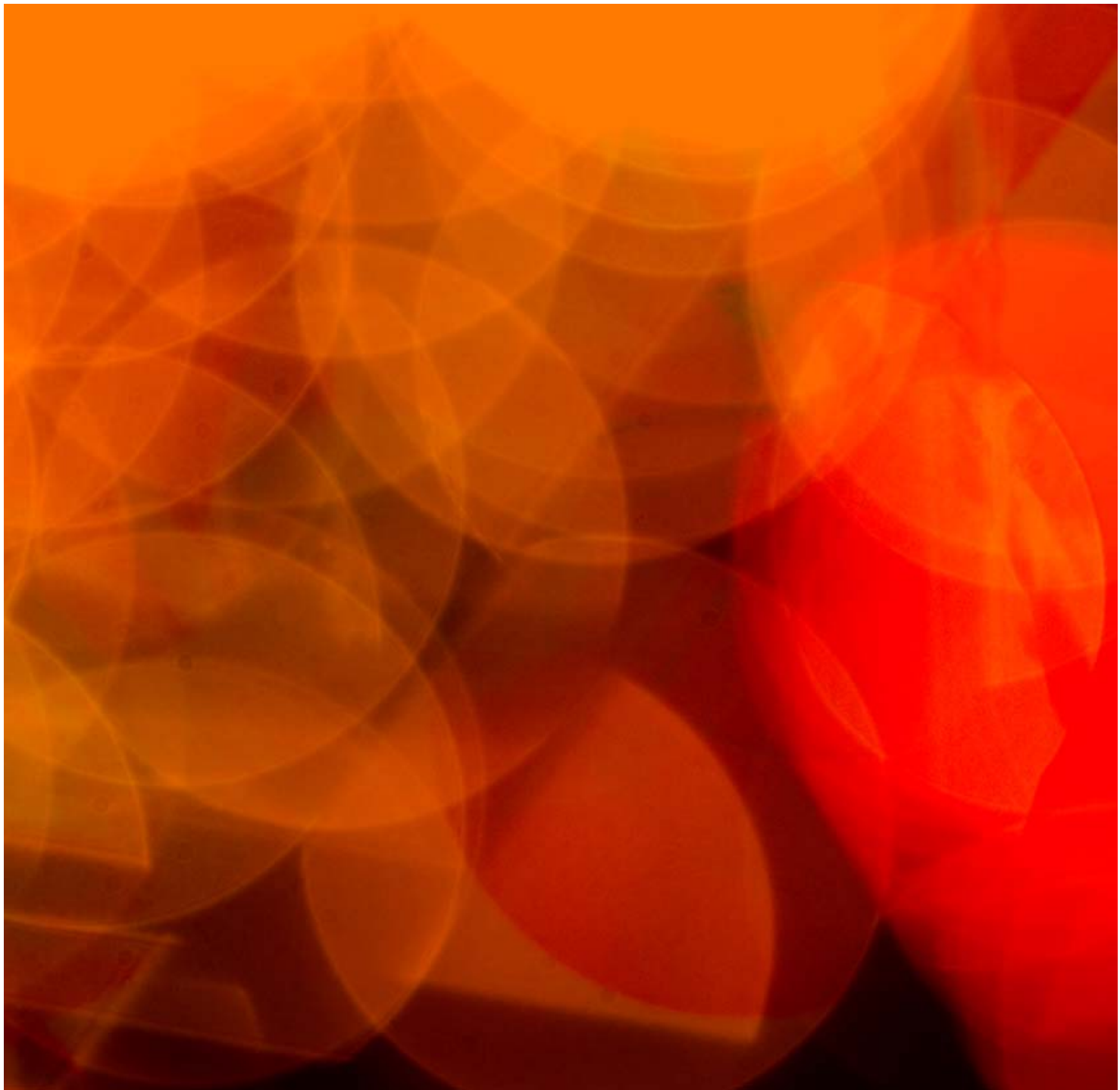


Training Quality Standard Part B

Guide for property, housing, facilities management cleaning



A Guide for learning providers working in the property, housing, facilities management, cleaning and support services sectors

2009

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1. Background

This Guide was produced as the result of a project funded by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), through the World Class Skills programme. It was led by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) and was completed during January and February, 2009. The key aim of the project was to produce a resource that would support providers in the property, housing, facilities management and cleaning and support services sectors (hereafter, referred to as The Sector) to work towards certification against Part B of the Training Quality Standard (TQS).

This project was undertaken with the support of Asset Skills, the Sector Skills Council (SSC) responsible for improving productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in the industries within The Sector. Reference was made to the Part B Guidance produced in October, 2008 for providers working in facilities, care and management. Input was also sought from providers from within The Sector on the content and approach used in the Guide.

1.2. Who is the Guide for?

This Guide is for learning providers of all sizes working with The Sector in England, which are working towards certification against Part B of the TQS. It applies equally to those providers that are at a relatively early stage in their journey towards certification and to those that are planning to submit an application in the near future.

Whilst the Guide may be of some benefit to those providers whose provision is solely for their own employees, it is not primarily aimed at this group. If you are one of these providers, you will be within the scope of the TQS for Employers variant and you should seek further advice from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and/or information from the TQS website:

www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

1.3. About the Guide

The Guide is a resource that focuses on the requirements of Part B of the TQS as they apply to The Sector. It aims to support you to make progress on your journey towards Part B certification, through assisting you with:

- identifying the requirements of Part B of the TQS
- analysing your current performance relative to these requirements
- identifying key development areas for your organisation
- reviewing your readiness to be assessed

The Guide also draws upon the experience of providers that have already completed the TQS formal assessment process. Whilst, at the time of production of this Guide, this cohort has not yet included a provider from The Sector, the generic issues that have faced these providers during their developmental and assessment phases and their responses to them, will be of general benefit. Likewise, lessons learnt by providers that have worked previously with

certification models such as Action for Business Colleges and Customer First and which have needed to implement further organisational development, in order to meet the requirements of the TQS, have been used to inform the Guide. Where appropriate, specific context has been added to the Guide to reflect the profile and the needs of The Sector, following consultation with Asset Skills.

The Guide is organised into five sections:

Section 1 explains why the Guide was produced, who funded its development and how it can help providers. It also describes the partners involved in its production.

Section 2 provides an overview of the TQS and identifies some of the key features that differentiate it from some of the previous standards, with which providers may have worked.

Section 3 presents a checklist which you can use to assess your readiness for certification against Part B of the TQS.

Section 4 presents practical guidance on working with specific elements of Part B of the TQS in the context of The Sector.

Section 5 offers some guidance on how to approach the writing of your application.

The Guide can be used to support you through every stage of your development towards the TQS Part B. However, it is arranged so that providers that are at different stages along their journey, can readily access those parts of the Guide that will be of most immediate use to them. For example:

- If you are new to working with the TQS, use this Guide to help you to develop the understanding of everyone in your organisation about issues related to the requirements of the Standard. Use Section 2 to help you here. Then move on to Section 3.
- If you are familiar with the TQS, or are certificated against Part A of the standard, but are unsure how ready you are for Part B certification, complete the checklist in Section 3. Then move on to Section 4.
- If you are satisfied that you are meeting the requirements of Part B and are ready to start writing your application, use Section 5 to support this process.

Nevertheless, whatever stage you are at, you are recommended to, at least, review every Section, to ensure that you maximise the potential benefit of using this Guide.

Section 2: Working with the Training Quality Standard

2.1. Background

Over the last few years the Government has placed an increasing emphasis on the need for providers to develop responsive provision that will support improvement in the nation's economic productivity. This was evidenced within the following:

- Skills White Paper (2005)
- Agenda for Change (Aug 2005)
- The Foster Review (Nov 2005)
- LEITCH Review of Skills (Final Report – Dec 2006)

As a result, responding to the needs of employers is now acknowledged as a key function of post-16 education and training. This is reflected in the fact that employer responsiveness is one of the seven key performance areas featured within the LSC's Framework for Excellence, which was rolled out to colleges and private training providers in September 2008 (and will be to the rest of the sector in September 2009). Its importance is also highlighted by the development of the TQS, the nationally-recognised certification scheme for employer responsiveness.

The TQS was originally developed by the Centre for Enterprise (CfE) for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Until March 2008 the standard was known as the New Standard for Employer Responsiveness and Vocational Excellence. Its introduction in 2007 brought with it a new certification framework and a new assessment model. Since then, many learning providers have been considering how best to implement the requirements of that standard. Some providers have also sought – and gained – certification, including a number of employers, against the TQS for Employers variant.

Feedback from both providers and assessors suggests that the sector as a whole is finding the TQS challenging and gaining certification difficult. However, learning providers taking part in the consultation that led to the development of this guide and also those achieving certification against the full standard, have identified many benefits to be gained from working with it. As a result, many providers are finding that they have a development journey to make, before they are ready to apply for certification. Some are also discovering that, when they come to write their applications for assessment, they need to rethink their approaches to submission writing.

2.2. About the Training Quality Standard

The TQS has a clearly defined emphasis. It deals with how learning providers develop and manage successful customer relationships with employers and how they ensure that the content of the training solutions they deliver, achieves the necessary quality to back up those relationships. These are assessed with reference to a provider's:

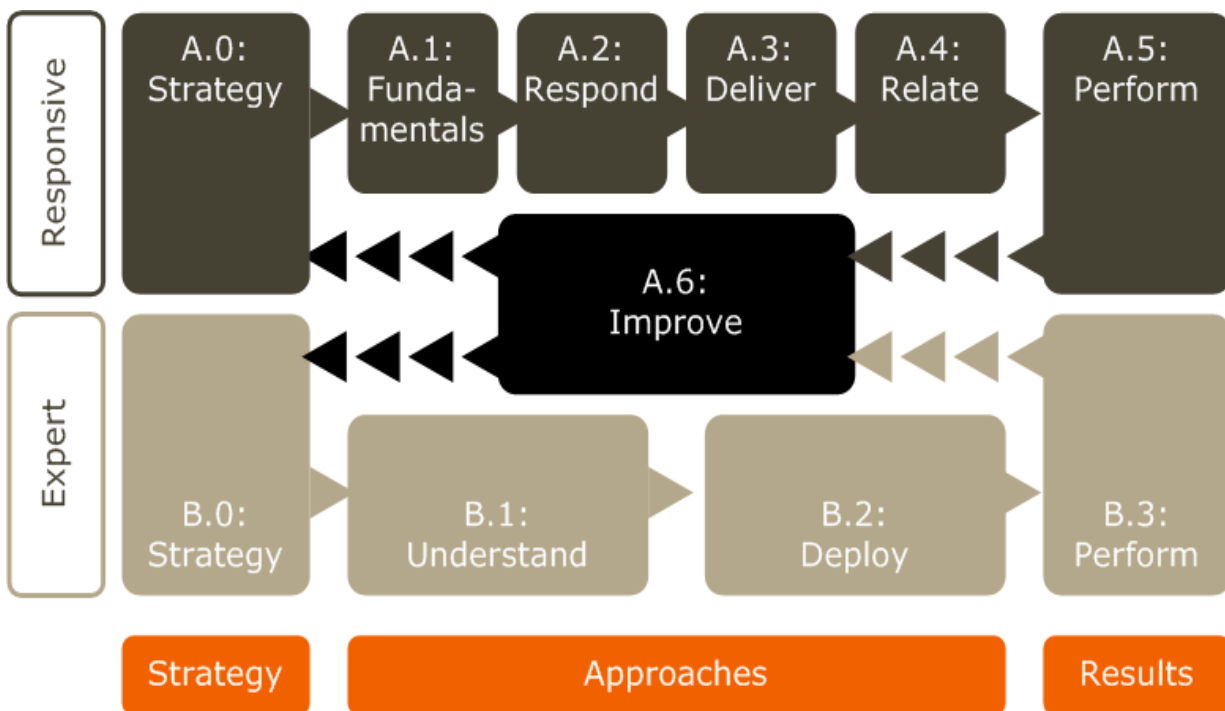
- responsiveness to employers' needs
- expertise in particular industry sectors
- These concepts are set out in a practical framework of criteria and indicators that focus on two linked, but ultimately very different, delivery competencies:

- responding to the needs of employers as individual customers, which is covered in Part A of the TQS
- developing and deploying products to address particular sector needs, which is covered in Part B of the TQS

Part A is for all organisations delivering training and development solutions.

Part B focuses on areas where organisations have particular expertise, having already demonstrated their ability to serve employers through Part A.

An overview of the Training Quality Standard framework is reproduced below:



As depicted in the above diagram, provider responsiveness (Part A of the standard) is assessed through six criteria (A.0 to A.6) and provider expertise, relating to particular sector needs (Part B), through four (B.0 to B.3). Criterion A.6, relating to performance review that leads to improvement, innovation and learning, is a bridging element that links Parts A and B.

Successful assessment against the standard requires a provider to produce an application that tells a coherent story of the provider’s practice and performance. It needs to do this by clearly identifying its **strategy**, by working through the **approaches** it uses to achieve against the strategy and by evidencing the **results** that these approaches deliver. This process is, therefore, different from many of the approaches to assessment with which providers will be familiar. In addition, when the assessors visit the provider, their role is to verify the claims made in the application document. As a result, many providers have found the writing of the application, a challenging process. Potential applicants for certification are, therefore, strongly urged to familiarise themselves thoroughly with the TQS framework and the certification requirements, before they consider submitting a formal application for the standard.

Further information on the framework and on the criteria and indicators can be downloaded from: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

Learning providers can choose to work with Part B of the TQS at any time. However, if they want to gain certification against the standard, they will need to adopt one of the following routes:

- work with Part A, gain certification for Part A first, and then work with Part B
- work with Part A and Part B concurrently and seek certification for both parts of the Training Quality Standard at the same time

It is not possible for a provider to gain a Part B certification before a Part A certification has been achieved.

To support providers that are working towards Part B of the TQS, the various Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) - each of which is an employer-led, independent organisation, covering a specific sector - have been tasked to produce guidance on Part B, customised for their sector. Asset Skills has produced its customised guidance for Part B and this can also be found via the TQS website: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

Section 3: Assessing your readiness for certification against Part B of the Training Quality Standard

3.1. Purpose of the Part B checklist

Having familiarised yourself with the TQS and with the requirements laid down within the framework of criteria and indicators, it is now time for you to consider if you are ready to apply for certification. The checklist in this section will help you to arrive at your decision. However, it is important to realise that the checklist is designed to help you to establish whether or not you have the processes in place and the subsequent outcome evidence that are indicative of the 'sector expert' employer training provision, expected by the TQS Part B.

This checklist is for your organisation's use only. To make the best use of the questions, answer them honestly and then refer to the notes which follow.

Readiness checklist	Part B application reference
1. Have you been delivering training and development solutions* to employers for: a) Over 12 months? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> b) Over 3 years? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Basic eligibility See note (5) below
2. Do you have a formal 'employer-focused' strategy, specifically for your 'area of operation' (sector)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.0.1 B.0.3
3. Do you regularly and formally consult your employers regarding the training solutions you offer? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.1.1
4. Do you analyse the outcome of employer consultation and use the results to: a) Inform and/or develop your sector strategy? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> b) Inform your development planning? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.0.1 B.0.3 B.2.1
5. Do you have evidence that you are constantly trying to improve the range of training products and services you offer to employers, e.g. a development plan? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.2.1
6. Do you have evidence that you are constantly trying to professionally improve/update employer-facing staff? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.2.2
7. Do you have evidence that you are constantly trying to improve/update equipment and materials used to deliver training solutions to employers? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.2.3

Readiness checklist	Part B application reference
8. Do you have dialogue with all or most of the main sector stakeholders, e.g. Sector Skills Council, Skills Academy, Regional Development Agency, sector advisory groups, economic development organisations/employer groups, professional organisations, award bodies, etc? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.0.1 B.0.3 B.1.2
9. Can you show that you have had an impact on the sector, e.g. by addressing the priorities identified in the Sector Qualification Strategy and/or Sector Skills Agreement? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.3.1
10. Do you have evidence that you understand the market in which you operate, e.g. the outcome of a review of national, regional and local labour market intelligence (LMI) for your sector? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.0.2
11. Do you have evidence that you understand the business needs of your employers, established through research and stakeholder and employer consultation? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.1.1 B.1.2
12. Do sector staff that negotiate with employers over training solutions, work closely with business development colleagues? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.2.2
13. Do you have established processes for determining the training needs of an employer that take into account the impact on their business? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.1.1 B.2.2
14. Do you have established processes for measuring the impact on the business, as the result of a delivered training solution? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.2.1 B.2.2
15. Do you set 'SMART' strategic performance objectives for your sector employer activities? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.0.3
16. Do you systematically review performance against these objectives? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.3.0 B.3.1
17. Do you have a Quality Improvement System in place that operates directly on your sector training products and services? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.3.1 A.6
18. Can you show clear links between the results of your sector performance reviews and your Quality Improvement System? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.0.3 B.3.1 A.6

Readiness checklist	Part B application reference
19. Do you have evidence of improving results or sustained good performance against your performance objectives? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.3.0 B.3.1
20. Do you have evidence of improving results or sustained good performance against national sector benchmarks? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	B.3.0 B.3.1

* Training and development solutions will be designed specifically to meet the needs of employers. They may include apprenticeships frameworks, work-based NVQ programmes designed to meet the needs of the adult workforce, industrial short courses delivered using flexibility in attendance and location and bespoke programmes designed specifically to meet the needs of one or more employers or employees. Importantly, a training and development solution will have been developed in consultation with one or more employers and should take into account the business needs of the employer, as well as measure business impact.

Interpreting your responses

1. If you answered 'yes' to all, or nearly all (20 or more) of the questions, including question 1(b), you have shown that you have most of the required processes in place. You may be able to submit a high-quality Training Quality Standard Part B application quite soon.

N.B. You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this guide, where you will find more detail about Training Quality Standard Part B requirements. This will enable you to establish existing deficiencies and take action. (You may or may not decide to delay your application to allow development activities to take effect.)

2. If you answered 'yes' to 15 or more questions, including question 1(b), you have shown that you have most of the required processes in place. However, you also have a number of areas that need to be developed, before you are able to submit a high-quality Training Quality Standard Part B application.

N.B. You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this guide, where you will find more detail about Training Quality Standard Part B requirements. This will enable you to establish potential deficiencies and take action accordingly. (You will probably need to delay your application to allow development activities to take effect.)

3. If you answered 'yes' to between 10 and 15 questions, including question 1(b), you have shown that you have some of the required processes in place. However, you have quite a few areas that need to be developed, before you are able to submit a high-quality Training Quality Standard Part B application.

N.B. You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this guide where you will find more detail about Training Quality Standard Part B requirements. This will enable you to establish potential deficiencies and take action

accordingly. (You will almost certainly need to delay your application to allow development activities to take effect.)

4. If you answered 'yes' to fewer than 10 questions, including question 1(b), you have shown that you have few of the required processes in place. Therefore, you have a large number of areas that would need to be developed, before you are able to submit a high-quality Training Quality Standard Part B application.

N.B. You should refer to Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this guide, where you will find more detail about Training Quality Standard Part B requirements. This will enable you to establish potential deficiencies and take action accordingly. (You will certainly need to delay your application to allow development activities to take effect.)

5. If you answered 'no' to question 1(b), even if you answered 'yes' to 10 or more of the other questions, you should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this guide, because Training Quality Standard Part B requires evidence that established processes are working effectively and this will be more challenging for newer provision.

Section 4: Working with specific elements of Part B of the TQS in the context of The Sector

4.1. Introduction

Part B of the TQS demands that you demonstrate how you work to support the development of the sector in which you have specialist expertise. Therefore, it focuses on your sector expertise – that is, on your relationship with the property, housing, facilities management, cleaning and parking sector (The Sector).

This section of the Guide will, therefore, help you to interpret the requirements of Part B of the TQS and the specific guidance produced for learning provider organisations in The Sector. It will help you to assess how far you have progressed along the road towards certification. It will help you to articulate your successes and achievements, with reference to Part B of the TQS. It will also help you to identify any development actions you need to complete, before you seek certification.

This section takes each criterion in Part B in turn and looks at:

- how you will demonstrate your abilities to fulfil the requirements of each indicator of each criterion in Part B
- how you might proceed, if you were just beginning to formalise an approach to working with your sector
- how you might decide on the best evidence to support your work
- how you might develop your abilities to make a case about your work with the sector

You should use a copy of Introducing the Training Quality Standard and the guidance notes produced by Asset Skills on Part B of the Training Quality Standard to help you complete the activities in this section. Both documents can be found at: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

4.2. About the activities

Tasks and activities linked to criteria B.0, B.1, B.2 and B.3 follow. Each section is broken down into three parts. These are:

- From the beginning
- Demonstrating your abilities
- Reviewing your achievements

From the beginning offers you detailed and explicit guidance on how you might choose to proceed, if you are just beginning to consider how effectively you serve The Sector and to review the requirements of Part B of the TQS.

Use the guidance here to help you to begin your development journey. Then progress to the section entitled: **Demonstrating your abilities**.

Demonstrating your abilities sets out a structured set of tasks you are recommended to complete, to help you as you progress on your development journey with reference to Part B of the TQS.

Completing these tasks will help place you in a good position to make a case about your achievements, when you come to think about certification.

As you work through the points under this heading, you are recommended to write down your judgements related to the nominated tasks, as they will be useful background information for you to refer to, when you come to write your submission for assessment.

Once you have completed these tasks, progress to **Reviewing your achievements**.

Reviewing your achievements asks you to reflect on what you think you have achieved.

If you already have extensive experience of working with the sector, use this part of the guide as a checklist, to help you to confirm that you are covering the necessary issues, as you prepare to seek certification.

If you believe you are ready to write your application for assessment and that you have already completed all the tasks and activities you need to work on before you progress to the remaining sections of this guide and to certification, then use the guidance here to help you to confirm your judgement.

In all cases, it would be beneficial to ensure that at least two people from your organisation review your achievements with reference to the components of Part B independently. Then compare your judgements and where you find you still have activities to complete, undertake them.

The rest of the section deals with how you can best support the work you have completed on the criteria in Part B.

Everyone using the guide should complete the remaining tasks in Section 4, before progressing to plan the writing of their application for assessment.

The remaining tasks in this section are summarised below:

Thinking about evidence asks you to reflect on the evidence you might use to back up the case you have made when completing the activities under the heading **Demonstrating your abilities**, or when you have completed your review of activities under **Reviewing your achievements**.

When you complete this task, you are asked to explain in precise terms why the evidence you wish to use is relevant and how it supports the case you have made in the output from the activities.

Making your case asks you to do just that. Practising making a case as opposed to making an assertion and offering evidence to support the assertion, is a valuable activity in itself and one that will help you both to recognise your successes and to identify areas, where you still have development work to complete.

Remember that although the different criteria are considered separately in the activities, the various parts of the TQS are linked. In some cases, the link is formal and obvious. For example, the objectives you identify when thinking about B.0.3 are related directly to B.3.0 and B.3.1.

However, you should also bear in mind the links between strategy, approaches and results that are important for all aspects of work with the TQS, as you work through the rest of this section.

4.3. Thinking about B.0 (Strategy)

This part of the TQS focuses on your strategy for working with The Sector, based on the market, including objectives. (Hence, if you are a provider that works with several sectors, this will not be the same strategy that you described in criterion A.0 of Part A.)

Working through the specific requirements of B.0.1, B.0.2 and B.0.3 will help you to produce a robust strategy for working with employers in The Sector, or to refine your existing strategy to ensure it more fully addresses the requirements of this part of the TQS.

4.3.1. From the beginning

If you are just at the beginning of your development journey with Part B of the Training Quality Standard, you have a choice about how to proceed. You could use existing documents and build extra components into them, to make sure you cover the needs of this criterion. Alternatively, you could produce a separate strategy for your work with employers. You can produce a comprehensive strategy or you can produce a very short strategy.

The notes below give guidance to those looking to produce a detailed strategy. If this is not your intention, maybe because you already have a range of relevant documents in place, use the notes to help you to confirm that you cover the points in a way that is relevant to your business.

If you decide to produce a new strategy, think about the shape of the document. You will need to cover the concepts of strategy, approaches and results. You might translate this into:

- **your aims and aspirations:** that is, what you want to do to address employers' needs and the needs of the sector
- **the elements of your business that will help you to meet your aspirations:** these include your policies, your management systems and processes, your ways of interacting with employers and stakeholders, plus the specific objectives you set yourself, to turn your aims and aspirations into something more concrete
- **the results you want to achieve with all of the above:** once again, these are quite specific statements which are related to your objectives

You will need to include a description of how you take into account the expectations of Asset Skills and how your strategy relates to the larger issues in The Sector. You will need to be clear about this, as it is easy to make assumptions about how your work fits in with the development of The Sector. You might find it useful to start by noting down the key issues facing The Sector, or the part of it with which you work. Then explain how you are addressing these issues, through the training solutions that you offer. Talk to your contacts at Asset Skills about these and related issues. You should also draw on information available from your LSC about the local and regional economy, to help you with these tasks.

A key source of labour market information will be the Asset Skills datasets. These can be accessed at:

<http://www.assetskills.org/Research/LabourMarketInformation/LabourMarket.asp>

You are strongly advised to use this source to help you develop a clear business plan and training offer to employers.

Your market analysis will focus on what is happening in your market and to the key customer groups you serve. You need a rationale for the choice of market and customer groups. You need to be able to explain why you are working with these employers and with this part, or all of The Sector.

You should draw on available labour market intelligence/information (LMI) to help you with this. You will probably also draw on your own market research, whether conducted in a systematic and analytical way or in an anecdotal way. You need to be able to demonstrate that you understand your market and your customers and that the means of gathering the information you employ, enables you to do this. Next, it is important to make the link between what the market wants, what the sector's key stakeholders want and what you are proposing to deliver. You need to be able to demonstrate that what you are proposing to offer, is what is needed and what will be valued. Think about the reasons why your offer will be of interest to all your stakeholders.

You will also need to consider how you will manage any risks associated with this work to your own operation, particularly where you are expanding your employer engagement activities and/or developing new areas of work/specialisms.

You should also think about how you are going to communicate your strategy to your key stakeholders and to employers. More than that, you need to have a strategy for making sure the messages you want to send out are delivered accurately.

When you have a document or documents that cover all these points, you can begin to test your approach by asking yourself the following:

- Does it work?
- Does what you have written make sense to people, both inside your organisation and beyond it?
- Can you run your business using the guidance you have produced?
- When are you going to review and refine your strategy?
- What process will you use to make sure your strategy continues to work well over time?

4.3.2. Demonstrating your abilities

Work through the tasks below, all of which focus on your strategy for working with employers in The Sector.

Producing your strategy

1. If you are going to work effectively with employers, you will need to produce a strategy, or plan, for working with The Sector, or with the part of The Sector on which

you focus. Look through your existing documents and decide if you already have such a strategy or plan. If you do not, then produce one.

2. Ensure that you specify what you aim to do with The Sector, or with the part of The Sector with which you work and intend to work. Set this down clearly. If you have already produced documentation about this, make sure the statements are clear and unambiguous. (If yours is a large organisation, with several strategies for working with employers, each relating to a different sector, it will be particularly important to differentiate what you do to support the development of The Sector, from your work with other sectors.)
3. As you work to produce your strategy, or on its revision and updating, check that you have taken into account the expectations of Asset Skills and those of employers in The Sector, when defining your strategy. Draw attention to the parts of the strategy which demonstrate that you have done this and which confirm that your strategy fits in with the latest analysis of the skills needs and the development needs for the sector that have been identified by Asset Skills (e.g. through its State of The Sector reports, produced six-monthly and through the Sector Skills Agreement).
4. Ensure that you have clearly identified objectives within your strategy. Your objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound.) These will help you to turn your aims into tangible tasks and activities. Objectives will cover a range of issues, but are likely to include those relating to financial issues, customer relationships, resources, operational effectiveness etc. They may also include issues related to externally-driven priorities (e.g. such as those identified as key indicators within the Framework for Excellence).
5. Check that you have expressed the key points in your strategy in ways that will make sense to all the people, to whom you are likely to want to communicate messages about your work (your stakeholders).
6. When you come to think about the part of the market in which you work or intend to work and the key customer groups within your market segments, note down who these customer groups are.
7. Specify clearly what information about the market and the key customer groups you collect and aim to collect. Ensure you have a systematic approach to collecting this type of information and a timetable for doing so.
8. Be clear about how you analyse the information you collect and how you use it to shape your work with your sector. This will mean explaining how you make sure you know what employers and other key stakeholders want from training solutions and how you design your approaches to address these expectations. Include your analysis of these issues in your strategy.
9. Set out clearly the ways in which the products and services you wish to offer and to promote to your sector, address the needs of your market and of your customer groups.

Communicating your message

10. Once you have produced your strategy, ensure you communicate it to your key stakeholders.

11. Take steps to ensure that you have a means of checking and confirming that the messages about the strategy, which you want to communicate to stakeholders, have been received and understood.
12. Check that your staff are aware of your strategy and are able to communicate it in a consistent way to others. If you find inconsistency in the messages your staff are communicating, go back to your own statements and work to make them easier to understand.

Reviewing your work

13. Now think about the key concepts of strategy, approaches and results. Check that your strategy includes aims for your work with The Sector. Check that your approaches, that is your policies, your objectives, your plans, systems and processes, are all designed and implemented to help you achieve your aims. Check that you have also identified the results that you wish to achieve with regard to employers in the sector and that the results are linked to the achievement of objectives. Check, also, that you have an effective risk management plan in place.
14. Confirm with your staff that they are aware of your strategy, your objectives and the results you wish to achieve with The Sector.

4.3.3. Reviewing your achievements

At least two people from your organisation should review your achievements independently.

Working alone, if you believe that you have already addressed the requirements of B.0, read through the points set out under **Demonstrating your abilities**. (See section 4.3.2 above.)

Decide how you address the issues raised and decide whether or not you deal with those issues in full. Where you believe you do, make some notes about your current practice, as these will be useful to you when you come to write your application. Where you do not deal with the issues raised in the above section in full, complete the suggested activities.

At the end of the process, review your achievements again and then discuss your judgements with the colleague who has also reviewed your organisation's achievements.

Progress to Section 4.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

4.4. Thinking about B.1 (Understand)

This part of the TQS focuses on how you ensure that you understand what employers in The Sector and other key groups working with The Sector, need and expect, in terms of training solutions. It also requires you to demonstrate that the products and services you design are appropriate to the sector's needs and expectations.

4.4.1. From the beginning

When you are working with this part of the TQS, you will need to think carefully about how you work with employers and those who influence the development of the sector and how effectively you build up relationships with these groups.

The key term used in the TQS is 'dialogue'. Use the definition below when you are considering what constitutes dialogue.

Dialogue: a conversation, discussion between representatives of two groups, an exchange of ideas.

You are looking to demonstrate how your approach to your work is shaped by your employers and by the other key stakeholders. You are looking to demonstrate that you are responsive and that what you offer is what The Sector wants and needs.

You also aim to show that you take on board examples of things working well – i.e. good practice – and that you modify your approaches to make the most of all that you find that are relevant to your situation.

Being in a position to give examples of how you have modified what you do in the light of these inputs, or how you have designed programmes specifically to address needs you have identified, is essential. This gives, what you are saying about your responsiveness, some basis in fact.

A list of the programmes you have developed in this way would be helpful, as would notes on the changes you have made to respond to business needs and to the needs of The Sector via modifications to your programmes.

If you can also show that an ongoing review and evaluation process is in place and operating, and that you keep on making adjustments and amendments to what you do, to ensure you are still responding to the requirements of the sector, you are making a strong case for your organisation.

4.4.2. Demonstrating your abilities

1. To help you with your work with this part of the TQS, make a list of the employers and stakeholders in The Sector with whom you have engaged in dialogue over a defined period. This may be six months, a year, two years or more.
2. Then note down the subjects of the dialogues that have taken place and if you can remember, the nature of the conversations which took place over the defined period you have nominated.
3. Make brief notes about the nature of the inputs you have sought from employers in The Sector, concerning their common business needs and what they want in terms of training solutions.
4. List the common business needs you have identified.
5. Identify the products and services you have developed, or refined, in order to meet employers' expectations and to address the common business needs in The Sector.

6. Show how you make sure you become aware of changes in the sector's needs and expectations and how you refine your products and services to ensure they remain relevant.

4.4.3. Reviewing your achievements

Two people from your organisation should review your achievements independently.

Working alone, if you believe that you have already addressed the requirements of B.1, read through the points set out under **Demonstrating your abilities**. (See section 4.4.2 above.)

Decide how you address the issues raised and decide whether or not you deal with those issues in full. Where you believe you do, make some notes about your current practice, as these will be useful to you when you come to write your application. Where you do not deal with the issues raised in the above section in full, complete the suggested activities.

At the end of the process, review your achievements again and then discuss your judgements with the colleague who has also reviewed your organisation's achievements.

Progress to Section 4.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

4.5. Thinking about B.2 (Deploy)

This part of the TQS is about how all parts of your organisation work to meet employers' needs and expectations and the needs and expectations of The Sector.

There is a close link between B.1, which deals with how you make sure you understand the needs and expectations of The Sector and then design relevant products and services: B.2.

4.5.1. From the beginning

Here you have the opportunity to take each of the products and services that you offer to The Sector and set out a case to demonstrate that you have really understood the needs and expectations of employers and other key stakeholders, when designing and delivering your products and services. You will need to demonstrate the effectiveness of the matching process you use; that is, how you make sure that the offer you make to an employer, is what that employer needs, wants and will value.

You will need to build up evidence of how you know you are meeting, and have met, employers' expectations. This is not just about end-of-programme evaluation, when you might ask learners about their experience, or if employers are satisfied with the services they have received. You will need to think about the ways in which the programmes are delivered and how they are resourced. You will also need to consider how adjustments are made, in the light of feedback received from employers and from your own monitoring processes.

Can you be sure you have used the best delivery methods for employers? Would it be best to deliver the programme on the employer's premises? Do you give feedback to employers about the progress of their employees, as often as they want it and in the form that is best for them? In other words, when setting up relationships with employers, do you take the time to make sure you know what they want and then make the commitment to deliver it?

It's not just a case of being able to demonstrate you can be flexible in your approach. You need to be able to show you are working in the way that is right for employers.

This will mean broaching such issues as location, mode of delivery, time of delivery, etc, when the programme is set up. This, in turn, means that those arranging your programmes need to investigate the best ways of meeting employers' needs and expectations. It also means that those delivering your programme need to know what each employer expects of them, so you will need to show that you have effective processes in place for the handover from one team to another (e.g. from needs analysis to delivery).

It will also mean confirming, before the programme starts, during the life of a programme and at the end of a programme, that the approach chosen meets the needs and expectations of your employers. The guidance in 'Thinking about B.3' below will help you to shape your approach.

4.5.2. Demonstrating your abilities

1. Begin by making a list of the products and services that you deliver to The Sector.
2. Note the process you use to match relevant products and services, with the needs and expectations of local employers. That is, explain how you make sure that the products and services you offer to employers meet their needs and their expectations, as far as it is possible to do so.
3. Explain how you ensure that the products and services you offer, meet the expectations of The Sector, or the part of The Sector with which you work. For example, what specific needs and expectations, which are found throughout The Sector, or in the part with which you work, do your products and services respond to and address?
4. Explain how you ensure that employers' expectations, in terms of such issues as delivery and content, are met. As you work on this, define the characteristics of delivery (e.g. location of delivery, time of delivery, order in which the programme elements are delivered) and content (e.g. programme details, programme organisation, qualifications gained, etc) that you analyse, in order to confirm your judgements about employers' expectations. Then, set about making a case, that you do meet expectations. Back up your case with examples.
5. Consider how you can demonstrate that the people, who arrange and deliver your products and services, have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet sector expectations. Explain also your understanding of expectations. You will need to include, also, an explanation of how you make sure that your staff are able to fulfil the service specification you have set out. You will need to draw attention to your recruitment policy, to your training and development processes and to the methods you use to monitor and improve the performance of individuals who work for you.

You will also need to be clear about the qualifications and experience your staff need.

6. You will also need to demonstrate how you ensure that the resources you use meet employer requirements. Are the buildings equipped to the required standards? Are the programme materials of the right quality? If programmes are delivered on employers' premises, do the employers supply sufficient resources of the right standard, to ensure you are able to deliver your products and services to a high standard?
7. Be clear about how you arrive at your decisions about what is right and appropriate. For your own benefit, make sure you have created definitions of all the more abstract concepts that you refer to in your documents. For example, what does 'regular' mean, as in regular updating? How do you know that an action you take is 'appropriate'?

4.5.3. Reviewing your achievements

Two people from your organisation should review your achievements independently.

Working alone, if you believe that you have already addressed the requirements of B.2, read through the points set out under Demonstrating your abilities. (See section 4.5.2 above.)

Decide how you address the issues raised and decide whether or not you deal with those issues in full. Where you believe you do, make some notes about your current practice, as these will be useful to you when you come to write your application. Where you do not deal with the issues raised in the above section in full, complete the suggested activities.

At the end of the process, review your achievements again and then discuss your judgements with the colleague who has also reviewed your organisation's achievements.

Progress to Section 4.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

4.6. Thinking about B.3 (Perform)

This part of the Training Quality Standard deals with the results you achieve in terms of fulfilling the objectives you have set out in your strategy and the impact your work has on the sector's workforce.

B.3 is closely related to B.0. You will therefore, need to return to the strategic objectives you set in B.0 and demonstrate how you check that you have achieved them.

4.6.1. From the beginning

Here you need to think carefully about the objectives you have set and how you know you are fulfilling them. You will need measurements, analyses, trends and statistics. You

will also need to confirm that you are measuring the right things and collecting information about the issues that will help you to fulfil the requirements of B.0 more completely and which will also help you to run your business more effectively.

However, before you decide to draw on any statistics you will need to be clear about the case they make. How do your figures and graphs illustrate the case you want to make about your successes? Do you have any comparative (benchmarking) data about The Sector, locally, regionally and nationally, that you can use to help with this task?

Learning providers have extensive experience of collecting information about learners: retention rates, achievement rates, success rates, etc. Often they have information and analyses that go back for several years. However, the analyses in themselves have little value in the context of your work with the TQS, until you are clear about what they mean in business terms and how they relate to what you are trying to do to support employers in The Sector. You should review the guidance from Asset Skills to help you to clarify your thoughts.

As well as statistics about achievements and similar information, think about statistics that relate to the issues that are of interest to employers. To do this effectively, you will need to focus on the business needs of the employer, from his/her point of view and also on the needs and priorities of The Sector that you described in B.0. This will help you show that you are supporting the development and improvement of The Sector and also helping individual employers – as well as their employees – to be more successful.

Statistics relating to improvements to worker productivity and to enhanced business profitability are examples of areas, in which you need to make a case in terms of your results. Those relating to **worker productivity** usually deal with the impact of the learner's ability to use new skills. Often this is measured in terms of doing tasks more quickly or reducing error rates. Those relating to **enhanced business profitability** usually relate to the measurement of what a learner will be able to do, once he or she has gained the new skills and how this will benefit the business. A comparison with what the worker could do before the training and with what he or she can do afterwards, will help to make the point. This approach also allows you to undertake profitability calculations (for example, when assessing the financial return to the business, in comparison with the cost of the training – often referred to as the return on investment). Both these types of benefits need to be addressed when training is set up and the nature of the calculations agreed with the employer, before any training takes place.

If you are able to measure the same variables in every organisation with which you work, you will very rapidly start to build up a useful profile of the success of your training. You may also be able to identify different profiles across different types of client organisation (e.g. from large organisations to SMEs). Furthermore, if you measure frequently (quarterly, for example), in less than a year you will start to see trends and you will be able to make a case for the impact you are having in The Sector.

Using this sort of approach will help you to begin to benchmark performance.

4.6.2. Demonstrating your abilities

1. Note down the results you have achieved with reference to each of the objectives you specified.

2. Describe the results in qualitative terms, but also set out performance data, relevant statistics and analyses of your data.
3. Use all this information to help you to make a judgement about how well you have met your objectives in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Also make a judgement about the effectiveness of the processes you use to measure your successes and achievements.
4. Note any trends that your data and analyses indicate. Make sure you present this information in a relevant and usable format.
5. Once you have produced your data and analyses, draw some conclusions about how your work – that is the delivery of your products and services – has contributed to the aims of some of the other key stakeholders, including Asset Skills. For example, your efforts may have resulted in you working with employers, who have not been actively involved in developing their workforce in the past, or you may be working with a hard-to-reach group of employers. If you specified this as something you aim to do, then the results show that you are achieving success.

4.6.3. Reviewing your achievements

Two people from your organisation should review your achievements independently.

Working alone, if you believe that you have already addressed the requirements of B.3, read through the points set out under **Demonstrating your abilities**. (See section 4.6.2 above.)

Decide how you address the issues raised and decide whether or not you deal with those issues in full. Where you believe you do, make some notes about your current practice, as these will be useful, when you come to write your application. Where you do not deal with the issues raised in the above section in full, complete the suggested activities.

At the end of the process review your achievements again and then discuss your judgements with the colleague who has also reviewed your organisation's achievements.

Progress to Section 4.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

4.7. Thinking about evidence

Now that you have completed the activities in 3.3 to 3.6 above you can begin to think about the evidence you might wish to use, to back up your case.

Use the document *Introducing the Training Quality Standard (2007)* and the guidance to Part B of the Training Quality Standard produced by Asset Skills, to help you to make choices about the evidence you are going to use, to support the statements you have made with reference to B.0, B.1, B.2 and B.3.

Remember the evidence you choose must back up the points you are making. That is, your evidence must back up your case. Evidence is only relevant when it is linked to your argument, or your case.

Look at the notes you have made when completing the tasks linked to the **Demonstrating your abilities** sections above. What evidence do you think will best illustrate the points you are making?

Identify a number of pieces of evidence that you think will be helpful. Then explain how specifically they will support the case you wish to make. Remember you can often use a single piece of evidence to back up several points.

4.8. Making a case

The following activities will help you to develop your ability to make a case about your successes in The Sector.

Assume you are going to make a presentation about how you work with employers in The Sector and how you help to address the workforce skills issues in the whole sector to an audience made up of two groups of people. These are:

- employers who work with you
- stakeholders, who include representatives from the LSC, The Sector and the brokerage service

You have decided that your presentation will cover how you are addressing the main issues raised in Part B of the Training Quality Standard, although you may decide there is no need to mention the Training Quality Standard at all. You may choose to focus on your successes in terms of the ways in which you are supporting employers and The Sector.

You are very keen to ensure that your audience remembers your key messages, so you intend to keep the presentation simple and straightforward. You have decided against using extensive handouts – even at the end of the presentation – and you have decided to make only limited use of slides. You have made these decisions, because you want people to concentrate on your message and not get bogged down with lots of information.

These are the possible headings you have set down so far, to help you plan your presentation:

- Strategy – approaches – results – how we link all three
- Our key objectives with regard to employers
- Our key objectives with regard to The Sector
- How we gather information about employers' business needs and their expectations about training solutions
- How we know we are offering products and services that the sector values and wants
- How we consult with our key stakeholders about all aspects of training
- Our approach to training delivery – how we make it relevant to employers

- How we ensure our staff – that is those who deliver our provision and those who work behind the scenes or those who work as managers – remain competent to do their the job
- How we measure our successes in terms of our work with employers and the sector more generally
- Key statistics about our work with the sector that we would want our audience to remember

However, time is tight and you know you will not be able to cover all of these points. You have 15 minutes to get your message across and to make sure people will remember what you want them to remember. (You can expect questions **after** the 15 minutes you have available for your presentation.)

When you think about the structure for your presentation, remember that the most common approach is to break a presentation down into key elements and allocate proportions of the time available to each of them. Some possible timings for your presentation are noted below:

- an introduction – which sets out what will be covered and your key points (2–3 minutes)
- a series of mini-presentations which are clear and unambiguous and which have different but related themes. For example, the three most important aspects of our work with you, how we help you to succeed ... etc (8 minutes)
- a summing up of what you have said (2 minutes)
- a final point or points – a message with which to leave the audience (2 minutes)

Once you have completed this activity, consider how your presentation might vary if you were presenting to your own staff? Assuming you are using the same content, how would your message differ? How would you customise your presentation to suit this audience?

Footnote

It is particularly important to make selective use of labour market information, rather than simply reproduce large sections of information readily available from Asset Skills without showing how this information has directly influenced your strategy and planned activity.

It is also important that you show how the competence of staff is maintained in the specific areas of competence covered by the Asset Skills footprint, rather than simply describing the generic CPD processes within your organisation.

When making reference to employer engagement and feedback, it is essential that you make direct reference to specific employers within the Asset Skills footprint, rather than describing generic employer feedback processes.

Finally, you need to remember that Asset Skills will be asked by the assessing organisation to comment on your application during the assessment process (prior to the on-site visit by assessors). Its staff, therefore, should be able to clearly identify from your Part B application that you have strong links with The Sector and have produced tailored training solutions that reflect the work patterns and trends within The Sector.

Section 5: Some guidance on writing your application

5.1. Introduction and background

This section is designed to provide some support to providers working on their applications for TQS certification. Providers, who are tempted to start their work with the Guide here, are strongly recommended to undertake a review of Sections 2, 3 and 4 first.

Many providers are struggling with their applications for assessment, because they have not appreciated how different the TQS application is from documents they may have produced in the past.

Some providers have assumed they can cut and paste information from other documents and use it without revision in their TQS application. For example, some providers have 'adapted' CoVE documentation with the result that they have failed to address, or only partially addressed the specific TQS requirements.

Some providers have underestimated the scope of the task and have failed to leave themselves sufficient time to write their applications to the standard of which they are capable.

Some providers have failed to realise the difference in emphasis between Part A and Part B of the TQS.

Some providers have failed to show that their Part B application takes account of the guidance and information on sector skills needs, produced by the relevant SSC.

As a result, many providers have submitted applications which do not do their organisations justice and which make the task of gaining certification more difficult than it needs to be.

5.2. Planning the application writing process

There are four key roles to be allocated in the application writing process. These are:

1. writer
2. reviewer
3. evidence gatherer
4. project manager

Of course, tasks may be shared and some people will undertake more than one role during the course of the application writing, but ensure that the principal responsibility for each of the above tasks is allocated to a named individual.

The only rule you must follow in this is that the principal writer must not also be the principal reviewer.

Elements of the key roles:

Principal Writer	Principal Reviewer
<p>This person will have oversight of the writing of the whole application.</p> <p>This person must be able to write in the style required by the assessment process.</p> <p>One of his or her jobs will be to ensure that the document reads well. This person will ensure different sections of the document do not contradict each other and that there is consistency in approach and writing style.</p> <p>This person must make sure that the document is coherent and makes sense as a whole.</p>	<p>This person will check that the document makes sense to a reader, who does not have knowledge of the organisation seeking assessment.</p> <p>This person must try to think like an assessor and keep asking himself or herself if what has been written would make sense to an assessor.</p> <p>One of his or her jobs will be to use the assessment guidance and to check that what is asked for in that document has been included in the application.</p> <p>This person is likely to be asking where statements about specific issues can be found and checking if application writing instructions have been followed.</p>
Principal Evidence Gatherer	Project Manager
<p>This person will need to have a good knowledge of the organisation and its recent history.</p> <p>This person needs a good working knowledge of the assessment guidance, in order to recognise good evidence. He or she will need to know whom to ask for examples of good practice and for the organisation's success stories.</p> <p>It is this person's responsibility to make sure that the principal writer has the best information with which to make a case.</p>	<p>The project manager will be a senior manager in the organisation and will manage the application writing process. This person will decide when the application is ready for submission.</p> <p>The project manager will take responsibility for the application writing plan and for keeping people on track. He or she will need to be able to insist that resource is allocated to the application writing process.</p> <p>This manager will also be the person who steps in to ensure that the others in the team do not become sidetracked or prevented from making progress because of other priorities.</p>

5.3. Before you start writing

Your organisation should address the application writing task in a disciplined way and the team with responsibility for writing is recommended to do the following:

1. Set a timetable for the writing of the whole application.
2. Read the guidance to assessment and refer to it throughout the time you are writing.

3. Follow the instructions for application writing to the letter.
4. Start writing sooner rather than later.
5. Work together as a team on preparing the application.
6. Take time to gather evidence of your successes.
7. Leave some contingency time at the end of your writing schedule.
8. Think carefully about how evidence of what you do well can best be incorporated into the application.
9. Be realistic about how much can be written each day.
10. Accept that everything will take longer than you think.

You need to make sure that your team is fully conversant with the materials that will support the application writing process. The most important of these are:

- The Training Quality Standard
Download this from: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk
- The Specialist Guidance to Part B of the Training Quality Standard
Download this from: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk
- The Training Quality Standard Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework. (Obtain this document from the certification body.) You will receive a copy of this document when you attend the applicants' training session. Get in touch with the certification body if you wish to obtain a copy prior to attending the training.
- Other documents and information available from Asset Skills

5.4. Application writing basics

If you wish to use the work you have done in connection with your development journey to support your submission for assessment, you will need to modify your notes to ensure that you:

- write with the assessment team's needs in mind
- make a coherent case for your claim to be ready for certification
- follow the guidance given by the certification body
- write in a manner that is accessible to a reader who does not know your organisation

You will also need to remember that your application will be scrutinised by the lead assessor. It will be assessed and scored remotely. The visit made to your site is a verification visit. Verification is about confirming – or not confirming – the case you have already put forward in your application.

The quality of the application is vital to your success.

Providers who are doing well in assessment are able to make a case clearly and to guide the assessment team. TQS assessment is where your words really matter and you are being asked

to make a case via the quality of your writing. Having worked through the previous sections of this Guide before starting to write your application, will assist you here.

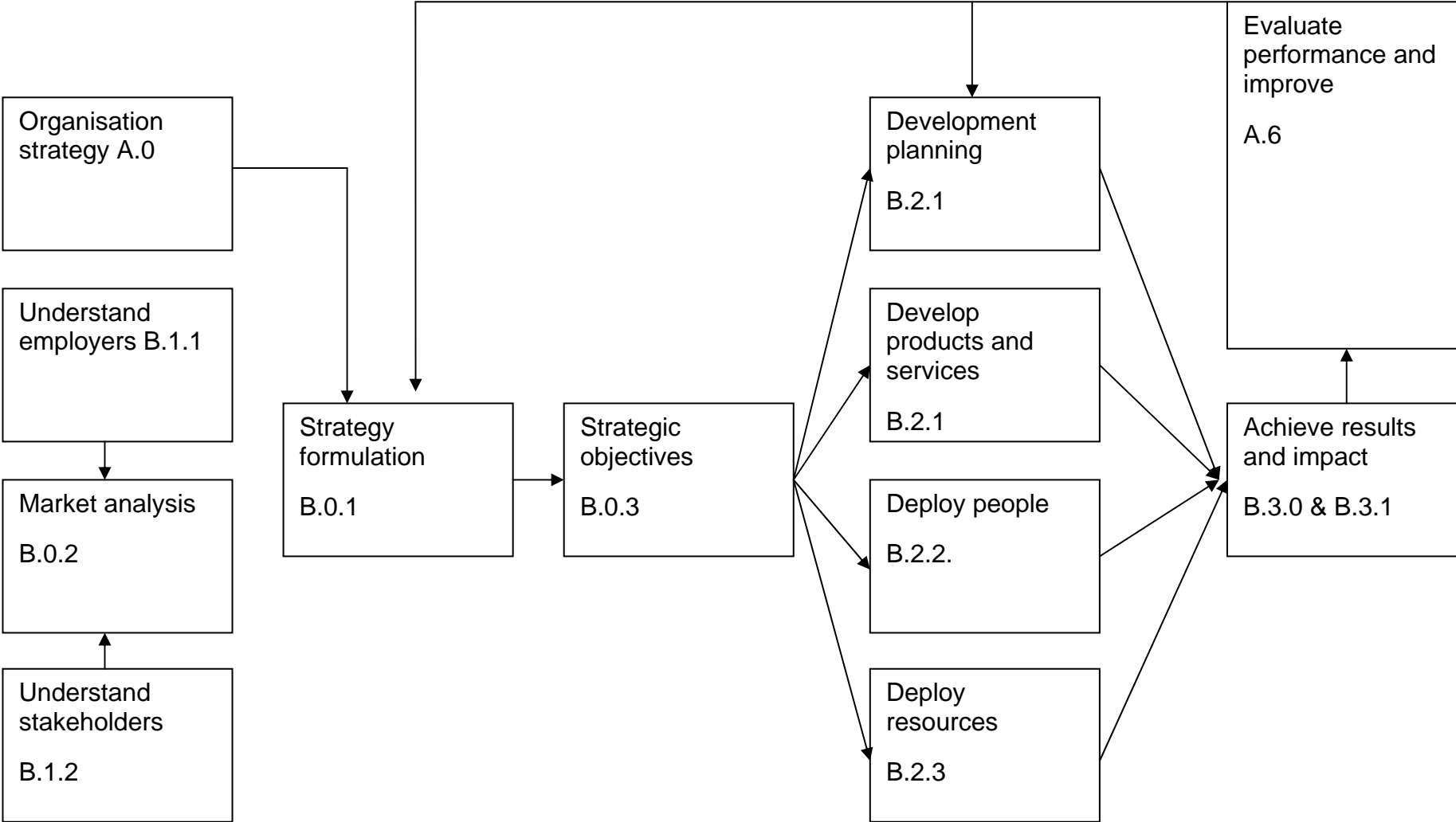
5.5. Writing your application

Some outline guidance follows to help you to write the individual components of your application. It complements the guidance presented in section 4. Both sets of guidance should be used by all members of your application writing team.

In 5.6 below, you will find a series of prompts to help the principal reviewer to analyse the application. Use this section to help to ensure that the application is robust.

Refer also to the diagram on the next page to help you gain an understanding of the linkages between different parts of the Standard.

Training Quality Standard Part B Suggested process and outcome links



Section B.0: Strategy

Notes to assist you to complete this part of the application

Although the 'Strategy' section of the Part B application is not 'scored' directly, it plays a vital role in a high-quality application for the following key reasons:

1. It forms the basis for the 'story' of your specialist provision, so the impact on scoring is through how successfully the later narrative links back to the strategy and strategic objectives.
2. It presents the main opportunity for you to demonstrate that your specialist provision relates to your organisation's overarching strategic priorities (fully described in Part A, A.0) and that your management team understands the scope of its business. It also allows you to show that you are not operating in isolation and that you are serious about your performance and the opportunities to improve quality.
3. An objective review of your evidence will be the key first impression for an assessor of the 'overall' quality of the specialist area. Poorly presented or missing evidence in the strategy section will lead to an uphill battle for the rest of the Part B application.
4. B.0 allows you to demonstrate that you understand and use the business development strategies you have in place across the whole organisation. Assuming you get through Part A successfully, you will already have demonstrated the effectiveness of your relationship with employers. Through your specialism in The Sector, you can then show that you have in place a strategy for taking best advantage of the business development expertise and support available, through your commitment to a number of cross-organisation working practices.

Criteria B.0.1 and B.0.3 both stipulate interaction with appropriate stakeholders. Although the requirement is for the bulk of the evidence to be text-based narrative, a diagram or flowchart illustrating the extent of stakeholder contact and active links, could be an effective addition.

Before attempting to complete the three elements of the 'Strategy' section, take some time to think about the relationship between them. This will enable you to get the best evidence in the appropriate section, make the sections easier to complete and make it much clearer for an assessor to understand.

B.0.1 is concerned with the **general approach of the overall sector strategy**. Resist the temptation to include lengthy lists of objectives and/or targets that are likely to complicate an assessor's ability to understand the basic features of your overall approach. (B.0.3 should contain your SMART strategic objectives and/or targets in any case.)

A key part of this section is to show how your strategy for Part B is created. This should include reference to a range of appropriate sources and how they inform the strategy. For clarity, these sources can be separated into three elements, relating to:

1. External sector stakeholders, including reference to individual dialogue with them, as well as to data and information published by them
2. Internal organisational contact mechanisms, such as business development forums, quality committees, marketing groups (the way these contribute to strategy formulation should be explained)

3. Your 'market view' established during the analysis in B.0.2 (the way this influences the general strategic aims and approaches should be explained)

A high-quality application will be full of evidence of a serious commitment to quality improvement. It must be clear that processes are in place to review the effectiveness of the strategy and more importantly, how the outcomes of these processes feed back in to the 'strategy formulation' process. An effective example of this would be how employer consultation (B.1.1) subsequently affected the 'market view' (B.0.2), which in turn influenced/changed a particular strategic aim or approach (B.0.1), requiring a change/modification to a strategic performance objective (B.0.3).

Section B.0.3 should contain sector performance objectives that relate directly to the strategic aims and approaches laid out in B.0.1.

Note that in some documentation, this section is headed 'define results' and this has led some applicants to concentrate on objectives that relate wholly or mainly to the performance of their courses and training solutions, rather than to the performance of objectives that cover the full extent of their strategy.

Your strategic performance objectives should set the challenge of high-quality sector work in the context of the marketplace in which the provision operates and they should have been generated specifically from the general aims and approaches defined in B.0.1.

Your processes for reviewing performance against the objectives should be explained clearly, although this is not the place to provide detail of strategic performance successes (that should be evidenced in section B.3). However, you will need to demonstrate the effectiveness of your performance review process. The best evidence of this is likely to be provided by explaining the processes for taking action on underperforming areas. Actual examples of how these processes have improved performance through strategic modifications, ie, how the 'cycle' of quality improvement has been effective in this case, contribute powerfully to this section.

Section B.1 – Understand

Notes to assist you to complete this part of the application

The narrative in B.1.1 will need to explain the effectiveness of the processes that your provision uses to understand sector employers, particularly the training solutions that employers need and their relationship with the employers' common business needs.

Demonstrating this understanding will include demonstrating your understanding of local employers and their concerns. It will also include demonstrating that you have links with industry bodies at national and/or local level – including the relevant SSC. See the specific guidance for The Sector, produced by Asset Skills, for further guidance.

You may consider this part of your business to be well informed, but you may still find it difficult to provide formal evidence. Most of your information will probably have come from informal verbal dialogue, so evidence is likely to be anecdotal and impossible to validate.

A high-quality Part B application will show a clear understanding of the marketplace in which you operate (B.0.2) and which employers you consider to be your key customer groups. It will now need to show formally how you have been able to understand these employers.

The layout of this section is particularly important, if you are to present information coherently and enable appropriate links to be made with other Part B criteria. You might find it useful to present your case in three sections:

- show that you have planned the way you gather and analyse information from employers
- show that you have done what you planned to do, using real examples and made references to the results of your analysis
- show how the views of employers have had an impact on the training solutions on offer and how their views have influenced or changed your strategy

Remember that employer consultation should not just consider the training products or solutions on offer, but take clear account of common business needs, too. High-quality training solutions will help employers to develop their businesses and be ambitious about 'business impact'; so employer consultation should include the range of possibilities that training solutions can offer to improve businesses.

Remember, also, that consultation is pointless, if the information gathered and the views formed as a result, do not affect the strategy and operational procedures of the training provision on offer. On the other hand, where issues have been raised and changes suggested and there is an 'audit trail' of effect through the quality improvement and/or the strategic planning processes, this reflects a responsive and high-quality operation.

In B.1.2, you should also be able to demonstrate a proactive approach to the sharing of good sectoral practice. You should also show that appropriate stakeholders have had opportunities to contribute and influence training provision and that they have provided important information about the links to common business needs and business impact.

Section B.2 – Deploy

Notes to assist you to complete this part of the application

When you write the narrative for this section, you will need to show that the development and delivery of products and services meet (or exceed) industry expectations and take account of employers' business needs. You could initially focus on your existing range of products and services. However, it is very important that you can show that these were formally and systematically designed to meet employer needs, that you rigorously evaluate their effectiveness (especially business impact) and that you are continuously striving to improve and to extend your portfolio of provision.

What evidence do you have of the ways in which employers have influenced the development and delivery of your products and services to them? This includes how you have responded during the delivery of the service, as well as to how employer feedback was used to influence future delivery.

In B.2.2, you will need to show that the people arranging and delivering your products and services have the knowledge and skills to meet sector expectations.

There may be a tendency here to simply show that all the technical teaching and assessment staff in the Part B area are qualified to recognised industry standards and they have appropriate teaching and/or assessment qualifications. However, consideration should be given to the whole process of arranging and delivering the products and services identified above. Staff

involved in all aspects of this process should have appropriate skills and knowledge. Furthermore, you will need to show robust evidence of a commitment to maintaining the credibility of your staff with employers through a methodical and well-resourced programme of continuing professional development (CPD). You should have records of professional development that are likely to include industry placements, exchanges, award body certification, specialist training (eg manufacturers' courses), etc. You may also wish to show how the proportion of the organisation's budget that is spent on CPD has changed over the recent past. Finally, you should have evidence that staff arranging and delivering training solutions are respected by employers (through positive feedback reports etc).

Section B.3 – Perform

Notes to assist you to complete this part of the application

The narrative in this section will be different from the bulk of the application, because it should be based mainly on data. It should show your success, measured against the sector performance objectives described in B.0.3.

This section is important, because it provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of your performance review process and how this provides a vital contribution to the 'improvement journey' of your provision.

The guidance is explicit that **performance should be measured against your own sector performance objectives defined in B.0.3** and this is a stark omission from most existing applications. Effective processes will have been planned from beginning to end and therefore you should be able to show that you have delivered against your performance objectives, which in turn will have delivered against your general strategic aims.

The form of your results will depend on the sector performance objective against which you are presenting, but they could be made up of figures, graphs or tables, related to finance (e.g. full-cost income increases), retention and achievement data, customer satisfaction survey results, etc.

You should provide commentary on each achievement, explaining the way the B.0.3 performance objective has (or has not...see following paragraph) been met and includes issues that were encountered on the journey to achievement, and other relevant features, such as trends.

TQS certification does not expect perfection; showing how you deal with performance objectives that have not been reached, is as important as presenting the evidence of your success. You should therefore show how your performance review links to your improvement processes. This provides a key opportunity to link the Part B application to the Part A application, which has an improvement section (A.6). Assessors will be looking for a harmonious interaction between the improvement processes used in the Part B area and those in use across the wider organisation. Real examples of the improvement process in action will do much to enhance your application.

With B.3.1, you need to show specifically that the delivery of your products and services has had an impact on the workforce of the sector. You should have performance objectives (B.0.3) that relate particularly to this and you should provide commentary on how these have been achieved, backed up by similar types of data to that used in the previous section (B.3.0). Where you have shown that your strategy for The Sector was informed by reference to SSC priorities, evidence of your successes in relation to these will make an invaluable contribution to your sector credibility and sector impact.

5.6. Reviewing your application

Having completed the application using the guidance above, now proceed to review it and to revise and update it as necessary. The principal reviewer should use the following prompts to help with the review process. He or she should use only the information in the application when answering the questions. Remember that the application is all that the assessor will have to work with, so it must stand alone and deliver all the information needed.

Reviewing B.0

- After reading B.0 are you clear about how your organisation identifies its stakeholders and who your principal stakeholders are?
- After reading B.0 are you clear about how your organisation collects, analyses and uses information about the sector market?
- After reading B.0 are you clear about what your organisation is doing to support The Sector?
- Reviewing B.1
- After reading B.1 are you clear about how your organisation engages in dialogue with employers? (Did you read about examples of practice?)
- After reading B.1 could you give some examples of how your organisation has adapted provision to better meet the requirements of employers in The Sector?
- Reviewing B.2
- After reading B.2 are you clear about how your products and services meet the expectations of The Sector? (Did you read about any examples of employer need for your organisation's products?)
- After reading B.2 are you clear about how your organisation ensures that the people who arrange and deliver your products and services have the right skills and knowledge to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities?
- After reading B.2 are you confident that your organisation is meeting sector expectations? (From your reading, do you know what these expectations are and how you address them?)

Reviewing B.3

- After reading B.3 are you clear about how the commitments made in B.0 are fulfilled?
- After reading B.3 could you explain how your organisation contributes to addressing the wider issues in The Sector?

Before you complete your review, ask yourself if a reader who was unfamiliar with your sector and your organisation's work would, as a result of reading your application, understand:

1. How your sector is defined
2. How your sector works
3. How your work fits into the work of The Sector
4. What your Sector Skills Council is trying to achieve in The Sector

5. What your organisation is trying to achieve in The Sector
6. What you do to help your sector to be more successful
7. How the work you do helps your Sector Skills Council to achieve its objectives for The Sector
8. How you have structured your work with The Sector
9. How you measure your success with The Sector (as opposed to how you measure your success with individual employers)
10. What you have achieved with The Sector

Without further reference to the application, could you offer a sentence summing up your answer to each of the above ten questions?

Could other members of the application writing team do the same?