The management agenda

Assessing your level of responsiveness

Skills

Contents

Foreword

The further education sector understands the need to improve skills levels if business is to compete and succeed in global markets. Further education providers recognise too the key role they have to play in innovation, training and support for employers. We are keen to learn from the many examples of effective practice in the sector to build provider capacity to deliver high quality, flexible provision that responds to employers' needs.

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service's (LSIS) World Class Skills programme (WCS) provides a range of products and services that are alert to the needs of individual providers as they seek to improve the responsiveness and quality of their offer to employers.

Fully funded, it provides a free-of-charge range of interactive workshops, seminars, consultancies and structured support to take forward reform and development through thematic development projects.

This publication is one of a group of resources that have been developed to support interactive workshops and seminars offered through the programme. We believe it brings together useful information to support providers as they gear up their business with and for employers.

Dr David Collins CBE
Chief Executive, LSIS

Welcome to World Class Skills

The *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the Global Economy, World Class Skills* (2006) investigated the UK's long-term skills needs and predicted that even if targets current at the time of the report were met, the UK's skills base would still lag behind many of its key comparators.

That's why the government has committed to ensuring that the workforce in England has world-class skills by 2020. This will call for an enormous shift in attitudes and aspirations within workplaces, schools, colleges, universities and society itself.

It will require every individual to think about updating their skills and qualifications to ensure that they are giving employers what they really need.

It will require employers to play an active role in helping to reform vocational qualifications to ensure that they are relevant and responsive to changes in the global economy.

In support of these reforms, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), working closely with national partners, was asked by the government to lead the development of a single, integrated improvement strategy to support the drive for excellence in the further education system that would succeed in the new demand-led environment.

" "

In the twenty-first century, our natural resource is our people – and their potential is both untapped and vast. Skills will unlock that potential. The prize for our country will be enormous – higher productivity, the creation of wealth and social justice.

Lord Leitch, *Leitch Review of Skills*, 2006

Introduction to the programme

The **World Class Skills – developing responsive provision** is an LSIS programme providing support for improvement activities for LSC-funded providers in enhancing their employer-facing provision. This will support organisations in developing provision to meet employers' skills needs and the aspirations of the *Leitch Review of Skills*.

KPMG and its consortium partners are delivering this major support programme. Together they can bring significant expertise to you and your organisation. KPMG has an in-depth understanding of the wider education and skills sector that can help further education colleges and independent training providers deliver improved outcomes for learners and employees, as well as achieve their organisational goals. They can also draw in the sector's most innovative and effective practice to share with you.

Programme benefits

Involvement in the programme will help LSC-funded providers of education and training to:

- develop and extend effective employer relationships
- ensure that growth and quality go hand in hand
- create fit-for-purpose organisational structures
- gain relevant accreditation, for example, Training Quality Standard (TQS) and Framework for Excellence
- access high-level support through a range of focused events
- network with peers and share effective practice.

Programme overview

The programme is designed to support the Train to Gain Plan for Growth, the changes to demand-led funding, the rolling out of the TQS accreditation, National Skills Academies and the development of specialist networks.

The focus of the programme is to work with providers and other stakeholders to be more responsive to the needs of employers and increase the capacity of the FE system to provide high quality, flexible training and support for employers and their employees in order that they can contribute to UK productivity and competitiveness in a global economy.

The programme comprises both seminars and workshops. Seminars provide a high-level introduction and overview of the topic. Workshops are designed for smaller groups: the sessions are more interactive and practical in nature, giving participants the opportunity to work with a range of proven tools and techniques. There will be an opportunity for providers to apply for individualised consultancy support to work within their organisation in an intensive way to focus on the development of employer-responsive provision.

Resources

HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationery Office) (2007) *World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of Skills in England*. Norwich: HMSO. Available online at:
www.dius.gov.uk/reports_and_publications % 20HIDDEN/leitch.aspx

Lord Leitch (2006) *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the Global Economy, World Class Skills*. London: HMSO. Available online at:
www.dcsf.gov.uk/furthereducation/uploads/documents/2006-12 % 20LeitchReview1.pdf

QIA (Quality Improvement Agency) (2006) *Pursuing Excellence: An Outline Improvement Strategy for Consultation*. Coventry: QIA.

Learning and Skills Council: www.lsc.gov.uk
Learning and Skills Improvement Service: www.lsis.org.uk
World Class Skills: http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk

E-learning

Alongside the workshops and seminars, a suite of five online training modules has been developed. The topics are as follows:

- Building employer-responsive skills in your organisation
- Funding and finance for maximising business
- Identifying bottom-line benefits
- Sales and gaining repeat business
- Targeting SMEs for training.

E-learning is an alternative way for providers to interact with the programme and share knowledge within their organisation.

Each module will take between 40 minutes and an hour to complete, and include interactive material such as multiple-choice questions, quizzes, games, scenarios and case studies.

The modules can be accessed from http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk

If you would like further information please contact
Adam Caldwell
adam.caldwell@kpmg.co.uk

Agenda

Coffee and registration	**09.30**
Welcome and introductions	**10.00**
The Employer Responsiveness Framework	**10.30**
Break	**11.00**
How did you measure up?	**11.15**
Examples of performance	**11.40**
Your current performance	**12.05**
Forming a judgement	**12.45**
Lunch	**13.00**
Self-assessment	**14.00**
Managing self-assessment	**14.20**
Completing the framework document	**14.40**
Break	**15.00**
Development planning	**15.15**
Possible support	**15.25**
Closing session	**15.45**

Workshop outline

Aim

To demonstrate a range of techniques and provide tools to complete self-assessment against LSIS's Employer Responsiveness Framework (ERF) in order to support the planning and prioritisation of improvement activities.
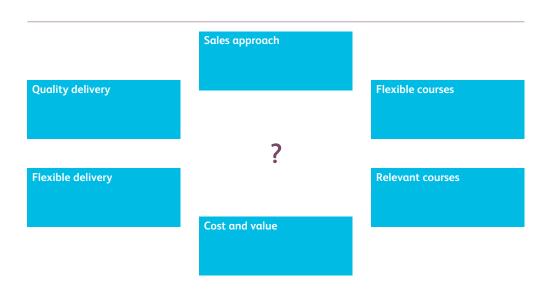
Objectives

- To introduce the ERF in order to understand its use and benefits.
- To demonstrate a process for undertaking a self-assessment and action plan for improving employer responsiveness.
- To provide tools and techniques to support self-assessment.

Benefits

- You will be able to measure your own level of employer responsiveness across the full breadth of the organisation.
- You will develop a prioritised action plan in order to bring about improvement.
- The workshop will utilise LSIS's *Framework to Measure and Improve Employer Responsiveness* as a basis for undertaking the self-assessment.
- The LSIS framework has been mapped to the Training Quality Standard against which you will also be equipped to measure your own performance.

What is employer responsiveness and involvement?

What do employers want?

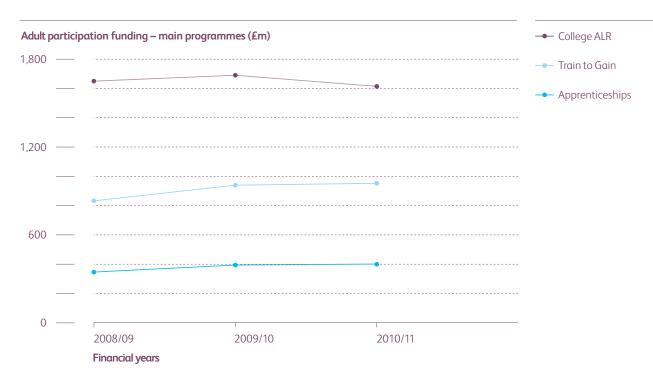|	Sales approach	
Quality delivery		Flexible courses
	?	
Flexible delivery		Relevant courses
	Cost and value	

Research by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) shows that employers want:
- a service in tune with business needs
- training with minimum disruption to work patterns
- an identified point of contact with knowledge of their business
- flexibility of delivery, assessment and qualifications
- high-quality delivery and interaction
- rapid response to questions and queries
- cost-effective provision
- clear and simple procedures
- qualifications designed to meet the needs of the business.

Meeting these expectations is not simple and we must recognise that in order to achieve the above there has been a distinct change by the sector. It has required a shift in emphasis in the following areas.
- Young people need to be seen as adults.
- Students and trainees to be seen as employees.
- Timetables and syllabuses should be customised and be able to provide training 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Increasingly, training should be available at the workplace, not just on the provider's premises.

Budgets for adult and employer responsive provision

Adult participation funding – main programmes (£m)

Financial years

Source: Skills Investment Strategy 2010/11 (Department for Business Innovation and Skills)

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) Skills Investment Strategy 2010/11 sets out the funding changes around adult provision. Key adult participation funding streams are shown in the above chart.
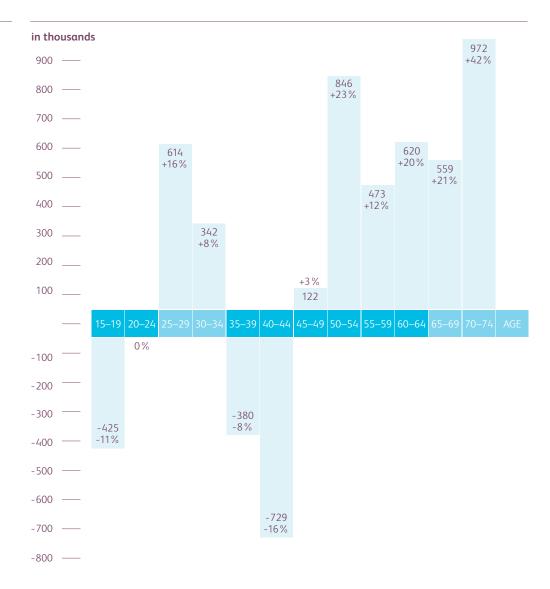
The Adult Learner Responsive line shows a reduction in funding in 2010/11 and Train to Gain funding shows some increase in 2010/11. This accounts for the fact that some of the funding has gone into response to redundancy programmes around six month unemployment and the young person's guarantee.

A key change in the funding policy is an increase in the amount of money available for adult Apprenticeships. The funding for Apprenticeships increased in 2009/10 and will increase further in 2010/11.

The funding for adult participation has to be used across a number of areas which means that providers can no longer look to work in just one of the funding streams and be financially viable. The implications to providers are that there is a clear need to diversify income streams and a need to explore new ways of building relationships with employers.

Projected change in age groups 2005–2020 in the UK

- There will be a decline in prime-age workers.
- Big increase in older workers.
- Yet these are the people we are least likely to train.

in thousands

Age group	Value	Change
15–19	−425	−11%
20–24	0	0%
25–29	614	+16%
30–34	342	+8%
35–39	−380	−8%
40–44	−729	−16%
45–49	122	+3%
50–54	846	+23%
55–59	473	+12%
60–64	620	+20%
65–69	559	+21%
70–74	972	+42%

Source: National Statistics 2004-based sub-national population projections, 2004–2074

The control of 14–19 funding will also pass to local authorities during this lifespan, which may add political complexity in some areas (eg the need to protect small-school sixth forms).

Further education providers must diversify their sources of funding – the obvious source being the adult (19+) employer-responsive provision as well as expand their commercial business by contracting directly with public and private sector employers.

The key impacts of the change on the FE sector are:
*   the heightened importance of the FE sector to develop skills to support the economy
*   the huge scale of change needed to meet government ambitions
*   that the responsive, demand-led culture must move centre stage
*   the employer-focused provision requires a fundamental change – in its provision, delivery and management, image, culture and ethos.

The challenges ahead
A number of challenges can be identified with regard to employer-responsive provision, such as:
*   putting in place a strategy and infrastructure for responsiveness
*   building new relationships with key stakeholders and ways of working
*   employees may have gaps in their skills or may have development needs that need to be addressed
*   showing evidence of the business benefits of training
*   training at a time, place and in a manner which suits the individual employer and his/her staff
*   becoming a skilled assessor of both business and developmental needs
*   securing cost-effective and low-volume delivery
*   developing the skills to be able to deliver all of the above.

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FE is at the heart of our actions to unlock the talent of individuals; build strong and inclusive communities; and develop the skills and innovation employers need to compete successfully … colleges have a crucial role to play in working with employers to deliver the skills they need now and in the future. This includes training local people who are out of work, and giving them the skills that employers want. It also includes providing higher-level skills provision, supporting innovation, and encouraging knowledge transfer. Across all levels, colleges are actively engaged in helping businesses to improve their competitiveness.

John Denham and Ed Balls, 17 September 2008

Notes

The Employer Responsiveness Framework (ERF)

The government has clearly set out the need for providers to become more responsive to the needs of employers both in its answer to the Leitch review and in the LSC's development of demand-led funding. It is clear that if providers want to be able to operate in the adult skills market then they must consider how they will change their operations. It is no longer sufficient just to think about changing your marketing approach or changing your mission statement, providers need to consider the full breadth of their operations and how they can become more employer focused.

This workshop will take delegates through a detailed process of how they can measure their own level of employer responsiveness across the full range of the organisation and develop a prioritised action plan in order to bring about improvement.

The workshop will utilise *The Framework to Measure and Improve Employer Responsiveness* (also known as the Employer Responsiveness Framework) as a basis for undertaking the self-assessment and will cover practical tools to support you in undertaking this for your organisation.

The framework enables you to undertake an end-to-end review of your business processes and performance in relation to employer responsiveness, and to prioritise areas for improvement, by providing quality indicators against which to measure your performance and a format for quality-improvement plans.

The quality indicators have been adapted from a wide range of quality standards relating to employer responsiveness, including the Training Quality Standard (TQS). The framework was initially developed from the self-assessment and development planning framework for Train to Gain. The framework is subject to continuous review and improvement.

Resource

LSIS (October 2008) *A Framework to Measure and Improve Employer Responsiveness*. Coventry: LSIS. Available online at:
http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk/webfm/download/374/Framework

The employer-responsiveness journey

Evaluation of
the learning
programme

Marketing
to employers

Infrastructure

Assessment
and certification
of learning

Identifying
the needs of
businesses and
organisations

**Leadership and
management**

Delivery
of learning

Information,
advice and
guidance for
employees

Developing
provision to
meet needs

Diagnostic
assessment
of individual
employees'
needs

Origins and development

The LSIS framework:

- is based on research findings of employers' expectations of responsive provision
- provides a comprehensive picture of what high-quality responsive provision looks like, arranged into the key stages of interaction between employers and providers (the employer journey)
- is adapted to reflect the criteria from a wide range of quality standards relating to employer responsiveness, including the TQS.

A development tool

- The single aim is to bring about improvement.
- Approach is based on a review of performance against quality indicators and subsequent action planning.
- Helps providers to systematically assess starting points and what is/is not working.

Key themes
- Leadership
- Planning – strategic, marketing, learning
- Managing relationships – communication, identifying needs
- Process measurement and management
- Systems – CRM
- People management
- Quality delivery
- Continuous improvement

Exercise

In small groups, look at the indicators in the LSIS framework and consider what sources of evidence/examples of performance you could use for each indicator.

Exercise

Choose one element of the journey that you particularly want to focus on and get a copy of the relevant document from the facilitator.

Working in pairs take turns to interview each other on the section that you have chosen and complete the document. Be prepared to share your view of how you found undertaking this exercise.

Forming a judgement

- Do we do this in all areas?
- Would various groups of staff and stakeholders agree?
- Can we demonstrate this?
- Do we measure this?
- Are activities routine or one off?
- Is this really about employer responsiveness?
- Have I been able to identify areas for improvement?
- What impact will they have?

Notes

Benefits of self-assessment against the framework

- Provides structured, fact-based approach to understanding overall performance in the area of responsiveness to employers:
  - Identifies strengths and weaknesses, progress made and areas for improvement.
- Builds awareness of the gap between the current strategy for employer responsiveness and where the organisation wants to go and how to bridge the gap.
- Builds a management team consensus about what your priority objectives are, and how to focus your organisation on them.
- Involves people at all levels and teams in continuous improvement.
- Creates a common language and conceptual framework for the way your organisation manages and improves responsiveness to employers.
- Develops management skills of staff.
- Facilitates the identification and sharing of effective practice.
- Facilitates the integration of improvement initiatives into your normal operations.

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One of the good things about doing a self-assessment is that we know our managers are now thinking about the right things.

Quote from a member of an EFQM benchmarking project
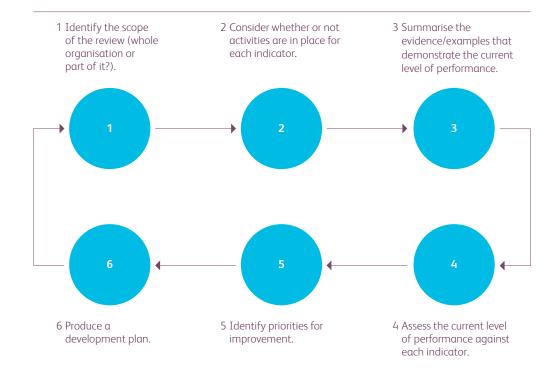
Notes

Managing self-assessment

Conducting the review

The key questions to ask before undertaking a review are:

- Who is going to sponsor this?
- Why are you doing it?
- What is in scope and out of scope?
- Who is going to undertake the review?
- How will you get the views of the relevant people?
- How will you reach a consensus?
- How will you get buy-in to the development plan?
- Will you get front-line staff's views/employers' views?
- What information do you already collect? Can this be used for the purposes of the review?

The process of conducting the review can be broken down into approximately six steps. This is a flexible process and is presented here as a guideline.

The review process

1 Identify the scope of the review (whole organisation or part of it?).

2 Consider whether or not activities are in place for each indicator.

3 Summarise the evidence/examples that demonstrate the current level of performance.

6 Produce a development plan.

5 Identify priorities for improvement.

4 Assess the current level of performance against each indicator.

Step 1 The first step will be to agree the scope of the review. This can be any part of the organisation that is touched by an employer. In some organisations there will be a discrete division dealing with employer engagement that will clarify what is in and out of scope. However, there may be occasions where providers want to narrow the scope and concentrate on a particular element of their employer provision.

The next steps are about completing the ERF document.

Step 2 For each section and indicator in the framework consider what activities you have in place. For example, for the leadership and management section, indicator LM1, 'employer responsiveness is a key focus of the organisation's mission and purpose and this is reflected at both strategic and operational levels', you want to think about what your mission statement says and whether it includes any reference to employers, how is the mission statement communicated, is there a strategy and who is involved in the drafting of the strategy, is there an operations strategy meeting?

Step 3 Once you have assessed what activities you have in place you need to provide evidence of these activities. If we continue with the example above, you would list the meetings and dates and the strategic plan and mission statement. It is important to provide this evidence so that you demonstrate current performance in the next step.

Step 4 The evidence provided in Steps 2 and 3 will allow you to assess your current performance for each indicator. This will help to build a clear, fact-based picture of your employer-engagement provision.

The ERF should be treated as an iterative process and each section of it should be reviewed before continuing onto Step 5. It is important to ensure that you have consensus across the scope of the framework. For example, what one part of the curriculum is doing well another part may not be – it is important to capture this and identify whether there is a particular reason for this.

Step 5 Once you have reviewed Steps 2 to 4 and are happy with the evidence and assessment provided, you can move onto identifying the key priorities for improvement. These are your key priorities for the long-term development of your employer engagement and will inform the consultancy support being offered in the development planning stage. The completed framework document provides an objective view of employer engagement and can be used and updated in line with plans and progress.

Step 6 The next step is to scope the consultancy support needed as part of the World Class Skills programme. Once you have filled out the ERF document and the development sections at the end of the ERF, your consultant will work with you to identify and prioritise the key areas for development from the self-assessment. The process will then produce a WCS consultancy support plan that will enable you to access consultancy support for the agreed development area.

Notes

The review process is dependent on your ability to understand current levels of performance through clear and appropriate evidence and examples of practice. Current performance must be evidenced. Descriptions of relevant activities/processes include:

- an analysis of what the activity/process demonstrates about performance in respect of the indicator; and information about impact
- identification of what needs to be improved.

What it should not be!

List of policies, plans, activities or events, with no description of what these entail or any analysis of what they demonstrate about performance in respect of the quality indicator.

Exercise: evidence and examples

The following examples illustrate how evidence can give a picture
of the level of performance in relation to specific quality indicators.
Look at these examples with a colleague and comment on:

1 the extent to which the evidence is appropriate and sufficient
   to illustrate performance in relation to the quality indicator
2 how the evidence could be improved
3 the features of appropriate and sufficient evidence.

Quality indicators	Evidence	Comments
1 The commitment to work effectively with employers and provide products and services to meet their needs is understood and acted upon by all staff and contractors.	Every manager is required to confirm that teams and individuals, including sub-contractors, for which he or she has responsibility, understand and act on our commitment to work effectively with employers.	
2 Adequate and appropriate physical and human resources are made available to design and deliver products and services for employers that meet their needs and expectations.	Customer satisfaction and other investigations, conducted on our behalf every six months by a third-party organisation, indicate that employer perceptions of the appropriateness of our provision are improving. The most recent investigation indicated that 90 % of employers responding to the survey believe that our provision is appropriate to their needs. Two years ago less than 60 % responded in this way.	

Quality indicators	Evidence	Comments
3 The appropriateness of new and existing provision is reviewed with employers to confirm that it is relevant.	Over the last three years participation in the planning of our provision by employers has increased from 25 per cent of employers being involved to 80 per cent of employers taking part in planning processes.	
	When new programmes are proposed, or when existing programmes are modified, employers are actively involved in the planning and review processes.	
4 The strategy for working with employers and the sector includes an analysis of the market, key customer groups and sectors.	We analyse the marketplace through standardised processes to identify customer groups and their needs. As a result of our recent employee surveys, labour market information (LMI) was used to understand the current demands of the market. We now tailor materials to meet the needs of the employers providing specific examples of past feedback and case studies demonstrating the benefits of training to the 'bottom line'. These processes are regularly reviewed, updated and evaluated for effectiveness.	
	We work in partnership regularly to ensure market intelligence is gathered.	

Quality indicators	Evidence	Comments
5 Promotional materials promote the benefits of training using jargon-free language and general branding is of high quality.	We are working constantly with brokers and the business development unit to promote a positive and professional image of the business. We have produced a fact sheet for all programmes offered to ensure our offer is correctly represented. We review and update this information when required. This has resulted in an increase of referrals from 35 per cent to 51 per cent.	
6 An employer's wants are established and underlying business needs identified to shape solutions tailored to is requirements. (A.2.2)	Each of our team leaders has a target to meet with 10 new employers every three months. This has been established practice for over two years. The outcomes of the meetings are recorded on the customer management system, and a follow-up procedure is in place. We have a 50 per cent rate of conversion from meetings to real business from this arrangement.	
	We have a full-time researcher who looks into LMI sources to identify trends. There is a report on this to the senior management team every three months, and a digest is produced for the business development unit and curriculum staff.	

Quality indicators	Evidence	Comments
7 Information systems relating to employers and their employees are kept up to date, and are used to inform current and future provision.	We have a good CMS. Our construction staff are all from the trade and keep in touch through the work-based assessments they supervise. We have processes in place to understand employers' needs.	

Notes

Development planning

When producing a development plan, make sure that you take into consideration the following:
- Key priorities for development – linked to assessment.
- Barriers to development within and outside of control so that you understand what it is possible to change.
- Focus actions on things that you have the power to change.
- What development is needed and how it will be addressed.
- The actions to be taken, by whom and when.
- Actions should be SMART.
- What success will look like for your organisation.
- Interdependencies and critical paths.
- Review points.

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Development plan: priorities for the next three months

Please reference each key priority. This reference will be copied into the consultant's final report in order to cross reference key priorities on your development plan and items on the proposed plan for support to implement the key priorities. You should list no more than five to seven key priorities.

When you have completed your assessment, produce your plan using the headings below.

Reference number for key priorities	Key priorities for action	Barriers to development and how to overcome them: • in your control • outside your control

Development and training needs: • in-house • externally provided	**Action to be taken, by whom and when**	**Evidence of success**

Development plan: priorities for implementation beyond the next three months

Please list actions for future improvement. When you have completed your assessment, produce your plan using the headings below.

Reference number for key priorities	Key priorities for action	Barriers to development and how to overcome them: • in your control • outside your control

Development and training needs: • in-house • externally provided	**Action to be taken, by whom and when**	**Evidence of success**

→

Plan of action

What are the top three actions I need to carry out back in the organisation?

What are the timescales I need to set myself?

What resources do I need to support me in these actions?

How will I measure the success of these actions?

Contacts

Name

Job title

Organisation

Email

Telephone

Name

Job title

Organisation

Email

Telephone

Name

Job title

Organisation

Email

Telephone

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Job title

Organisation

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Publications

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Lord Leitch (2006) *Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for all in the Global Economy, World Class Skills*. London: HMSO. Available online at: www.dcsf.gov.uk/furthereducation/uploads/documents/2006-12 % 20LeitchReview1.pdf

LSN (Learning and Skills Network) (2007) *A Framework to Measure and Improve Employer Responsiveness*. London: LSN and QIA.

LSIS (October 2008) *A Framework to Measure and Improve Employer Responsiveness*. Coventry: LSIS. Available online at: http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk/webfm/download/374/Framework

Websites

Learning and Skills Council: www.lsc.gov.uk
Learning and Skills Improvement Service: www.lsis.org.uk
World Class Skills: http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk

CPD tool

You can use the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Tool
to record thoughts, ideas, reflections and actions as you continue
your journey of professional development with the WCS programme.

To access the tool and find further details about how you can use it to
record your CPD activity please visit the CPD pages of the WCS website:
http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk/CPD-tool

Courses

Visit the World Class Skills website for listings of all seminars and workshops within the programme: http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk

PDFs of all the courses are available to download.

E-learning
Visit the World Class Skills website for all e-learning courses within the programme: http://wcs.excellencegateway.org.uk

Courses that may be of special interest are:
- Funding and finance for maximising business
- Identifying bottom-line benefits.

Appendices

Provider questionnaire

This is an assessment of business processes and performance in responsive to employers' needs for you to complete.

Circle the level of employer responsiveness in your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10.

Element of responsiveness to employer's journey	Extent to which element is in place									
	Not in place				Partially in place				Fully in place	
1 Leaders and managers have developed the organisation's vision and strategy for working with employers, and ensure it is implemented across the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2 Effective processes for working with employers are in place across the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3 Infrastructure is in place to support the delivery of effective employer engagement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4 The marketing of employer-facing work demonstrates an understanding of the market and encompasses a range of activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5 Training and development solutions are underpinned by knowledge of employers' needs and an understanding of their business.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6 Effective and impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) is available to employees to help them examine options and get the best out of their development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7 Effective initial assessment of an individual's learning needs of employers and employees is a key component of the workforce development you provide.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Element of responsiveness to employer's journey	Extent to which element is in place									
	Not in place			Partially in place				Fully in place		
8 Employer provision is planned effectively and takes into account the needs of employers and employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9 Innovative and flexible methods are used to deliver high-quality learning at or near the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 Work-based assessment and accreditation is fit for purpose and, where required, leads to appropriate qualifications.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 The value of the effectiveness of learning to the individuals and employers is evaluated, and the outcomes of the evaluation are used to inform future provision.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Notes

Employer questionnaire

This is an assessment of business processes and performance in responsive to employers' needs for your customers/employers to complete.

Circle the level of employer responsiveness on a scale of 1 to 10.

Element of responsiveness to employer's journey	Extent to which element is in place									
	Not in place				Partially in place				Fully in place	
1 The aims/approaches of the college/ITP are communicated to you. (LM2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2 The organisation networks with the broader business community. (LM7)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3 You feel that the organisation manages your relationship well and that you have contacts at appropriate levels. (I2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4 Your enquiries are handled promptly, flexibly and to good levels of customer service. (I4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5 The organisation designs and delivers products that meet your needs and expectations. (I5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6 You are made aware of the range of training solutions available. (1.4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7 The promotional materials are of a high quality and are jargon-free. (1.5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8 You are consulted on the creation of training solutions and materials. (2.1, 5.1, 5.4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Element of responsiveness to employer's journey	Extent to which element is in place									
	Not in place			Partially in place				Fully in place		
9 The organisation understands your wants and needs and circumstances, and tailors training to these requirements. (2.3, 5.3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 You are referred to suitable alternatives when a training solution cannot be found within the organisation. (2.4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 At the end of a course you are made aware of possible next steps. (3.6)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12 The organisation seeks your feedback on provision and uses this to improve its offering. (3.9, 8.2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
13 You are given appropriate briefing before delivery of training begins. (5.9)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
14 Objectives and targets are set and you receive feedback on employees' work against these objectives. (7.6, 8.1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Notes

Staff questionnaire

This is an assessment of business processes and performance in responsive to employers' needs for your staff to complete.

Circle the level of employer responsiveness in your organisation on a scale of 1 to 10.

Element of responsiveness to employer's journey	Extent to which element is in place									
	Disagree				**Partially agree**				**Fully agree**	
1 Employer responsiveness is a key focus of my organisation. (LM1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2 I have a positive attitude towards working with employers. (LM6)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3 I am clear about the customer service standards to which I need to work when dealing with employers. (I3, I4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4 We have sufficient resources available to design, market and deliver products and services that meet employers' needs. (I5, 1.6)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5 We are using the right marketing approaches to make employers aware of the range of training solutions we have available. (1.4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6 Employers are referred to appropriate alternatives when a training solution cannot be provided by us. (2.4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7 I have had effective training and development for my work with employers. (3.8)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Element of responsiveness to employer's journey	Extent to which element is in place									
	Disagree				**Partially agree**				**Fully agree**	
8 My performance while working with employers is monitored.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9 Our diagnostic service is informed by input from employers. (4.1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 I have the knowledge and skills to meet the expectations of the sector. (5.7)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 We are able to offer training in a variety of ways to match an employer's or learner's particular circumstances. (6.3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12 I am aware of our level of customer satisfaction for employers. (8.5)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Notes

Examples of evidence for assessing performance against the ERF

The following examples illustrate how evidence and examples of current performance can be used to give a picture of the level of performance in relation to the quality indicators. In order to contribute to the process of identifying strengths and areas for improvement, the evidence should describe the level, extent, frequency or quality of the provision. The examples below have been taken from case studies and training materials generated as part of the Train to Gain Development Programme.

Leadership and management

LM.1 Every manager is required to confirm that teams and individuals, including sub-contractors, for which he or she has responsibility, understand and act on our commitment to work effectively with employers.

LM.3 Over the last three years participation in the planning of our provision by employers has increased from 25 per cent of employers being involved to 80 per cent of employers taking part in planning processes.

Infrastructure

I.3 We have developed a generic format for our SLA following consultation with investigating what was in place across the college, eg in Centres of Vocational Excellence, and looking at what other organisations and employers use and at evidence of what employers wanted. This generic SLA can then be built upon during initial meetings with employers to suit the particular requirements and circumstances of the training programme or service being delivered. Feedback on what employers think of the SLA and the process is collected and used to make amendments or improvements.

Marketing to employers

1.1 We are working on ways of extracting and recording information that comes out of visits to employers. To do this, we have redesigned the employer report forms, so that we get more bespoke information. We are also producing a college LMI calendar to show when we expect information to come into the college and when this information may be required in the reporting and planning cycle.

1.1 Many of our staff are a valuable source of LMI, but we are not using it effectively. To counter this we are developing an LMI reference guide that will identify existing collected sources and will capture the information identified and held by staff. The guide will be a vehicle for communicating information around the college and will also be used as a handover document when staffing changes occur.

1.3 We use employer case studies to promote the benefits to other employers – and a common template for generating case studies and promotional material helps to ensure consistency of approach and guarantees that all key issues are addressed. Through marketing materials and in face-to-face discussions, we have seen the benefits and convenience of sourcing training locally. As a direct result of our marketing, take-up from new employers and for new programmes has increased by 20 and 10 per cent respectively, since last year.

1.5 We analyse the marketplace through standardised processes to identify customer groups and their needs. As a result of our recent employee surveys, LMI was used to understand the current demands of the market. We now tailor materials to meet the needs of the employers, providing specific examples of past feedback and case studies demonstrating the benefits of training to the bottom line. These processes are regularly reviewed, updated and evaluated for effectiveness.

1.5 We are working constantly with brokers and the business development unit to promote a positive and professional image of the business. We have produced a fact sheet for all programmes offered to ensure our offer is correctly represented. We review and update this information when required. This has resulted in an increase of referrals from 35 per cent to 51 per cent.

Identifying the needs of business and organisations

2.1 We have set up a focus group specific to the retail sector. Its purpose is to ascertain their needs and determine what is driving the development of skills in their sector.

2.2 The college is working with the Sector Skills Council to identify a successful working model that will deliver training to meet local requirements. All the information obtained from the project is shared with other providers, brokers and employers.

2.3 During the initial meeting with an employer, a needs analysis is conducted and outcome measures are identified and agreed which focus on the required business improvement and employee performance. Progress against these targets is reviewed during and after delivery of the training.

2.5 We have established a website to accompany our management (CRM) database. Our CRM database now enables people working with employers, particularly account manages and tutors, to log employer contacts and coordinate promotional campaigns. The availability of website downloads enables sales staff to direct prospective clients to accurate and up-to-date information. Support staff also use the CRM system to log calls and enquiries in a more structured way so that managers will be able to better judge the demand for particular programmes.

2.5 We have introduced a commercial CRM system, it is maintained well and kept up to date as far as our client contacts are concerned, and saves time with correspondence and invoicing, but it is certainly not used to its full potential in terms of reporting on sales or tracking activity with a specific client or group of clients. Different areas of the college have historically used their own databases and spreadsheets, and not all key staff have been trained to use the software.

2.7 Customer satisfaction and focus groups, conducted on our behalf every six months by a third-party organisation, indicate that employer perceptions of the appropriateness of our provision are improving. The most recent investigation indicated that 90 per cent of employers responding to the survey believe that our provision is appropriate to their needs and making an impact. Two years ago less than 60 per cent responded in this way.

Information, advice and guidance for employees

3.9 We have established an informal network with other IAG providers and meet regularly to share knowledge of demand IAG services and to identify alternative provision that is beyond the scope of our expertise. All staff involved in employer engagement are made aware of what we are able to offer in terms of IAG, IAG provision that should be referred and processes for referral, including follow-up action. Employee and employer satisfaction with referrals is monitored and has increased from 60 per cent to 77 per cent in the last year.

Diagnostic assessment of individual employees' needs

4.3 Two Skills for Life specialist staff based in the college's business unit undertake the initial assessments for employees. They negotiate Skills for Life targets with employees with identified needs and incorporate them into a single individual learning plan (ILP) that is used by both Skills for Life and vocational staff. Vocational assessors based in the business unit work with the Skills for Life staff to develop materials for the separate course. Success rates in this provision, both for the NVQs and the national tests, have improved following the introduction of the role of the S4L specialists in the business unit.

4.6 We use the appraisal system, linked to the self-assessment report process, to review performance and identify training and development needs. In addition to our assessment improvement network, staff development days and events involving external experts are used to disseminate information about assessment techniques, share effective practice in assessment techniques.

Developing provision to meet the needs

5.1 and **5.2** We have in place a steering group that includes the local college, the District Council and the LSC. In the future, it might include the Regional Development Agency, Business Link and the County Council. We have a research assistant who is interviewing local employers in the food and drink industry; audio recordings are made of the interview and analysed to identify trends and initial findings are reported to a steering group for their consideration and possible joint action. We arrange a second interview in which we offer employers specific responses to their particular needs.

Delivery of learning

6.2 We recruit staff from the sector and provide opportunities for staff to refresh and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the sector by undertaking secondments/placements with employers.

6.3 We have developed flexible, web-based resources that support learners under the Train to Gain programme. The resource includes an e-learning site and an electronic communication system for use between learners and assessors. Learners have access to workbooks, question papers and videoed interviews on NVQ-related topics on the website and are given workplace assignments. This means that the face-to-face contact time was no longer taken up with collecting evidence; instead, it has become an opportunity to assess the learner's work and to give feedback. Between visits the e-mail facility provided extra support.

6.5 Small businesses wanted 'on site' training but had low delegate numbers. Training was offered for clusters of 'like' businesses in an appropriate central location. Uptake from small business for the training has increased by X per cent. [Percentage not declared in case study.]

Assessment and certification of learning

7.1 A 'traffic light' system has been put in place for the completion and the quality of the construction ILP reviews. This system is an effective quality-assurance tool and has supported the maintenance of good practice in the department.

7.3 Train to Gain construction assessors have worked with the curriculum area staff to produce a range of vocational activities that can help to contextualise the initial assessment for construction learners – learners have responded positively.

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