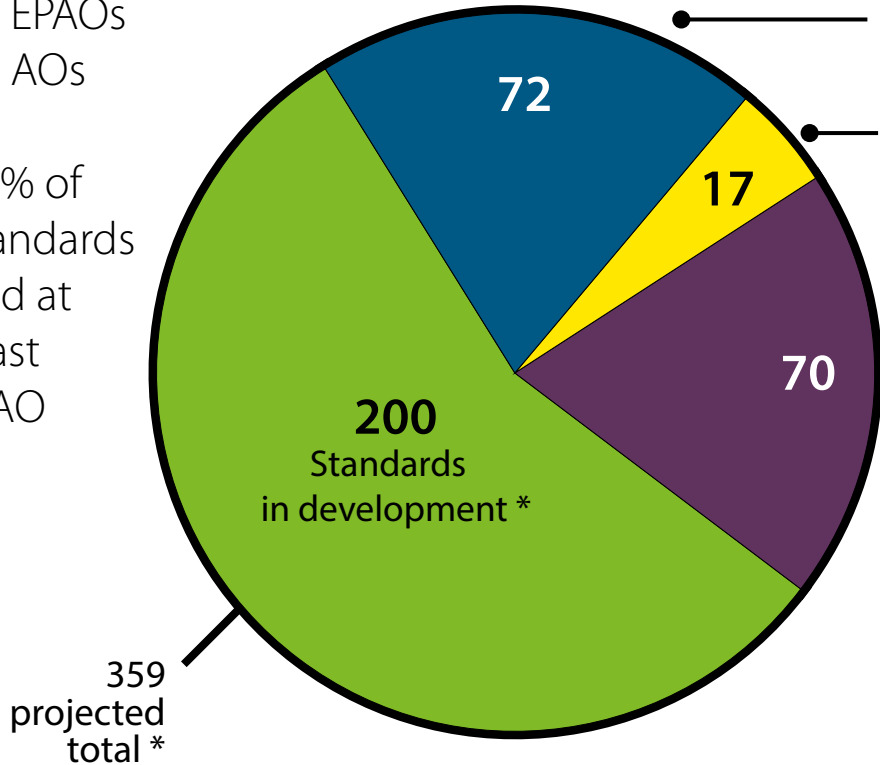


\* Estimated figure

## February 2017

44 EPAOs  
23 AOs

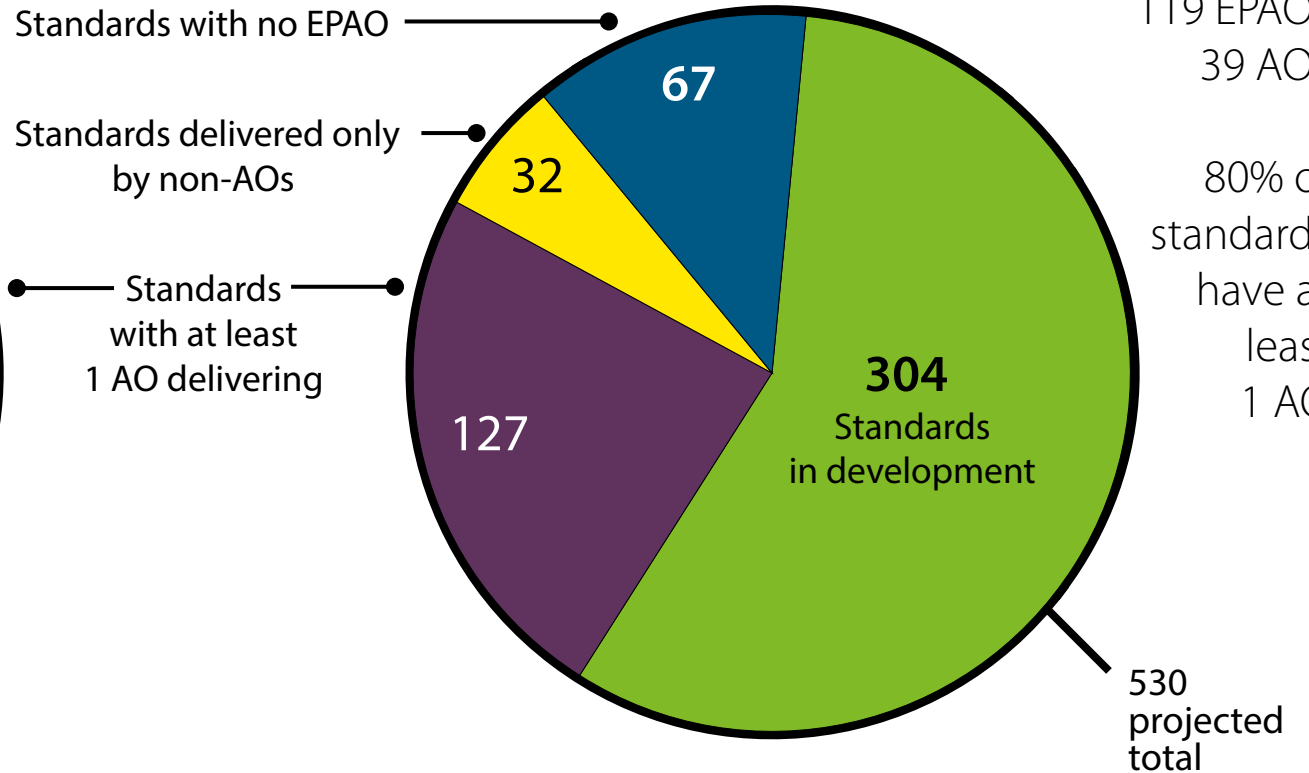
80% of standards had at least 1 AO



## February 2018

119 EPAOs  
39 AOs

80% of standards have at least 1 AO



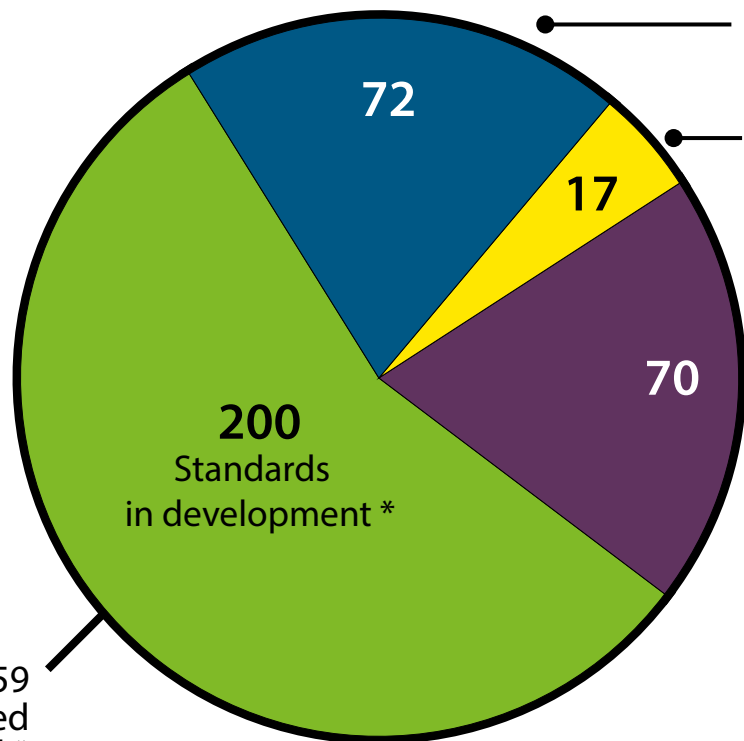
\* Estimated figure

# The awarding organisation community is significant

February 2017

44 EPAOs  
23 AOs

80% of standards had at least 1 AO



359 projected total \*

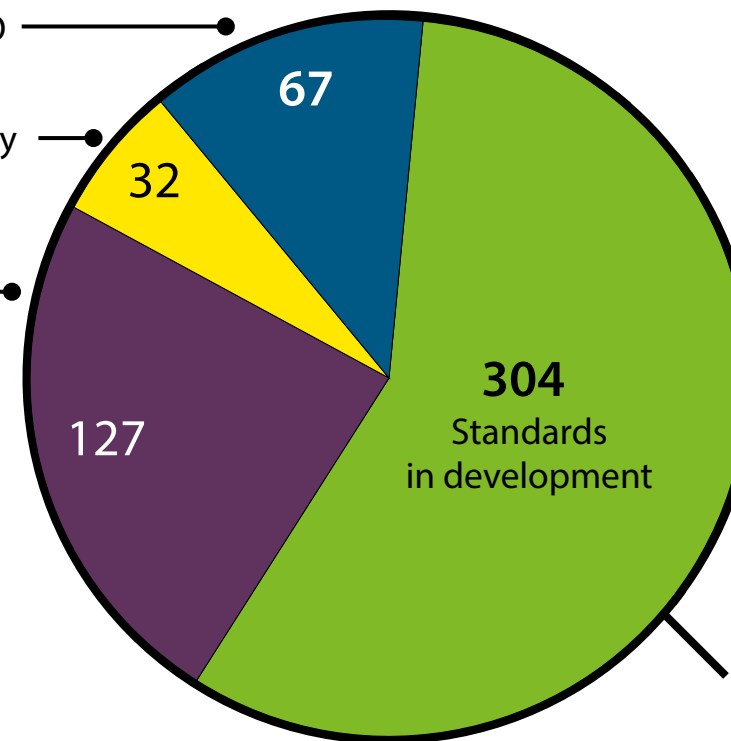
AOs were delivering 65% of the projected total of 176 EPAs

Standards with no EPAO  
Standards delivered only by non-AOs  
Standards with at least 1 AO delivering

February 2018

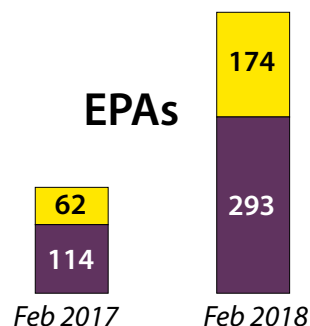
119 EPAOs  
39 AOs

80% of standards have at least 1 AO



530 projected total

AOs are delivering 63% of the projected total of 467 EPAs



\* Estimated figure

# Four options for External Quality Assurance



1. Employer-led route
2. Professional Bodies
3. Ofqual
4. Institute for Apprenticeships



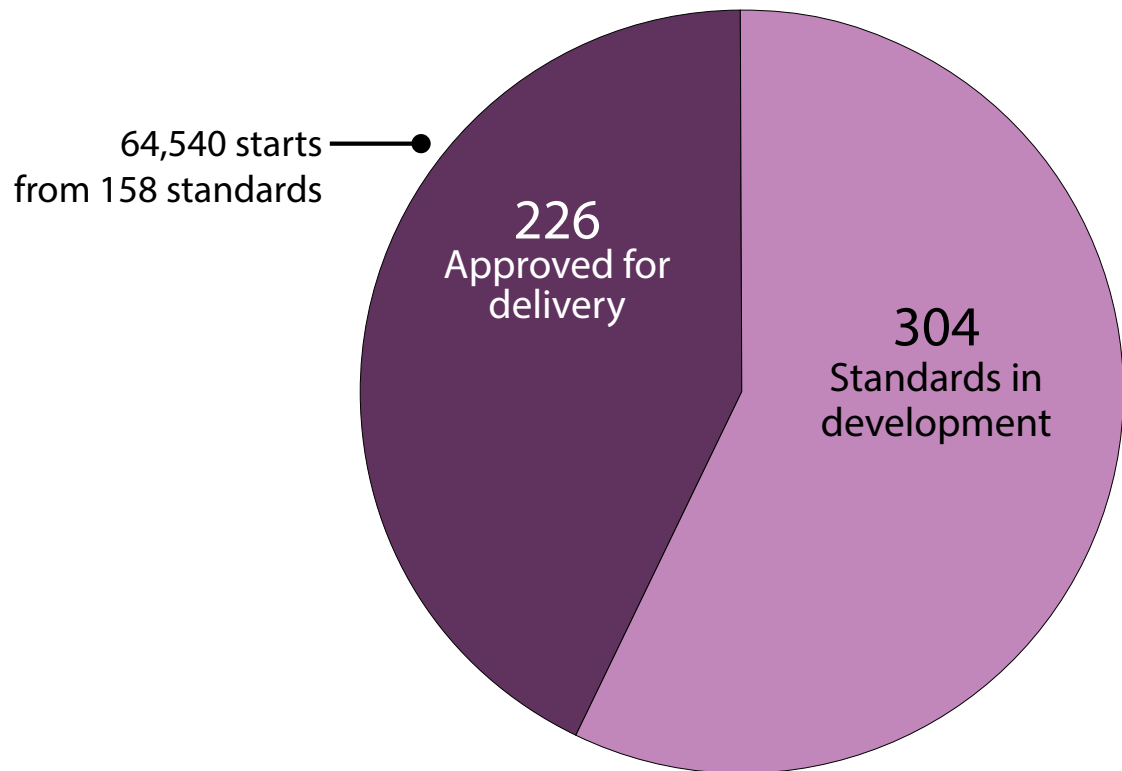
# Four options for External Quality Assurance



- Assessment organisations and assessors are competent
- Assessment plan is valid and cost-effective in practice:
  - coverage of the whole occupation by the assessment methods
  - assessment methods are appropriate and suitable
- Assessments are reliable and comparable across different assessment organisations and assessors
- Assessment is carried out independently
- Access to assessment is fair

# Starts and the 4 EQA routes

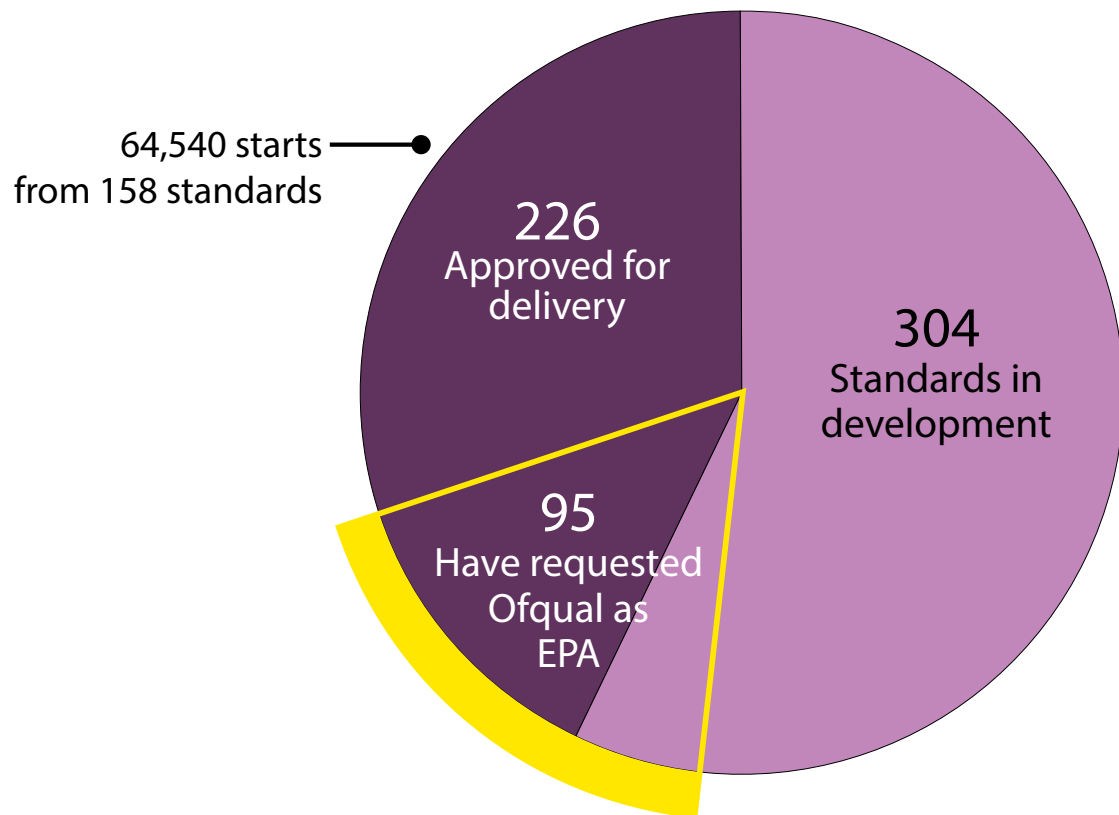
Currently projected total of standards, mid-February 2018: 530



Number of starts are from 2016/17 to February 2018 (5 quarters)

# Starts and the 4 EQA routes

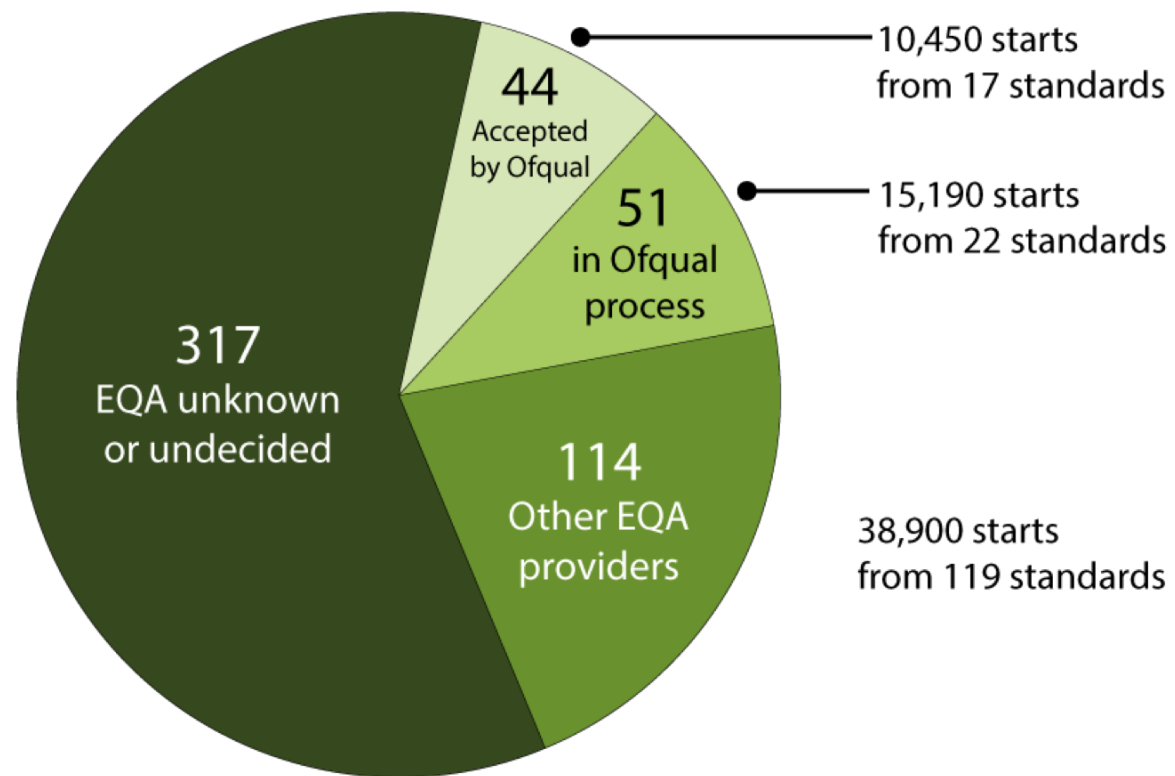
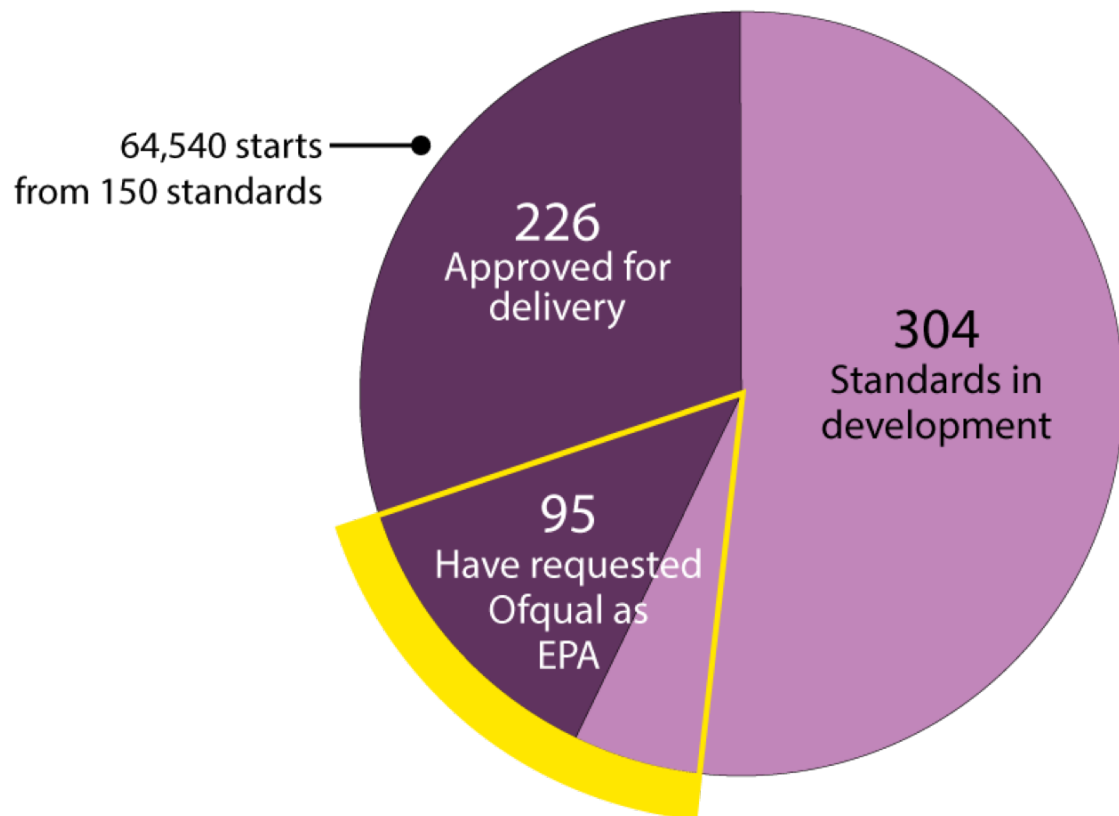
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# Starts and the 4 EQA routes

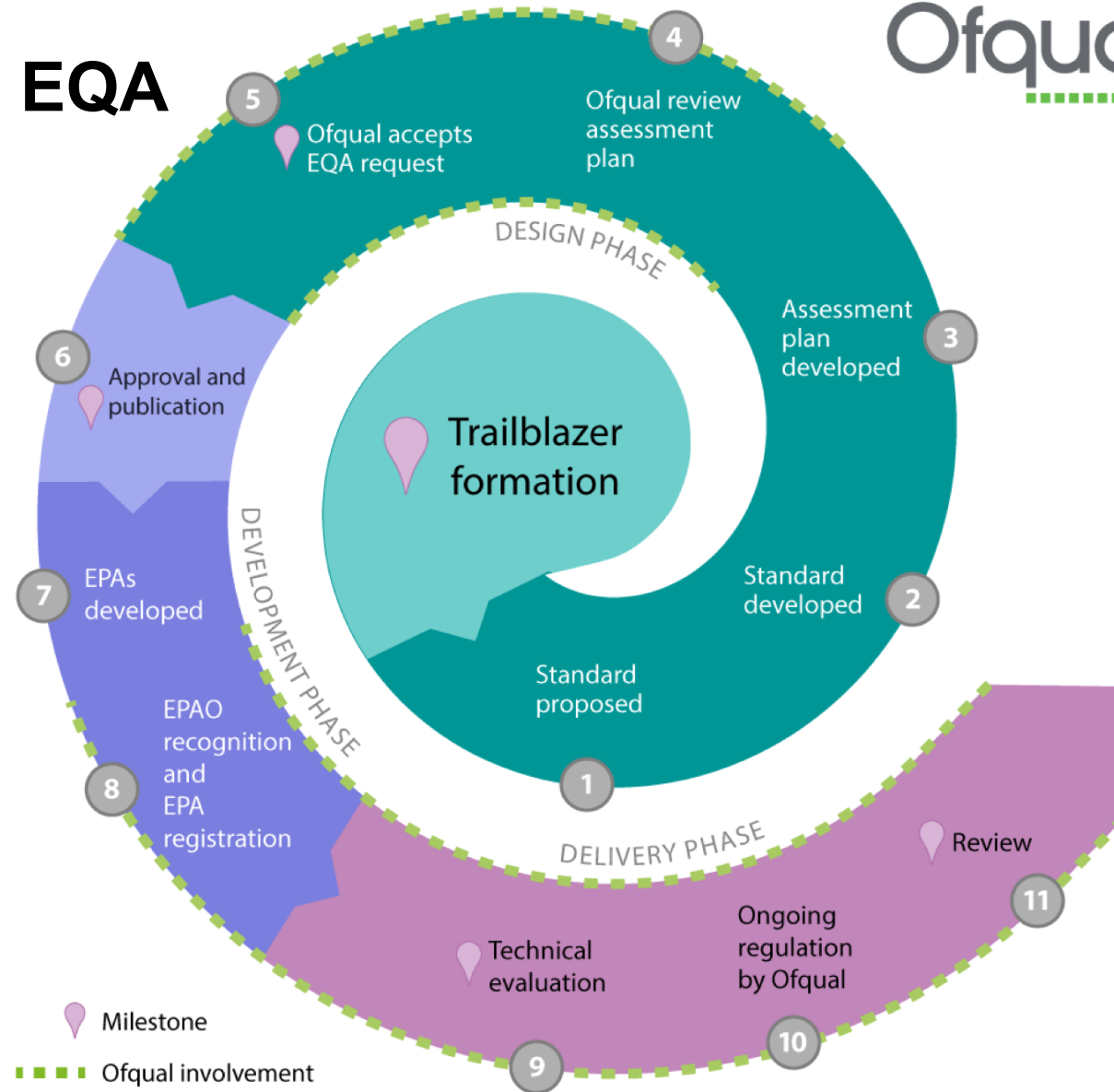
Currently projected total of standards, mid-February 2018: 530



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# PROCESS

# Our approach to EQA

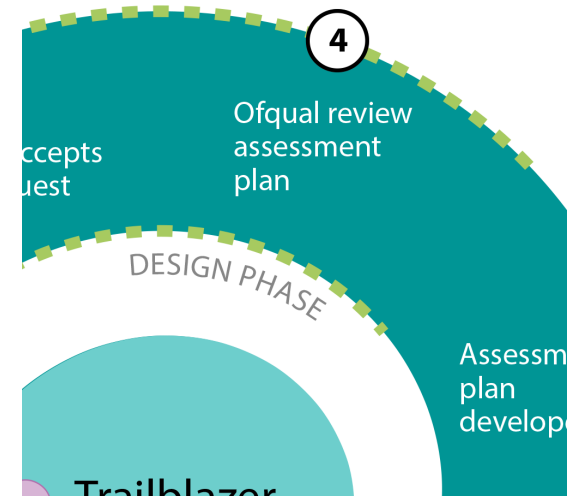


Ofqual/18/6343

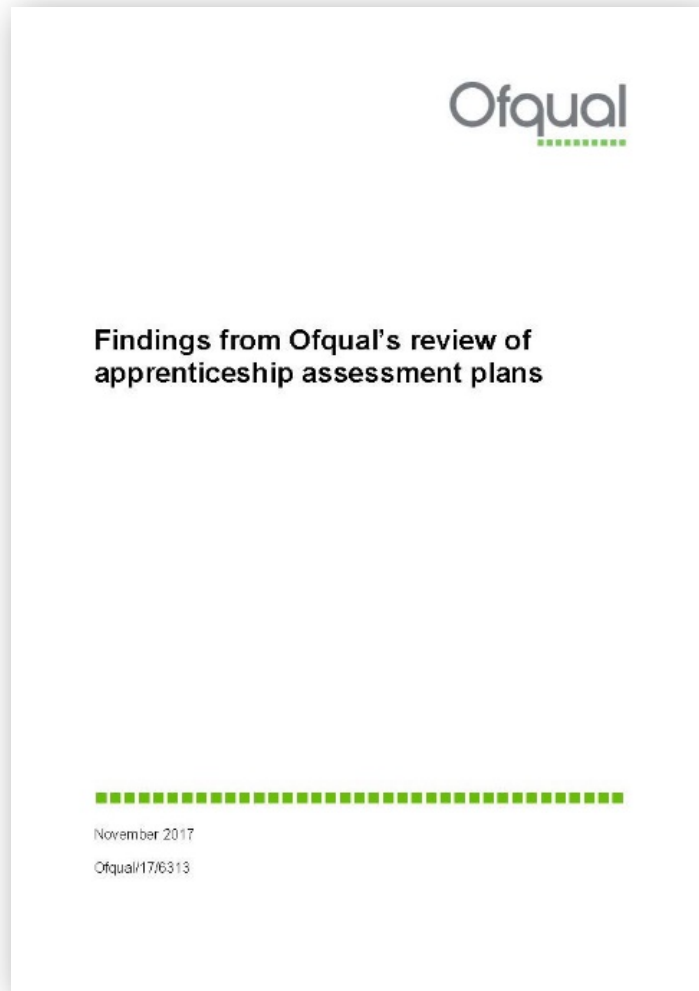
# Assessment plan review: Technical Advisory Group

*“Is there anything in the assessment plan that would cause an awarding organisation to develop an EPA that wasn’t sufficiently valid?”*

- 103 assessment plans through Technical Advisory Group to date
- A huge commitment from employers to develop good assessment
- Some thematic issues:
  1. Mapping of KSBs in the assessment model:
    - Considerable overlap and potential for ‘bespoking’ of assessment
  2. ‘Can-do’ vs ‘degrees of achievement’, Compensation vs Mastery
    - Variable amount of consideration for these, for KSBs, individual assessment methods, or the aggregation of assessment methods
  3. Levels of detail in the plan
    - Criteria for differentiation are too subjective, unclear how they relate to the KSBs, do not objectively describe the expectations of evidence which facilitate judgements.



# Findings document: a toolbox

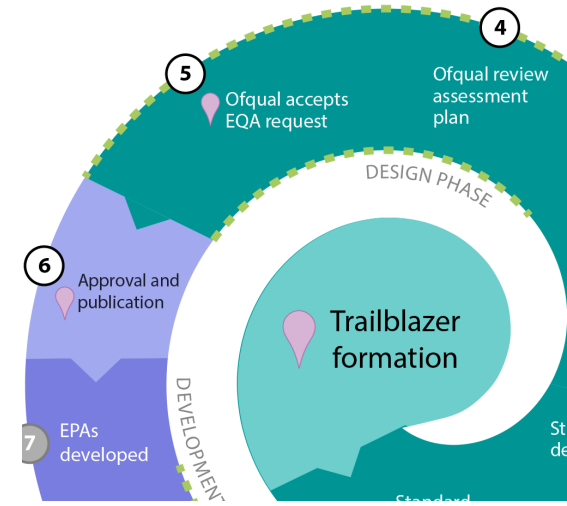


- Based on considering over 90 assessment plans in the previous 18 months, dialogue with over 70 trailblazers
- An overview of validity
- Assessment methods
- Individual assessment method grading
- Concepts such as mastery, compensation, grade thresholds, degrees of achievement, hurdles, grade descriptions, grade differentiation, weighting, scaling
- Some examples of what we've seen that is good
- A 'methodology of thinking' through the process of assessment design within an assessment plan



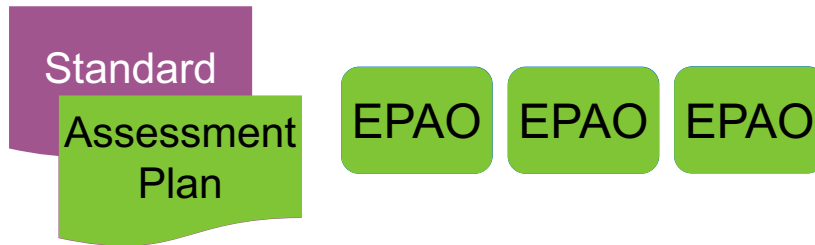
# Process alignment

- Previously IfA and Ofqual have operated completely separate and sequential processes
- We are working towards Ofqual's process 'dovetailing' with that of the IfA
- Intention is to retain the rigour of both processes, but align touch points so that both processes benefit from:
  - Considering the same version of an assessment plan
  - One set of feedback from trailblazers
  - A single timeline

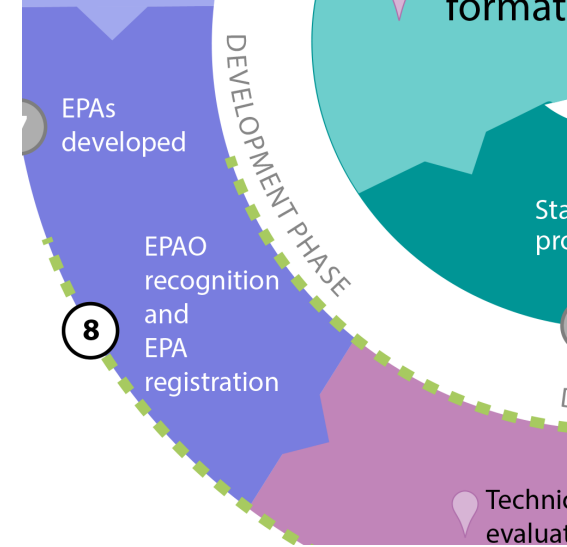


# Recognition

- Part of our regulatory framework
- Is an implication of our acceptance of a request to EQA

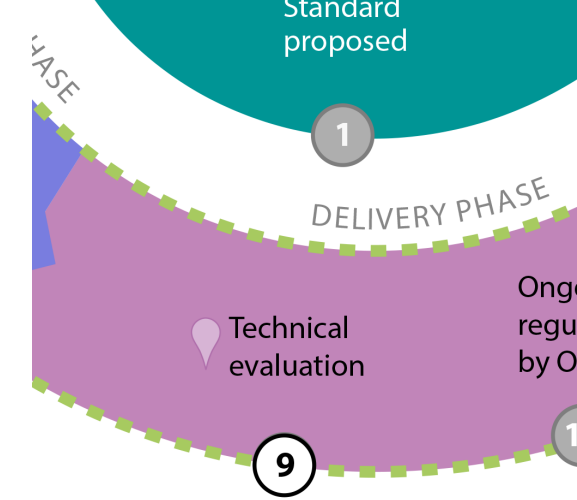


- We are looking at the recognition process that will apply to EPAOs that are seeking to become Ofqual regulated



# EPA technical evaluation

- We will seek to consider Ofqual-regulated EPAs before they are delivered/awarded:
  - Focusing on issues related to assessment validity and standards
- Pilot process in December 2017:
  - Customer service Level 2
  - Hair Professional Level 2
- Two-part evaluation of the assessment instruments:
  - In-house technical scrutiny
  - Subject-specialist consideration of materials

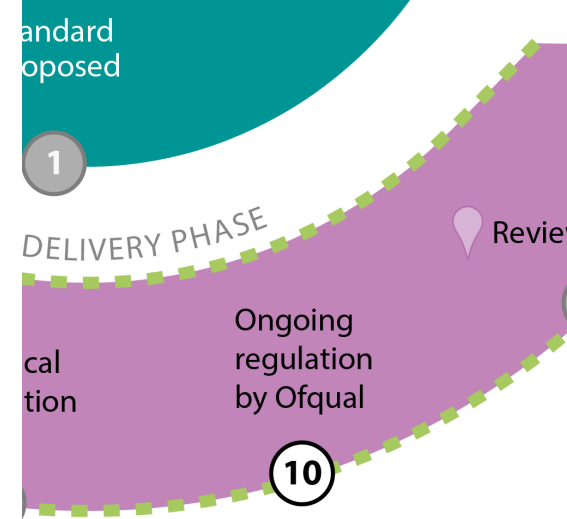


## Key questions

- Is it clear how the EPAO materials map to the assessment plan and therefore cover the required KSBs?
- Will the assessment/grading criteria support reliable application and effective differentiation?
- Is there sufficient information about what individual assessment methods will entail and require?
- Are requirements between and/or within individual assessment methods sufficiently comparable?

# Ongoing regulation

- Prioritisation against our regulatory strategy
- Risk analysis
- Outputs from technical evaluation:
  - specific assessment materials
  - emerging themes and issues
- Reactive work responding to:
  - event notifications
  - complaints
  - stakeholder intelligence
- Other activity (e.g. audits, investigations, analysis and research)
- Annual plan



# CONDITIONS AND GUIDANCE

## Reviewing our approach

- Review existing conditions and guidance to assess suitability for regulating EPAs
- Discussions with EPAOs to discuss our framework and gather views on its effectiveness in relation to EPAs
  - Request for feedback
  - Three workshops at Ofqual
- Discussions with the IfA, ESFA and DfE on EQA approach
- Review of our conditions and guidance against rules set by others (e.g. the IfA's guidance for trailblazers, ESFA conditions)
- Development of proposals in light of feedback

# Considerations

- In reviewing our approach, we have considered:
  - Ofqual's statutory objectives
  - views of AOs
  - the potential to reduce burden and improve the guidance we provide for those we regulate
  - policy intentions for apprenticeships and EPAs and expectations of the IfA, DfE and ESFA
  - rules set by those other than Ofqual that apply to EPAs, such as ESFA's conditions and the IfA's guidance to trailblazers
  - expectations of our role as an EQA provider
  - differences in delivery between EPAs and qualifications we regulate



# Proposals

- Our conditions and guidance are designed to enable us to regulate a range of qualifications and assessment types and are mostly effective for us to regulate EPAs
- Identified some adjustments to ensure our rules work in the most effective way possible alongside other parts of the apprenticeship system, to secure valid EPAs where Ofqual is the EQA provider:
  - Some rules we can disapply to reduce burden and duplication on EPAOs
  - Some areas where we can provide additional guidance to help EPAOs understand how our existing conditions and guidance relate to EPAs
  - Some new or amended rules we plan to introduce in relation to things that are specific to EPAs

## Proposed changes: rules we will remove

- We have identified a number of areas where we can remove rules that will not be relevant to EPAs. Removing these will reduce burden and remove duplication between our rules and those of others.
  - Total Qualification Time (E7) and Credit requirements (E8)
  - Requirements relating to the design and content of certificates (I3) and issuing certificates and replacement certificates (I4)

## Proposed changes: additional guidance

- We plan to issue EPA-specific guidance to help EPAOs understand how to comply with the conditions that will apply to EPAs:
  - Managing conflicts of interest taking into account the ESFA's detailed conditions that apply in this area (A4)
  - Centres (C2) to be clear that, in most (but not all) cases, these rules are not relevant
  - Marking (H1) and moderation (H2) to be clear in which circumstances each of these is relevant and how they apply to EPAs
  - Fitness for purpose and setting assessments (D1, E4, G1) to help EPAOs understand how to balance the competing demands on validity that exist between the conditions and the assessment plan

## Proposed changes: additional guidance

- We plan to issue EPA-specific guidance to help EPAOs understand how to comply with the conditions that will apply to EPAs:
  - Reviewing approach (D3) to explain how the IfA's review process should be factored into this
  - Issuing results (H6) to be clear about what results can and can't be issued
  - Titling (E2) to explain how to make sure titles meet the requirements of the IfA and comply with Ofqual's titling requirements
  - Specifications (E3) to set out what should be included in a specification for an EPA

## Amended conditions

- For a small number of conditions, we propose to disapply the existing *General Conditions of Recognition* and apply a bespoke version that is more relevant to EPAs:
  - Notifications to Ofqual (B3) – setting out the EPA specific events we would expect to be told about
  - Levels of qualifications (E9) to make sure the level of the EPA matches that of the apprenticeship standard

## Proposed changes: new conditions

- We have identified a small number of areas where we require new conditions to enable us to effectively regulate EPAs. These are:
  - To require compliance with assessment plans approved by the IfA and gateway requirements. This will set out clearly the need to follow assessment plans and enable us to take action where requirements set out in assessment plans are not met.
  - To allow us to require information from EPAOs in order to undertake evaluation of their EPAs, and to enable us to require changes where we identify issues with the approach they have taken.