

PRACTICAL BEEKEEPER STANDARD 2027

How this is assessed

Evidence. Gateway. Professional discussion. Grade.

A clear guide to how evidence is assessed throughout the programme, how Gateway is achieved, and how the End Point Assessment determines the final BeeEducated grade.

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Real evidence. Real beekeeping. Competence demonstrated over time.

THE ASSESSMENT JOURNEY

Competence is built and assessed before EPA.

BeeEducated uses ongoing assessment. Beekeepers gather evidence from genuine activity, submit it against the Knowledge and Skills (K/S), and receive assessment decisions throughout the programme.

1 PLAN

Identify upcoming beekeeping activity and the K/S it could evidence.

2 GATHER

Carry out real activity and capture evidence while it is current.

3 SUBMIT

Map the evidence to relevant K/S and submit it for assessment.

4 ASSESS

Evidence is accepted or not yet accepted, with feedback where needed.

5 GATEWAY

All K/S requirements have been accepted as meeting the Standard.

6 EPA

Complete the professional discussion within the three-month EPA window.

THE KEY PRINCIPLE

Gateway asks: Has this beekeeper met the Standard? EPA asks: At what level does this beekeeper demonstrate the Standard?

EVIDENCE THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAMME

Submit evidence regularly. Build a picture of real competence.

Candidates are encouraged to plan evidence opportunities throughout normal beekeeping activity rather than trying to create a portfolio at the end. The aim is authentic evidence gathered across time, seasons and changing colony circumstances.

1. IDENTIFY THE OPPORTUNITY

Use the credential requirements and evidence planner to identify what the activity could demonstrate.

2. CARRY OUT THE ACTIVITY

Inspect, manage, monitor, record, explain and reflect as part of genuine beekeeping practice.

3. SUBMIT AND MAP

Upload evidence and link it to the relevant K/S and required range. One activity can support several K/S where it genuinely does so.

4. RECEIVE AN ASSESSMENT DECISION

Evidence is assessed as accepted or not yet accepted. Where more is needed, the beekeeper receives feedback and can gather further evidence.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE CREDENTIAL

Track progress towards the credential against each K/S and required range. Evidence items can be accepted while a K/S is still building towards sufficiency.
Not yet demonstrated | Partially demonstrated | Sufficient evidence

ASSESSMENT ROLES

Support, assessment and grading have different jobs.

Clear roles protect authenticity and make the final credential more credible. Support can be generous; assessment decisions still need to remain evidence-led.

THE BEEKEEPER

Plans evidence, carries out genuine activity, keeps records, submits evidence, explains decisions and reflects on outcomes.

THE MENTOR

Supports the beekeeper, helps identify evidence opportunities and can authenticate genuine activity. A mentor does not decide whether a K/S has sufficient evidence.

THE ASSESSOR

Reviews submitted evidence against the K/S, range and evidence expectations, and decides whether evidence is accepted or not yet accepted.

THE EPA ASSESSOR

Uses the accepted Portfolio of Evidence as the basis for a structured professional discussion and determines the proposed final grade.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Checks the EPA grading decision before the result is released and supports consistent interpretation of grading expectations over time.

AUTHENTICITY MATTERS

Evidence must represent the beekeeper's own activity, decisions and understanding. Honest evidence - including unsuccessful outcomes and what was learned from them - can be valuable evidence of competence.

QUALIFIED PEOPLE. SOUND DECISIONS.

Occupational expertise, backed by assessment qualifications.

Assessment is carried out by occupationally competent assessors who are trained and qualified to assess vocational achievement. They combine current beekeeping expertise with the ability to judge evidence fairly against the published Standard.

ASSESSOR QUALIFICATIONS

Assessors hold relevant Ofqual-regulated assessment qualifications, such as the Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (CAVA), covering all three mandatory units, or an appropriate equivalent.

CAVA: UNITS 1, 2 AND 3

1. Understanding the principles and practices of assessment.
2. Assess occupational competence in the work environment.
3. Assess vocational skills, knowledge and understanding.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Internal quality assurance is undertaken by suitably qualified staff holding qualifications such as the Level 4 Award in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice, or an appropriate equivalent. This supports consistent, fair and well-founded assessment decisions.

KEEPING COMPETENCE CURRENT

Assessors and quality assurance staff maintain relevant occupational knowledge, take part in standardisation and keep their assessment practice up to date. Qualification titles describe different responsibilities: assessment and internal quality assurance.

Ofqual regulation applies to the assessor and quality assurance qualifications named here. The Practical Beekeeper Standard is a BeeEducated credential.

THE EVIDENCE TEST

Every assessment decision is grounded in VARCS.

Evidence is not accepted simply because it has been uploaded. The assessor considers whether it provides a sound basis for judging the relevant K/S.

V | VALID

Directly relevant to the K/S, required range and activity being assessed.

A | AUTHENTIC

Clearly the beekeeper's own work, decisions and understanding, with authentication where required.

R | RELIABLE

Consistent enough, and supported by appropriate records or repeated practice, to give confidence in the assessment decision.

C | CURRENT

Recent and relevant enough to represent the beekeeper's present competence.

S | SUFFICIENT

Enough in quality, depth, range and quantity to support the K/S decision.

EVIDENCE CAN CROSS-MAP

One genuine activity may provide valid evidence for several K/S or competencies. Candidates are not expected to manufacture separate evidence where the same authentic activity naturally demonstrates more than one requirement.

GATEWAY TO END POINT ASSESSMENT

Gateway means the Standard has already been met.

The EPA does not begin until the beekeeper has submitted VARCS evidence that has been assessed and accepted as meeting every required K/S of the Practical Beekeeper Standard.

TO ENTER GATEWAY

· All K/S requirements have sufficient accepted evidence.
• The required range and evidence expectations have been met.
• The evidence is judged to meet VARCS.
• Gateway is entered within the candidate's permitted on-programme period.

THE EPA WINDOW

3 months From the date Gateway is entered, the beekeeper has a three-month window in which to book and complete the End Point Assessment professional discussion.

THE PURPOSE OF EPA

Competence has already been confirmed at Gateway. The End Point Assessment is designed to determine the grade awarded for the credential.

2027 FOUNDING COHORT EXCEPTION

Evidence collection and submission finish at the end of October 2027. For this cohort, EPA must be completed before 31 March 2028. This fixed deadline replaces the usual three-month-after-Gateway window. There is no automatic deferral to the 2028 beekeeping season.

PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSION

A structured conversation about the evidence already submitted.

The End Point Assessment is a professional discussion based on the beekeeper's accepted Portfolio of Evidence. It normally lasts approximately 1-2 hours.

WHAT THE DISCUSSION EXPLORES

- why decisions were made, not just what was done
- how observations and colony history were interpreted
- how the beekeeper adapted when circumstances changed
- what outcomes were reviewed and what was learned
- the depth and consistency of judgement shown across the portfolio

THE KIND OF QUESTIONS A CANDIDATE SHOULD EXPECT

"What did you observe, and what did that tell you?"

"Why did you choose that action rather than another option?"

"What changed afterwards, and how did you review the outcome?"

"What would make you manage the same situation differently next time?"

THE PURPOSE OF THE DISCUSSION

The EPA is not intended to make the beekeeper repeat practical tasks that have already been competently evidenced. Its purpose is to explore the quality behind the evidence and determine the final grade.

PASS | MERIT | DISTINCTION

The grade reflects the quality of the beekeeper's demonstration.

Gateway confirms that the Standard has been met. The professional discussion then differentiates the quality, depth and consistency with which the beekeeper demonstrates the K/S.

PASS

Meets the Standard

The beekeeper demonstrates the required Knowledge and Skills to the expected level of the Standard and can explain the decisions behind their accepted evidence.

MERIT

Exceeds the Standard

The beekeeper demonstrates the K/S above the normal expectations of the Standard across their practice, showing stronger interpretation, justification, adaptability and reflection.

DISTINCTION

Significantly exceeds the Standard

The beekeeper demonstrates significantly above the expectations of the Standard in all areas, with exemplary judgement, reasoning and reflection that sets expectations for others to follow.

QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY

Higher grades are not awarded for simply submitting more files or completing extra tasks. They reflect the quality of professional judgement, interpretation, adaptability and reflection demonstrated through the discussion and the accepted evidence it explores.

PROTECTING THE CREDENTIAL

Consistent standards. Individual fairness.

The assessment system is designed to protect both the individual beekeeper and the credibility of the BeeEducated credential.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RESULTS

The EPA grading decision is quality assured before release. The final grade is normally released within 15 working days of the professional discussion. As BeeEducated gathers assessment experience, quality assurance and standardisation will be used to strengthen shared understanding of Pass, Merit and Distinction. This can refine guidance and exemplars over time without retrospectively changing the published expectations that applied to a candidate.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

BeeEducated recognises that beekeepers come from different backgrounds and may have different needs, circumstances and ways of demonstrating competence. Where an adjustment is requested or identified, the beekeeper's individual circumstances and the information or evidence provided are considered carefully. Experienced people who understand assessment and appropriate adaptations will consider the changes needed so the beekeeper has a fair opportunity to demonstrate the required K/S. We adapt the assessment process where needed, not the standard being assessed.

READ THIS GUIDE WITH THE STANDARD

This guide explains how assessment works. The BeeEducated Practical Beekeeper Standard remains the authoritative source for the competencies, K/S, required range and evidence expectations that candidates must meet.