
TQS Part B

Skills for Logistics sector

Between September 2009 and March 2010 the LSIS World Class Skills programme supported providers to develop sector expertise in the freight logistics and warehousing sector. This included measuring their performance against the requirements of the Training Quality Standard (TQS) Part B.

Introduction

This project explored providers' understanding of what is meant by developing sector expertise and included identifying areas in which they could improve. Providers used the TQS Part B framework as a basis for assessing their current levels of expertise. This report contains the key learning points arising from this work.

Who is it for?

This report is aimed at providers who wish to understand what it means to be a specialist in the freight logistics and warehousing sector.

What will they gain from it?

The aim of this document is to:

- Share the experiences and learning of the providers who participated;
- Enable an understanding of how providers might tackle a similar project; and
- Provide tips about the steps to take to become recognised as a sector specialist.

Project background

In September 2009, the LSIS World Class Skills programme approached the Skills for Logistics Sector Skills Council (SSC) to explore how they could support and develop providers serving the freight logistics and warehousing sector. The SSC wanted to improve provision and make sure it was highly pertinent to their sector.

A support project was developed that focused on helping providers understand and develop their sector expertise. The TQS Part B framework was used by providers to measure their current levels of sector expertise. The project was lead by TQS Practitioners supported by Skills for Logistics professionals and business improvement facilitators. Specifically, the project offered:

- A series of five workshops delivered over six months on topics critical to participants;
- Access to up to five days of one-to-one consultancy to support implementation;
- The opportunity to work with sector peers;
- Access to facilitators with knowledge and experience of the Training Quality Standard; and
- Access to specific freight logistics and warehousing sector information and guidance.

“Skills for Logistics has benefitted from being involved in this project. The experience has informed our review and development of the sector specific Part B Guidance and given us a clearer understanding of how we can support all providers in our sector in the future in meeting our key objective of making the training supply side in the sector more responsive and attractive to employers.”

David Fisher, Head of Quality Assurance, Skills for Logistics

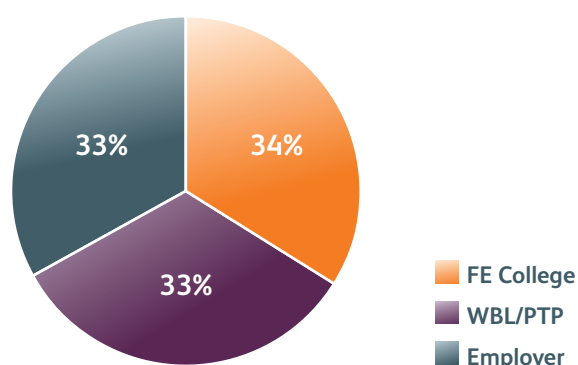
Participants

The World Class Skills team worked with Skills for Logistics to identify organisations that were active in delivering to the sector and who would benefit from participation. Each provider confirmed the commitment of their senior management team to continuous improvement and to developing sector expertise. The participating providers were:

- **ACE LGV Training Limited**
Sawbridgeworth
acettraining@tiscali.co.uk
- **Baker Hammond Limited**
Needham Market
roy.baker@baker-hammond.co.uk
- **Enterprise Solutions Training Limited**
Huddersfield
enquiries@estl.co.uk
- **N-Gaged Training Limited**
Bristol
mail@n-gaged.co.uk
- **Warrington Business School**
Warrington
training@warrington.ac.uk
- **West Nottinghamshire College**
Mansfield
www.wnc.ac.uk/employers/
- **TIR Training Services**
Beverley
www.t-i-r.com
- **Tyneside Training Services**
Newcastle
info@tynesidetraining.co.uk

(Contact details correct at March 2010)

Figure 1: Participating providers by type



Source: KPMG LLP (UK)

Aims

The aim was to support providers in their ambitions to raise the quality of services provided to the freight logistics and warehousing sector by:

- Building a common understanding of the TQS Part B requirements in order to develop their sector expertise;
- Helping providers to understand their current level of expertise by using sector information; and
- Developing action plans to improve policies, practices and procedures.

Key Activities

Workshop 1 – familiarised participants with what it means to develop their sector expertise including undertaking an analysis of their current position against the TQS Part B standard and producing an action plan.

Workshop 2 – focused on understanding the sector and drew out the difference between being a provider of training and being having expertise in the sector.

Workshop 3 – highlighted the importance of and provided potential approaches to developing a sector strategy.

Workshop 4 – demonstrated how to turn plans into actions and track their progress, including exploring the need for measuring performance in relation to objectives.

Workshop 5 – highlighted how to bring their findings together into an application for TQS Part B through developing an understanding of the process of certification.

“ Being involved in the programme has provided us with reassurance that what we currently do is a firm basis on which to enhance our expertise in logistics. By methodically working through the TQS framework ACE has introduced improvements to the ways we support the needs of employers and contribute to the sector as a whole.”

Valerie Spinks, Training & Development Manager,
ACE LGV Training Limited

“ Although we were organised to deliver sector specific training, significant development of our team has taken place around the TQS.”

Ged Latham, Logistics Manager, Warrington Business School

Challenges

The participants faced a number of challenges in developing their sector expertise. These fell into two main areas:

Programme management

- Clearly identifying the full range and nature of individuals and organisations that impact on, or are impacted by the provider's business.
- Securing management sign-off for participation and maintaining ongoing commitment to introducing new developments.
- Dedicating sufficient time to move projects forward whilst maintaining day to day operations in the current economic climate. Many providers are focused on simply surviving the recession.

Supporting processes and information

- Establishing effective performance measures to support quantitative assessment of performance alongside existing qualitative approaches.
- Sourcing reliable and relevant market information and having systematic approaches for the analysis and evaluation of information and trends.
- Recognising that funding is a resource to support delivery and not the reason for being in business.

Impact

The advantages of participating in the programme identified to date include:

Understanding of the sector

- A clearer understanding of the areas in which providers want to improve has been achieved by completing a self assessment and action plan against the TQS assessment criteria.
- Increased knowledge of the sector as whole and not just of individual employers.
- Developing a clear, informed strategy that cascades into day to day activities has enabled providers to focus on their priorities.
- Benefits have been gained by establishing a clear link from the requirements of the sector to business processes; these include cost savings by targeting the training and building more effective relationships with employers that will bring in new business.

Development areas

- Clear evidence of a need to change and the opportunity to improve the business with a clear action plan to achieve this.
- Supportive relationships with other providers in the sector have been established in which experiences and practices have been shared.

Customer satisfaction

- Higher levels of customer satisfaction have been achieved by developing new delivery methods based on sector information, such as delivering on providers sites and utilising technology to a greater degree.

Provider case study

N-Gaged Training and Recruitment Ltd

N-Gaged is a professional driver training company based in Bristol.

On joining the programme the company expressed major concerns about the training funding mechanisms currently in place and the impact changes in funding were having on their business.

Since participating in the project, the company has reviewed its strategy and approaches for delivering both training and expertise to the freight logistics and warehousing sector. Whilst funding is still a major

consideration it is no longer dominant and is now viewed more as a resource that needs to be risk managed. N-Gaged has also reviewed the opportunities available to obtain information on the needs and expectations of the sector and has a plan in place to keep up to date. Business intelligence of this nature is enabling the company to be confident it is firmly in the 'driving seat'.

Demonstrable benefits have been realised almost immediately. During a recent meeting with a major customer additional business was gained because the customer appreciated the effort that N-Gaged had made to understand their organisation and its training needs, as well as their knowledge of the sector.

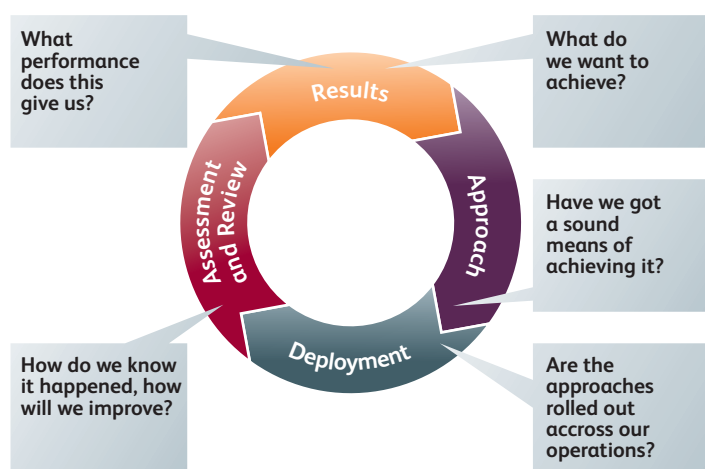
Top tips

The participants in the programme offered the following insights for providers who wish to enhance their sector expertise and apply for TQS certification:

- Have a well informed strategy for working with the sector; this is critical to success.
- Measure your performance systematically.
- Start with a high level gap analysis of your business using the TQS framework.
- View your improvement activities as a project.
- Be clear about the full range of stakeholders, individuals and organisations that should be included in the project.
- Ensure you understand what information is available about the sector and carefully plan the collection, analysis and evaluation of information and trends. This includes information from key stakeholders: the Dept of Transport, the Driving Standards Agency, the Vehicle Operator Service Agency, the Joint Approval Unit for Periodic Training, the Freight Transport Association and the Road Haulage Association.
- Utilise the eLMI tool available through www.excellencegateway.org.uk/wcs to help quantify the size of the employer market.
- From the experience of the providers in this group, they would recommend getting Part A first before thinking about Part B. Be clear on the cross-over and linkages to Part A.
- Get in touch with other providers who have been through the process already.

Providers found the following tool useful to support them in identifying their improvement opportunities:

Figure 2: RADAR® logic used to improve



Source: RADAR® logic used in conjunction with the EFQM® Excellence Model

For further details, please go to: www.efqm.org

What's next for you?

Based on the experiences of the participants in this project, there are some key areas to consider to understand your position in respect of developing sector expertise:

Checklist

- Does your strategy for working with the freight logistics and warehousing sector clearly describe which sub-sectors you work with?
- Have you identified who your key stakeholders are, both internally and externally, and how you will work with them?
- Do you have key objectives for working in the sector, with measures in place to judge your contribution to the sector?
- Are your methods for gathering, analysing and using information on the sector robust?
- Do you use this information to inform the direction of your business and the development of your products and services for the sector?
- Do the capabilities of your people and resources to support your delivery meet the sector's expectations?
- Do you have procedures in place to improve both your organisation and the training services you offer to the sector?

“Challenging our activities in relation to understanding what is needed to be a sector expert has had a massive impact on our business. Our customers really appreciate what we now do to fully understand their needs.”

Simon Arnold, Managing Director, N-Gaged

Get in touch

For more information on the WCS programme, please go to www.excellencegateway.org.uk/wcs

Specialist Part B guidance can be downloaded from the Training Quality Standard website. www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk/partbguidance01

For more information about the Logistics Sector Skills Council, please go to www.skillsforlogistics.org