Training Quality Standard Part B

The process and nuclear sector

WCS

World Class
Skills Programme
Developing Responsive Provision

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IMPROVEMENT
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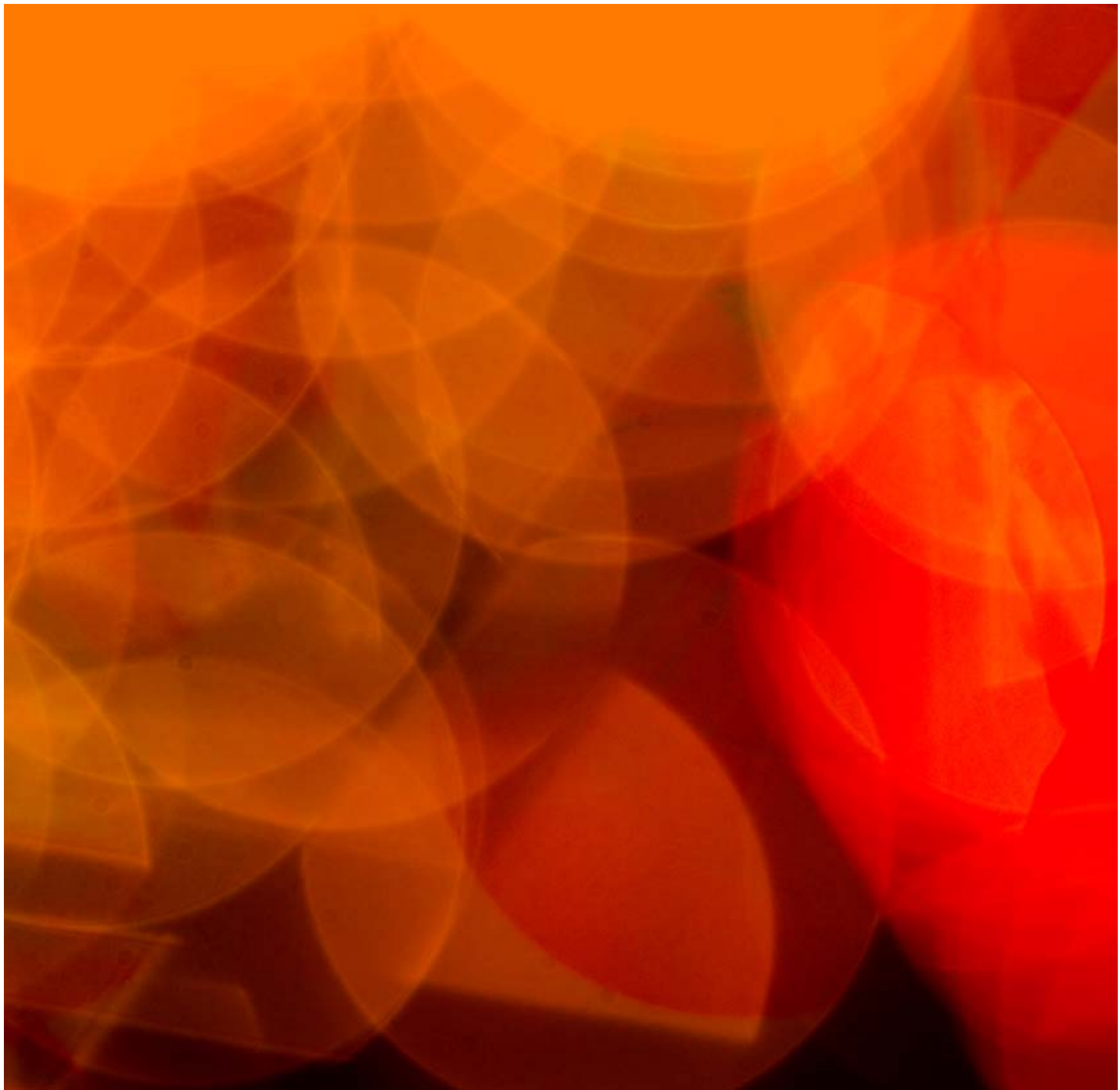
A guide for providers working in the process and nuclear sector 2009

Contents

Section 1:   Introduction

1.1.   Background to the activity

This guide is the result of a project funded by the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), via the Learning and Skills Network (LSN). It focuses on the requirements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard, as they apply to the Process/Nuclear sector.

The guide has been produced with the help of Cogent (the Sector Skills Council for the Chemical and Pharmaceutical, Nuclear, Oil and Gas, Petroleum and Polymers sectors) and training providers working in these sectors.

1.2.   Who is this guide for?

This guide is for providers of all sizes working with the Process and Nuclear sectors who are:

- considering certification with reference to Part B of the Training Quality Standard (Process/Nuclear)

- looking to join or to work with the Process and Nuclear academies

- preparing a submission for Part B of the Training Quality Standard assessment

The guidance applies to every stage of the work towards achieving certification for Part B of the Training Quality Standard.

1.3.   About the guide

This is a customised resource. It focuses on the requirements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard as they apply to the Process and Nuclear sector, as well as on the development journey learning providers will make as they progress towards Part B certification. It also helps providers in the sector prepare a submission for assessment and to confirm their organisation's readiness to submit their application to the organisation that will assess them.

The guide has been produced after consultation with providers in the sector and following discussions with the Sector Skills Council: Cogent.

The guide aims to support learning providers as they work to:

- identify key development areas for their organisation, linked to the requirements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard

- plan their development journey towards certification

- undertake a range of development activities that will help them to progress towards certification

- prepare a submission for assessment

- confirm their organisation's readiness to be assessed

The guide will also provide useful information about organisational and quality development that will help providers to meet the requirements for membership of the skills academies.

1.4.   Recognising achievements to date

The guide acknowledges that many providers have already worked with a number of organisational development and certification models, including Action for Business Colleges, Customer First and Matrix.

It also acknowledges that providers are also beginning to work with the regional skills academies and may already be thinking about quality development issues, in order to ensure they are ready to take up full membership of these organisations.

Therefore, the guide builds on the good practice and expertise in quality development that is to be found in the sector, as well as in existing approaches to quality development.

1.5.   When should you use this guide?

This guide aims to support your organisation's development and progress towards Training Quality Standard certification with reference to Part B (Process/Nuclear). Use it to support you through every stage of your development as follows:

1. **When you are new to working with the Training Quality Standard**, use this guide to help you to develop the understanding of every one in your organisation about issues related to the requirements of the Standard. Use Section 2 to help you here.

2. **When you are familiar with the Training Quality Standard**, use Section 3 of this guide to help you to make sure you address all the issues you need to take into account, before you think about assessment. Then use Section 4 to help you to plan your journey to certification.

3. **When you have registered for assessment**, or when you are thinking seriously about assessment, use Sections 4 and 5 of this guide to help you to plan your project and to write your application.

4. **When you have completed your application** and you believe you are ready to submit it, use Sections 5 and 6 of this guide to help you to establish whether or not you are ready to submit your documents.

1.6.   How the guide is organised

This guide is divided into seven parts as follows:

1. Introduction

2. Working with the Training Quality Standard

3. Working with Part B of the Training Quality Standard

4. Planning your journey to certification

5. Writing your application

6. Readiness for assessment

7. Next Steps

Section 1	Explains why the guide was produced, who funded its development, how it can help providers and what it aims to achieve.
Section 2	Offers introductory guidance on the Training Quality Standard. It also explains the differences between this standard and some of the other standards with which providers may have worked.
Section 3	Covers practical guidance on working with the specific elements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard in the context of the Process/Nuclear sector. It also encourages providers to think about how best to make a case about their successes with the components of the Training Quality Standard.
Section 4	Deals with planning the journey to certification. It covers the resources providers will need to find, to ensure they have the best chance of completing a good application. It also offers some guidance on how to prepare for the assessment process.
Section 5	Offers guidance on how to write the Part B (Process/Energy) application. It draws on the experience of organisations, which have already been assessed and notes a series of checklists providers should use, before deciding that their application is complete.
Section 6	Is all about judging the quality of the application. It asks providers to consider if they have done what is needed, before submitting their applications.
Section 7	Looks at the greater picture, including what to do after reading this guide.
Appendix A	Is written by Mark Chapman of Cogent and gives an overview of the Sector Skills Council for the Process and Nuclear sectors.

1.7.   Why apply for the Training Quality Standard?

Below are some of the reasons why an organisation may make the decision to apply for the Training Quality Standard.

Informing Employer Choice in a demand led system

In a truly demand-led system, employers will be free to choose where they purchase their training and development solutions. It is, therefore, important to ensure that employers recognise what TQS represents and what they can expect from a provider with TQS. The LSC is working with a range of stakeholders to ensure that providers with TQS are highlighted to employers as their preferred provider. The LSC is working on The Employer Guide to Training Providers to ensure that employers with TQS are 'flagged' as being highly responsive.

Train to Gain

As the Train to Gain service continues to be enhanced, it is vital that the service offers an effective development service that helps employers identify and meet their skills needs. Providers with TQS will play a major role in further raising the credibility and equality of the Train to Gain service.

Train to Gain brokers have been made aware of providers with TQS and what this represents. These providers should be prioritised over those without the standard, when referring new TTG business. The Employer Guide to Training Providers will link in with this, when TQS providers will be flagged as preferred.

National Apprenticeship Service

As the apprenticeship programme expands, TQS will play a major role in the delivery of responsive provision that meets the needs of the employer and the learner. Providers, who have invested in a responsive infrastructure and excellence in vocational areas, will drive the apprenticeship programme forward.

Framework for Excellence

The Framework for Excellence is an annual quantitative assessment of performance across all LSC funded providers. The Framework will provide an accurate, independent picture of the performance of the Further Education sector, validated and supported by published data.

The evidence used to assess the employers' views measured in the Framework, will be based on a subset of the assessment criteria from TQS. Providers that achieve TQS for their whole organisation, will automatically be rated outstanding across the whole Responsiveness to employers KPA, for the period for which TQS is awarded (three years).

In a reciprocal arrangement, from summer 2010 any provider that is in scope for the Responsiveness to Employers KPA, may need to achieve a rating of good or outstanding in this particular area, before it can apply for TQS. This alignment means providers do not need to do both.

Framework for Excellence evidence will be highly relevant to support an application for TQS, not least because the Framework's Employer Views survey is based on elements of TQS.

The operational relationship between TQS and Framework for Excellence was agreed by Ministers in March 2007 and published in the Framework for Excellence provider guides in July 2007 and July 2008.

Capital skills prospectus: Implementing the key priorities of building colleges for the future

The LSC capital strategy published in March 2008 has confirmed the intention to help drive increased specialisation among FE providers and to ensure that capital investment supports provision to address identified skills needs. Providers with TQS will have priority access to specialist capital funding. The capital prospectus states that colleges applying for capital funding will need to demonstrate their commitment to employer engagement. In most cases, colleges will need to show that, at the point of application, they have at least applied for TQS and they must have achieved the TQS before funding is released. This requirement will apply to other providers of employer responsive provision as well.

National Skills Academies

The LSC is working with the new and emerging National Skills Academies so that they adopt TQS as their key quality criterion in selecting and working with provider partners. This will ensure that only the highest standard providers are part of the National Skills Academies networks.

1.8.   Where should you begin?

Start by making a judgement of where your organisation is on its journey towards Training Quality Standard certification.

To help you to arrive at an accurate decision, review the profiles of the following four provider organisations and consider which description most closely matches your own situation.

Provider A – is new to the Training Quality Standard and new to government-funded training. This provider has been told that the Training Quality Standard is a badge of excellence, to which it should aspire and is keen to learn more about the standard and the assessment process.

Provider B – has been working in the government-funded sector for some time and understands the contracting system. The organisation has always achieved its targets for learner outcomes, and has a sound record of achievement. Its OFSTED record is good but not outstanding.

This provider knows a little about the Training Quality Standard, but has not, as yet, undertaken any serious analysis of what gaining the standard will mean for it.

Two of its senior managers have attended briefings about the standard. Neither has any in-depth knowledge of the Training Quality Standard. They have asked another manager to work on preparing their organisation for assessment and given that manager this guide.

Provider C – has been working with the Training Quality Standard for some time and is already registered for assessment. The assessment date has been set and the organisation is working on its real application.

This organisation is finding that there is a lot to do, to make sure the application is as good as it can be. Managers have realised that the application process presents them with a real challenge. They are using this guide to help them to meet that challenge.

Provider D – has already gained certification for Part A of the Training Quality Standard and is now working with Part B. Managers in this organisation are reasonably confident about their application writing abilities and their knowledge of the Process/Nuclear sector.

Now read the suggested guidance for each provider on page 10, on how to use this guide. If you think your situation is addressed in more than one of the provider snapshots above, read the guidance for both providers.

Note that the term 'Review' means that you should read through the relevant section to ascertain whether you need to work through the activities set out there. If you do, then follow the instructions in the relevant section on how to proceed.

Provider A
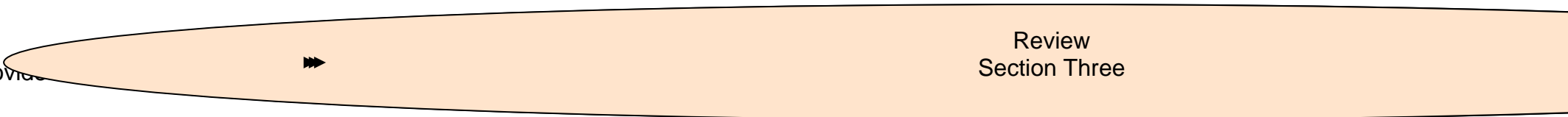
Provider B

Review Section Two

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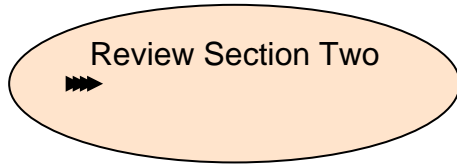
Using the Guide - A Quick Reference

1.9.   Finding your way

The following page references will help you to find your way around the guide quickly.

Section 2:   Working with the Training Quality Standard

2.1.   Overview

The Training Quality Standard was 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 providers have been considering how best to implement the requirements of the standard. Some providers have also sought – and gained – certification.

Certification under the standard is demanding. During the test phase, only one in three of the providers were assessed at, or above, the level required to be successful. Furthermore, feedback documentation and 'scores' for most of the certified providers that made up the research sample, showed that despite the high quality of these providers, most Part A and Part B scores did not significantly exceed the CFE pass level of 550 points per 1000.

It is essential that you are aware that TQS assessment is concerned with **processes**, as much as outcomes. TQS applications and the CFE feedback, to those in sectors that have already been through TQS Part B, show that the presentation of process evidence is far weaker than that of outcome evidence. This should be a major consideration when assessing your readiness to apply.

Many providers are also discovering that they have a development journey to make, before they are ready to apply for certification. Providers are also finding 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 Training Quality Standard has a particular, and clearly defined, focus.

It deals with how learning provider organisations 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.

The Training Quality Standard aims to assess and where appropriate, to certificate providers with reference to two broad issues:

- their responsiveness to employers' needs

- their 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 Training Quality Standard

- developing and deploying products to address particular sector needs, which is covered in Part B of the Training Quality Standard

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

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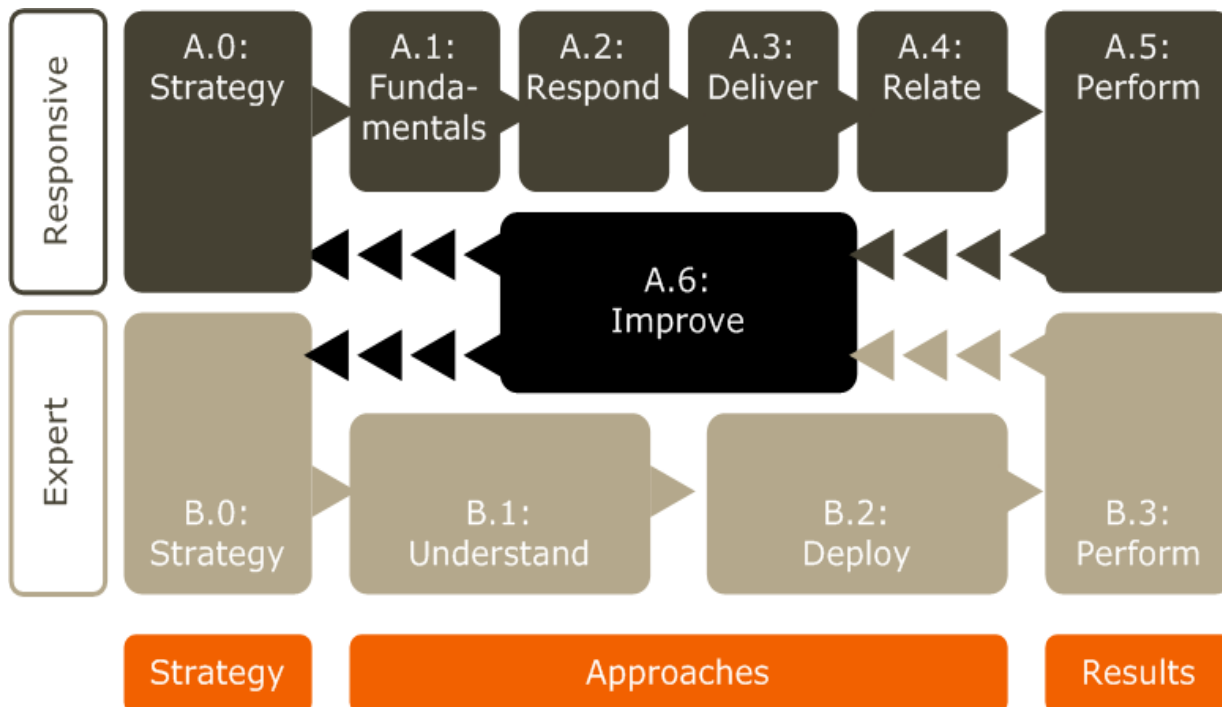
The Training Quality Standard

This diagram can be found in Introducing the Training Quality Standard (2007).

This document can be downloaded from: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

2.3.   The new world of the Training Quality Standard

As many providers are beginning to realise, working with the Training Quality Standard requires them to ask different questions about their relationships with employers from those that many of them have asked themselves in the past.

Working towards certification to the Training Quality Standard also means working with an assessment methodology that is unfamiliar to a significant number of providers.

Therefore, users of this document are urged, as they work through this guide, to put aside any judgements they have already made about:

- what the Training Quality Standard requires of them

- how they intend to work with the Training Quality Standard

- how much working with the Training Quality Standard will cost their organisations

and to approach the activities and guidance set out here unfettered by assumptions.

2.4. A note about Part B of the Training Quality Standard

The requirements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard are set out in Introducing the Training Quality Standard (2007).

The individual 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. Cogent has produced its customised guidance for Part B. This guidance can be found via the Training Quality Standard website (www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk). (Choose Resources on the left-hand menu and follow the link).

Providers can choose to work with Part B of the Training Quality Standard (Process/Nuclear) at any time. However, if they want to gain certification with reference to the Training Quality 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.

2.5. A new approach to demonstrating success

Most learning provider organisations are familiar with assessments and inspections. Most learning provider organisations have experience of external verification visits and visits by those who scrutinise their performance, as well as their achievements.

To facilitate the assessment and inspection process, managers are used to supplying documentary evidence to support their claims about what they do. They are used to being interviewed. They are used to having their work observed. They are used to providing opportunities for their visitors to search for the evidence they need, to enable them to arrive at conclusions about particular aspects of the learning provider's service.

The approach to **demonstrating success** with regard to the Training Quality Standard will **require a different approach** on the part of many providers, because the approach to assessment is different. In consequence, the requirements of assessors and of the assessment process are different.

Few learning provider organisations are, at present, familiar with the approaches to demonstrating their successes, which they will need to use when seeking Training Quality Standard certification.

This is important because every journey begins with a destination in mind and the requirements of the assessment and certification process will impact upon all the work providers undertake with the Training Quality Standard.

In consequence, existing approaches to assessment preparation and inspection will need modification, if providers are to be in a position to present the best information, in the best way to support their applications for certification.

The difference in approach is best illustrated by example:

Example

In assessment visits and during inspections managers in provider organisations will regularly say:

'We do this (specify what we do) and here's the evidence (often a document) to prove it.'

Success here depends on making an **assertion**: we do this and then producing some form of evidence or **proof**, often documentary, to back up the assertion.

Providers expect the assessors and inspectors to:

- listen to what is said

- review the evidence

- arrive at a judgement about the accuracy of the assertion

If the evidence presented to them is incomplete, the assessors and inspectors may ask for different evidence. They may also look for additional evidence themselves or seek it out via discussions with the learning provider's staff, employers working with the organisation and learners.

However, when you come to work with the Training Quality Standard, you will need to do more than think in terms of making an **assertion** and offering the proof to back up what you say. You will also need to make a **case**; that is, offer a rationale or an explanation to back up your **assertion**. The case you make must, of course, be based on your knowledge of your industry and of the market.

Thus, saying:

> *'We have a relevant strategy for working with employers in the Process/Nuclear sector. Here it is. See for yourself. Have a look at it.*

Talk to people about how we work'

is not the best approach.

You need to do more than make an assertion and offer evidence to back up your case, or encourage your visitors to seek out extra evidence themselves. You must be able to explain **why** your strategy is valuable and **how** it ensures you are meeting the needs of employers in your sector. Moreover, when you come to think about assessment, you must be able to do this in writing.

Therefore, when thinking about your achievements with the Training Quality Standard, you might say, or write:

> *'We have a relevant strategy for working with employers in the Process / Energy sector. It is based on analyses of our market and the identified needs of our customers. Our main partners and the other key people we work with are aware of what we are trying to do.*

> *'We have specific performance objectives in our strategy. We make sure we achieve them and doing that, keeps us on the right track. We also make sure our partners and the other key people we work with know what our objectives are and how well we are meeting them.'*

In making this statement you are justifying your assertion that you have a relevant strategy and that it fulfils its purpose of helping you to work effectively with your sector. You are not relying on the listener, or your reader to make the case for you.

Of course, if you were writing a submission for assessment you would **probably** need to write more than this. You would need to link your statements directly to the elements of the Standard and to some of your supporting evidence. However, the example gives an indication of the difference in approach between assessments and inspections you may have taken part in, to date and the requirements of the assessment and certification process linked to the Training Quality Standard.

In summary, you need to do more than say you do something and offer the evidence to prove your point. You need to make the case about the relevance and value of any evidence you produce. You can't leave it to other people to make the case for you, or to work out for themselves how the evidence you present, helps you to make your case.

This all has implications for the evidence you decide to use. Your evidence only has validity and it is only of value, when you are able to explain **why** it is important and **how** it helps you to make your case. If you cannot explain why a piece of evidence is of value, then you should not be thinking about using it to support your claims about your success.

Therefore, when you begin to think about certification, the first questions you ask yourself will not be about which pieces of evidence you will choose to support your application. Rather, they will be about the case you want to make. Only when you are clear about your argument and your rationale for claiming you are ready to be certificated, will you begin to think about the evidence you intend to use to support your assertion and the case you are making.

Thinking about how you make your case, with reference to the requirements of the Training Quality Standard, will also help you with your work with the Process/Nuclear academies, if you decide to seek to become a member. Using this approach and thinking about your assertion, your case, or rationale, followed by some considerations about evidence, will also help you to demonstrate how ready you are to become a member of the relevant academy.

Section 3:   Working with Part B of the Training Quality Standard

3.1.   Overview

Part B of the Training Quality Standard demands that you demonstrate how you work to support the development of the sector, in which you have specialist expertise. Therefore, this part of the Training Quality Standard focuses on your sector expertise – that is on your relationship with the Process/Nuclear sector.

This section of the guide will help you to interpret the requirements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard and the specific guidance produced for learning provider organisations in the Process/Nuclear 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 Training Quality Standard. 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 your copy of **Introducing the Training Quality Standard** and the guidance notes produced by Cogent 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

3.2.   About the activities

Tasks and activities linked to B.0, B.1, B.2 and B.3 of the Training Quality Standard follow in sections 3.3 – 3.6. Each section is broken down into three parts. These are:

- Starting from scratch?

- Demonstrating your abilities

- Reviewing your achievements

Starting from scratch? 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 Process/Nuclear sector and to review the requirements of Part B of the Training Quality Standard (Process/Nuclear).

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

Demonstrating your abilities in each case sets out a structured set of tasks you are recommended to complete, to help you as you make progress on your development journey with reference to Part B of the Training Quality Standard.

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, ensure that 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 3, before progressing to plan the writing of their application for assessment.

The remaining tasks in section 3 are now summarised:

Thinking about evidence (section 3.7) 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 (section 3.8) 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 Training Quality Standard 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 Training Quality Standard, as you work through the rest of this section.

3.3. Thinking about B.0

This part of the Training Quality Standard focuses on your strategy for working with the sector based on the market, including objectives.

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 your sector, or to refine your existing strategy, to ensure it more fully addresses the requirements of this part of the Training Quality Standard.

Starting from scratch?

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**: which include your policies, your management systems and processes, your ways of interacting with employers and stakeholders etc, 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 write with several audiences in mind, because much of your strategy will be communicated to a range of stakeholders and employers. You might choose to write different words to be communicated to different groups. For example, for your own organisation, you might have recorded some very specific financial objectives. These statements could be commercially confidential and you would not wish to share this information with others.

Yet, you could still communicate the essence of what you are intending to do to your employers and to the LSC, by explaining that you aim to double the numbers of employers you work with, within a specific area, or increase the number of employer organisations of a defined size you intend to target. When communicating with the employers themselves, you could talk and write about how you are focusing on particular concerns in their part of the industry.

You probably need to write something about how you take into account the expectations of Cogent and how your strategy relates to the larger issues in the sector. It's easy to forget about this, or to make assumptions about how your work fits in with the development of the sector. The safest thing to do is to write down your approach. It may make sense to note down the key issues facing the sector, or the part of it with which you work and explain how you are

addressing these issues through the training solutions that you offer. Talk to your regional manager about these and related, issues. You should also draw on the information available from your LSC about the local and regional economy, to help you with these tasks.

Your market analysis will focus on what is happening in your market and on 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 of the sector.

You might draw on 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 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 of these points, you can begin to test your approach and ask 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?

Demonstrating your abilities

Work through the tasks below, all of which focus on your strategy for working with employers in the Process/Nuclear 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 your 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. Make sure that the strategy you identify or compose is linked to the work you are doing with the Process/Nuclear sector. (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 Process/Nuclear sector from your work with other sectors.)

3. Ensure that you specify what you aim to do with the Process/Nuclear 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.

4. As you work to produce your strategy, or on its revision and updating, check that you have taken into account the expectations of your Sector Skills Council and those of employers in your sector, when defining your strategy. For your own benefit, draw attention to the parts of the strategy which demonstrate that you have done this.

5. Confirm that the plans for your work with employers fit in with the skills needs and the development needs that have been identified by Cogent.

6. Make sure you also take into account the issues facing the Process/Nuclear sector as a whole, both in the short term and in the longer term, when producing, or when updating, your strategy. These issues include:

- the challenge posed to the process sector by the ageing workforce

- innovation and business improvement techniques

- change and project management

- health and safety

- management and leadership

   There may be other issues that you will also need to address. Some of these will have been identified by employers working in the sector. You should establish with Cogent and with other relevant organisations what these issues are.

7. Make sure you have objectives within your strategy. Your objectives should be specific, measurable, relevant and time bound. Your objectives will help you turn your aims for your work 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, or operational effectiveness. It would also be helpful, if you defined your success criteria and the ways in which you plan to measure your success now, rather than later.

8. 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 your messages about your work. Refer to these as your stakeholders.

Consider your stakeholders in very broad terms. Your stakeholders are the people and organisations with which you work and interact. At the very least your definition of your stakeholder group will include: Cogent, the LSC, your Regional Development Agency (RDA), your employers and their trade organisations, other providers with whom you work closely, the Skills academy in your region and the brokerage service. You will almost certainly identify additional groups and you must be able to explain your rationale for the inclusion and exclusion of groups from your list. If you have an existing strategy, then check that you have already communicated the details to your key stakeholders.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. As a means of checking that you are collecting the best information and analysing it appropriately, consider if you are gathering relevant information about the market for training solutions within the Process/Nuclear sector and about stakeholder expectations. Explain how you ensure that you are doing so.

13. Set out clearly the ways in which the products and services you wish to offer and promote to your sector, address the needs of your market and of your customer groups.

Communicating your message

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

15. Take steps to ensure that you have a means of checking and confirming that the messages about the strategy, which you communicated to stakeholders, have been received and understood.

16. Take action to correct matters where the messages received, do not match the messages you have sent out.

17. 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

18. Now think about the key concepts of strategy, approaches and results. Check that your strategy includes aims for your work with the Process/Nuclear sector. Check that your approaches, that is your policies, objectives, 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 the employers in the sector and that the results are linked to the achievement of objectives.

19. Confirm with your staff that they are aware of your strategy, your objectives and the results you wish to achieve with the Process/Nuclear sector.

20. Review the work you have done in connection with the points above. Keep the notes you have made safely.

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.0, read through the points set out under **Demonstrating your abilities**. (See 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 3.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

3.4.   Thinking about B.1

This part of the Training Quality Standard focuses on how you ensure that you understand what employers in your 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.

Starting from scratch?

When you are working with this part of the Training Quality Standard 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 Training Quality Standard 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 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 those examples around you, which are working well, - i.e. good practice – and that you modify your approaches, to make the most of all that you find, that is 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 the 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.

Demonstrating your abilities

1. To help you with your work with this part of the Training Quality Standard, make a list of the employers and stakeholders (see B.0 above for a definition of stakeholders) in the Process/Nuclear 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 Process/Nuclear sector, concerning their common business needs and what they want in terms of training solutions.

4. List the common business needs you have identified, just as you have identified your employers and stakeholders.

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 Process/Nuclear 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.

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 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 discuss your judgements with the colleague who has also reviewed your organisation's achievements.

Progress to Section 3.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

3.5.   Thinking about B.2

This part of the Training Quality Standard is about how all parts of your organisation work to meet employers' needs and expectations, as well as the needs and expectations of the sector.

There is a close link between B1, which deals with how you make sure you understand the needs and expectations of the process sector and then design relevant products and services, as in B2.

Starting from scratch?

Here you have the opportunity to take each of the products and other services that you offer to the Process/Nuclear 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.

Think how you can 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 keep some records 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 ask if employers are satisfied with the services they have received. You also need to think about the ways in which the programmes are delivered and how they are resourced:

- 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 means that those delivering your programme need to know what each employer expects of them.

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.

Thus, you need a system for making sure you get this right. The details of the system are for you to decide. Use the guidance in 'Thinking about B.3' below to help you to shape your approach.

Demonstrating your abilities

1. Begin by making a list of the products and services that you deliver to the Process/Nuclear 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 expectations, as far as it is possible to do so.

3. Explain also 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. To complete this task, make sure you have defined what is covered by the terms **arranging** and **delivering**. Explain also your understanding of **expectations**.

6. Next, explain how you make sure that your staff are able to fulfil the service specification you have set out in point 5 above. 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.

7. When you deliver your products and services, you will 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?

8. 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:

- What does 'regular' mean, as in 'regular updating'?

- How do you know that an action you take is appropriate?

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 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 discuss your judgements with the colleague who has also reviewed your organisation's achievements.

Progress to Section 3.7 when you are confident that you have completed all the necessary activities relating to B0, B1, B2 and B3.

3.6.   Thinking about B.3

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 need to return to the strategic objectives you set in B.0 and demonstrate how you check that you have achieved them.

Starting from scratch?

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, which will help you to fulfil the requirements of B.0 more completely and which will 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 data about the sector, locally, regionally and nationally, that you can use to help you with this task?

Providers have lots of experience of collecting information about learners: retention rates, achievement rates, qualifications 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 Training Quality Standard, 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 your sector.

As well as statistics about achievements and similar information, think about statistics that relate to the issues, which are of interest to employers. These will help you to 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 the key areas in which you need to make a case, in terms of your results. This case will back up the points you have made about your contribution to the success of the sector in B.0.

Statistics 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.

Statistics 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, with what he or she can do afterwards, will help to make the point. This approach also allows you to undertake profitability calculations.

Both these types of benefits need to be addressed when training is set up and the nature of the calculations agreed, before any training takes place.

If you measure the same factors in every organisation with which you work, you will very rapidly start to build up a useful profile of the success of your training. If you measure 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 Process/Nuclear sector.

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

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 the performance data, relevant statistics and analyses of your data.

3. Use all of 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 Cogent. For example, your efforts may have resulted in your 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.

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

3.7.   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 Cogent, 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.

3.8.   Making a case

The following activities will help you to develop your ability to make a case about your successes in the Process/Nuclear sector.

Assume that you are going to make a presentation about how you work with employers in the Process/Nuclear 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, Cogent 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 (no more than six slides in total and one sheet of A4 paper, printed on one side only and with a font size of 12 pt). 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 to 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 process 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 to have time for 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:

- 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)

- Summing up of what you have said (2 minutes)

- A final point or points – a message with which to leave the audience   (2 minutes)

N.B.

People listening to presentations also need a theme, or some linking statements, to help them to remain aware of what the presentation is about.

Additional activity:

- How would your presentation 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?

Section 4: Planning your journey to certification

4.1. Overview

Thinking about Training Quality Standard certification takes many providers into uncharted waters.

They know about inspections and they have been assessed in other contexts, but Training Quality Standard assessment is something new to them. They wonder just how transferable their existing knowledge and experience will be when they come to plan their journey towards certification.

Sound planning is important, as this will help providers of all sizes and at all stages, - to make the journey towards certification more straightforward.

Taking heed of the advice in this section will help providers to make progress rapidly.

4.2. Know your sector

From the outset think carefully about the differences between Part A of the Training Quality Standard and Part B.

Part A, as noted above in Section Two, deals with responsiveness to employers. Part B deals with how the provider responds to, and addresses, sector needs.

This means that there is a different emphasis and approach to the two parts of the Training Quality Standard, which you will need to take into account right from the start, when you begin to work with Part B (Process/Nuclear):

- The first task is to be quite clear about the sector with which you are working

- The second task is to make sure you understand how you support the sector

To help you to be clear about the shape and size of the sector and how the Sector Skills Council is working to support the sector, refer to the Cogent website: http://www.cogent-ssc.com

You need to be sure you know what is defined as the Process/Nuclear sector in the United Kingdom, before you begin to think about assessment. Look for information about the sector skills council's "footprint" to help you.

You also need to be clear about which aspects of your work will be assessed under the auspices of the Sector Skills Council, i.e. Cogent and which aspects of your work would be assessed with reference to the work of other sector skills councils.

In the first instance, visit the website for clarification. If you need more guidance on this issue, speak to your regional manager.

 The key sector skills issues currently noted on the Cogent website are:

- Innovation and business improvement techniques

- Change and project management

- Health and safety

- Management and leadership

- Ageing workforce

You need to be clear which of the sector issues above you are helping to address and how you do so, because your understanding of these issues will shape your whole application for assessment.

4.3.   Plan your journey

Planning is the key to your success with your Part B application.

Treat the journey to certification as a project. Projects that work well are appropriately planned, resourced, managed and reviewed.

Begin your planning before you register for assessment.

You may find it helpful to create a project team to help you with your journey. You will almost certainly find it helpful to plot on your calendar the tasks to be completed and to estimate the time you will need to complete individual tasks.

Some of the tasks, which you are advised to complete sooner, rather than later, are noted below:

1. Confirm your understanding of the Process/Nuclear sector's scope

2. Confirm your understanding of how you support the part of the Process/Nuclear sector with which you work

3. Make sure you are fully conversant with current sector-related issues

4. Make sure you understand the assessment process

5. Make sure you understand what you need to do at each stage of the assessment process

6. Make sure you understand the differences and similarities between the Training Quality Standard assessment process and other assessment and inspection processes, with which you have been involved

7. If at all possible, talk to organisations which have already been assessed about their assessment experience

4.4.   Be clear about the benefits of certification

By now you will have noted that seeking certification is a sizeable undertaking. It is not a journey on which to travel without thinking about the costs and benefits.

Many providers in the Process/Nuclear sector, who are considering seeking certification with reference to the Training Quality Standard, are beginning to ask themselves questions about the costs and benefits of working with this certification model. They are asking these questions with reference to Part A and with reference to Part B.

Review the section **'Why Apply for the Training Quality Standard?' (Section 1.7, page 6)**

Be clear about how Training Quality Standard certification will help your organisation, before you decide to register for assessment.

Section 5:   Writing your Application

5.1.   Overview

This section supports providers working on their applications for Training Quality Standard assessment.

Providers, who are tempted to start their work with the guide here, are strongly recommended to undertake a review of Sections 3 and 4 first.

5.2.   About applications for assessment

Many providers are struggling with their applications for assessment, because they have not appreciated how different the Training Quality Standard 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 Training Quality Standard application.

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 Training Quality Standard.

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.

5.3.   Planning the application writing process

It is a big mistake to leave the application writing task to one person.

You need a team of at least two people working on this project.

If your organisation can sustain it, a team of four people would be helpful.

There are four principal 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.

The team as a whole will take responsibility for producing the organisation's application for assessment.

Producing your application for assessment

Principal Writer	Principal Reviewer
This person will have oversight of the writing of the whole application. This person must be able to write in the style required by the assessment process. 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. This person must make sure that the document is coherent and makes sense as a whole.	This person will check that the document makes sense to a reader who does not have knowledge of the organisation seeking assessment. 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. 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. This person is likely to be asking where statements about specific issues can be found and checking if application writing instructions have been followed.
Principal Evidence Gatherer	**Project Manager**
This person will need to have a good knowledge of the organisation and its recent history. This person needs a good working knowledge of the assessment guidance, in order to recognise good evidence. He or she will need to know who to ask for examples of good practice and for the organisation's success stories. It is this person's responsibility to make sure that the principal writer has the best information with which to make a case.	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. 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 resources are allocated to the application writing process. 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.

5.4. 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 anticipate

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 (Cogent)*
> *Download this from: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk*
>
> *The Sector Skills Agreement for the Process/Nuclear sector*
> *Download this from: http://www.cogent-ssc.com*
>
> *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 assessment body, if you wish to obtain a copy prior to attending the training.

5.5. 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. Training Quality Standard assessment is where your words really matter and you are being asked to make a case via the quality of your writing.

If you have worked through this guide you will find that:

Section 2 of the guide has given you guidance on how to make a case.

Section 3 of the guide has given you practice in making a case both to people within your own organisation and to those beyond it. It has also given you the opportunity to work through the detail of the Part B requirements, and to think carefully about how you meet them or what you may wish to do, in order to meet the requirements more fully.

Section 4 of the guide has helped you with the planning process that precedes the writing of your application.

5.6. Writing your application

Step-by-step guidance follows to help you to write the individual components of your application.
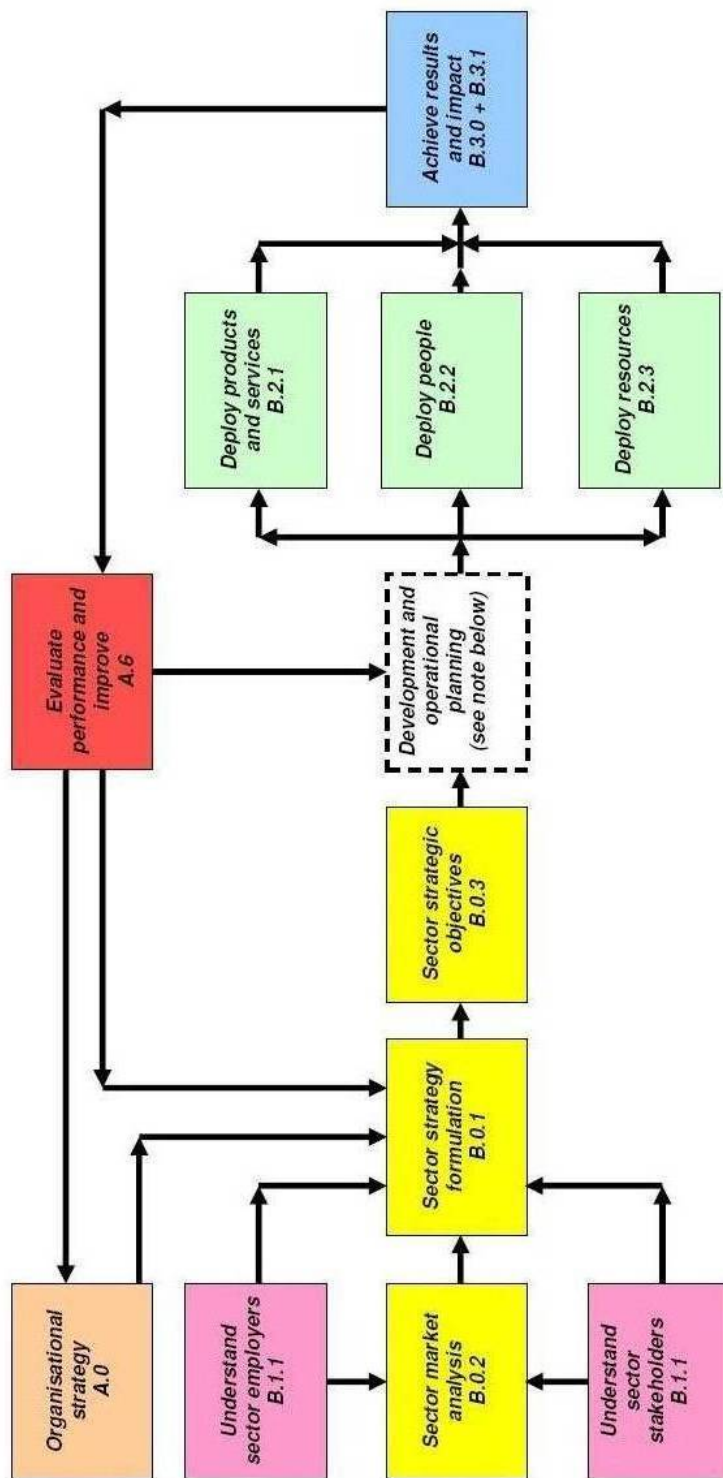
This guidance should be used by all members of your application writing team.

In 5.7 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 to gain an understanding of the linkages between different parts of the Standard.

Training Quality Standard Part B
Flowchart – suggested process and outcome links

Achieve results and impact B.3.0 + B.3.1

Deploy products and services B.2.1

Deploy people B.2.2

Deploy resources B.2.3

Evaluate performance and improve A.6

Development and operational planning (see note below)

Sector strategic objectives B.0.3

Sector strategy formulation B.0.1

Organisational strategy A.0

Understand sector employers B.1.1

Sector market analysis B.0.2

Understand sector stakeholders B.1.1

Note: Although there are not specific TQS criteria for operational and development planning, these processes are considered to be essential for the effective deployment and continuous improvement of products and services, people and physical resources. Development planning guidance can be found in section B.2 of this guide; however, operational planning is considered to be a routine training deployment process and is not therefore covered in this guide.

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 process provision, through its strategies, shows that your management team understands 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 process, 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. This should involve quite a few external organisations: Regional Development Agency, employer groups, Sector Skills Councils, etc, as well as contacts inside your organisation: business development forum, quality committees, marketing groups, etc. 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.

Note that:

B.0.1 should explain your **overall strategy for working with the process sector** and how this strategy was informed and created. The relationship of this strategy with the overall Strategic Plan of your organisation should be explained as simply as possible. However, the sector strategy will need to show how well your management team understand the sector and how this understanding translates general aims and approaches. The way in which the 'market view' established in B.0.2 is integrated will also need to be clear.

Having explained your strategy and how it was formulated, it is necessary to show how your strategy will be delivered (in a general sense); although this may already be clear from the way the aims and approaches have been presented. It is also necessary to make clear how the effectiveness of your strategy will be reviewed and how the strategic aims and approaches are communicated to appropriate stakeholders.

B.0.2 is concerned with the **analysis of the market in which the provision operates and its key customer groups**. It is likely to include reference to national labour market intelligence (LMI) in the sector but must also include the range of ways in which LMI and other relevant information are gathered from the geographic area of the provision. The structured way in which the information is analysed should be illustrated, as should the way in which the 'market view' is converted into general strategy and linked to B.0.1 and the strategic performance objectives in B.0.3.

B.0.3 should contain pe**rformance objectives that relate directly to the strategic aims and approaches laid out in B.0.1**. These strategic performance objectives should set the challenge of high-quality sectoral work. The objectives must be specific, measurable, relevant and time-based (SMART) to ensure that there are comparators for actual performance. The processes for reviewing performance must be clear, as must the processes for taking action on underperforming areas and for communicating performance information, at appropriate stages, to stakeholders.

Completing the application – B.0.1

This section 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 logical and effective way to ensure you have included information in each of the required areas is to present your narrative in paragraphs relating to these areas.

Organisational strategic planning

Show, in as simple terms as possible, how your organisation as a whole, plans strategically and what influence the different sections of your organisation have on this process. Explain how the strategic planning for your process provision relates to, or is influenced by, the organisation-wide approach.

Strategy formulation

A key part of this section is to show how your strategy for Part B (Process/Nuclear) 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 sections:

1. External sector stakeholders: SSCs, Skills Academies, observatories, Regional Development Agency, sector advisory groups, economic development organisations, professional organisations, employer groups, awarding bodies, etc. Identifying the range of contacts and the level of interaction will not only show the stature of the provision in the sector as a whole, but will provide the opportunity to show that the creation of the strategy is underpinned by credible information sources. Identify key information sources from the above organisations – the Sector Qualification Strategy and the Sector Skills Agreement for example – and any other skills priority documents relating to the sector.

2. Internal organisational contacts, such as business development forums, quality committees, marketing groups, etc and 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.

Your strategy formulation process is also likely to include consideration of and reference to, development planning (see B.2.1), especially the evaluation of the impact of new products and services.

This general strategy section should also include a fundamental commitment to quality improvement. You could refer to the quality improvement processes used by your Part B area and how they link to the quality processes employed by the wider organisation (A.6), although detail of how this actually works will be better located in the performance section B.3.0.

Strategic aims and approaches

List the strategic aims and approaches that flow naturally from the strategy formulation process above. Aims and approaches suggest relatively general statements, so there should be no need to have a lot of them or to make them lengthy or very detailed. Aims are general statements that identify the main thrust of the strategy and approaches show generally how these aims will be met (policies, objectives, plans and processes). There will be opportunities to include more specific statements and appropriate detail in the performance objectives in B.0.3.

Strategy delivery

Illustrate the way your strategic aims and approaches will be delivered. It is possible that this will already be clear from the aims and approaches. However, it may be better to narrate this separately, especially if inclusion in the aims and approaches would make them unwieldy and detract from your key messages.

Strategic review

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).

Stakeholder communication

It should be clear how your strategic aims and approaches are communicated to appropriate stakeholders and if it has not been clarified in the 'strategy formulation' paragraph, what opportunities stakeholders have to influence strategy. Real examples of this influence in action

are important, but at the very least an assessor should be left in no doubt that stakeholders support the content and extent of the strategic aims and approaches.

Completing the application – B.0.2

This section is concerned with the analysis of the market (in which your process provision operates) and its key customer groups.

A summary of a general analysis of national LMI in the sector would be a good starting point, including the documents used and the organisations that produce them (LSC, SSCs, sector bodies, etc).

However, most providers will have a geographic area of operation, based on a combination of local and regional delivery. Information relating to the determination of this would be useful, to set the context of an effective market analysis and demonstrate a sound understanding of the factors in play.

Your analysis should include the range of ways in which LMI and other relevant information is gathered. This will include using documents published by the RDA and regional LSC, where they specifically refer to the process sector and information from regional observatories, economic support organisations, local employer bodies and group training associations. Evidence of stakeholder consultation is also required in section B.1.2 and the outcome of analysis of these processes will provide important market analysis contributions.

Section B.1.1 also requires evidence that process sector employers have had opportunities to express their expectations of training solutions and that the provision supports common business needs. Clearly, an effective strategy would take account of this employer input and so reference should be made to section B.1.1 (which will explain the processes for capturing and analysing employer information). The impact of this employer consultation on the 'market view' should form part of the analysis for this section. Showing how employers' views subsequently influence/change strategy would be a powerful addition to the 'strategic review' section of B.0.1.

Employer consultation (B.1.1) should have provided further useful information on appropriate training solutions. Real examples of such consultations should be included and the importance of their contribution to marketplace understanding explained. Other initiatives, which identify and target 'hard-to-reach' customers (such as small and medium-sized enterprises), would enhance the analysis and provide further evidence of a proactive approach to the needs of the sector.

The structured way in which all of the above information is analysed should be illustrated (who is responsible, how often does it happen, what information sources contribute, what analytical processes are used, etc). If this is done well, it will prove that the 'market view' is current and robust.

Finally, cross-referencing will be required to show how the 'market view' is converted to general strategy (B.0.1) and how the performance of this key element of strategy is monitored through the strategic performance objectives (B.0.3).

Completing the application – B.0.3

This section 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 objectives must be SMART to ensure that there is clarity in the comparison between them and the actual performance of the provision.

Your processes for reviewing performance against the objectives should be explained clearly. This is not the place to provide detail of strategic performance successes (which should be evidenced in section B.3).

However, the effectiveness of your performance review process should be demonstrated. 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, i.e. how the 'cycle' of quality improvement has been effective in this case, contribute powerfully to this section.

One possible source of evidence is your employer consultation process (B.1.1), but there may be no evidence to this effect, if 'across-the-board' performance has exceeded the expectations of the objectives in all aspects.

Finally, it should be clear how strategic performance information is communicated to appropriate stakeholders and what the relationship of this is to the 'stakeholder influence' issue, discussed in B.0.1, in the section on Stakeholder communication.

Completing the application - B.1.1

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

General note to set the context of B.1.1

High-quality training solution provision does not happen accidentally. Managers, technical experts and work-based specialists will have worked together to ensure that the contents of your training portfolio, coupled with a range of responsive delivery options, meet the needs of employers within your process provision.

Development of this provision requires a significant input from sector employers and training delegate customers. Indeed, your understanding of the 'employer audience' is likely to have evolved over a long time and to be based on contact with many employer representatives, employers and company delegates.

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 the 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.

The information could be sorted into the following three sections:

1. show that you have planned the way you gather and analyse information from employers

2. show that you have done what you planned to do, using real examples and make references to the results of your analysis

3. 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

These 3 sections will now be considered in turn:

1. **Show that you have planned the way you gather and analyse information from employers**

There are many opportunities to seek employer (or employer representative) views of the training solutions on offer, e.g. Employer Federations, Sector Advisory Committees, SSC forums, Skills Academies, Organisational Needs Analysis (ONA), Training Needs Analysis (TNA), programme delivery, on-site or work-based assessment, site visits, industry placements for staff, projects, visiting speakers, specialist advisers, employer update events, workshops, questionnaires (and there are many more).

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.

Additionally, quality processes should be in place to help you to capture the levels of satisfaction of employers and trainee delegates about training solution delivery.

You will need to explain your plan for capturing and analysing information from this vast array of opportunity, e.g. which opportunities you consider most valuable and why, when, how often and how you will capture the information. You need also to be clear about how the information will be analysed; by whom and how often.

2. Show that you have done what you planned to do using real examples and make references to the results of your analysis

Having explained how you intended to gather and analyse information from employers, employer representatives and trainee delegates, you should evidence the outcome of these processes. Explain how well your planned activities actually worked and what they produced in terms of volume and extent of information.

The results of the analysis processes will be the key information, supported by appropriate references to evidence sources (minutes of meetings, workshop planning, consultation papers and completed questionnaires, etc). This information may be presented in different formats, but would probably include the summarised views of employers. It will then be necessary to consider a reaction to each view and determine appropriate courses of action.

This information as a whole should be used to inform the 'market view' of the training provision you dealt with in B.0.2.

Information relating to the availability of products and services and issues relating to the delivery of products and services, should be used to inform the development-planning processes explained in B.2.1.

3. Show how the views of employers have had an impact on the training solutions on offer and how their views have influenced/changed strategy

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, changes have been suggested and there is an 'audit trail' through the quality improvement and/or the strategic planning processes, this reflects a responsive and high-quality operation.

The outcome of the above analysis will have produced evidence that sector employers have had opportunities to express their expectations of training solutions and the links to common business needs and business impact. The general link to strategic planning will be clear, if the information has been used to form your 'market view' (B.0.2) and has subsequently been used to inform your general strategic aims and approaches through 'strategy formulation' (B.0.1).

However, this may not have provided specific examples of strategic or operational changes, as a direct result of employer views. Consider the statement below:

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).

Identifying real examples of this would significantly enhance your Part B application. They could be included here or in the 'strategic review' section of B.0.1, but clear links should be made to prove the effectiveness of the strategic planning and quality improvement processes.

Completing the application – B.1.2

The narrative in this section will need to explain the effectiveness of the processes that your process provision uses to understand appropriate stakeholders, particularly when you deal with the sharing of good practice and with your understanding of the process sector's common business needs.

In the strategy section (B.0) you should have shown that you engage with appropriate stakeholders, that they have the opportunity to influence the formation of your strategy and that you communicate with them about strategic performance. For clarity, you may have chosen to illustrate the extent of stakeholder contact with the aid of a diagram.

In this section you should explain how you systematically use your contact with stakeholders to ensure you have a current and robust understanding of the sector's common business needs:

- Who are you in contact with?

- How often?

- How do you use the opportunities to gather information?

- What form does the information take?

- How is it analysed?

- Why analyse it?. . . and so on

You should also be able to demonstrate a proactive approach to the sharing of good sectoral practice:

- How is this planned?

- What dissemination processes are used?

- Who is involved?

- What processes are used to consider the information captured from partners?

- Who is responsible? and so on

The outcome of the above analysis will have produced evidence 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. Further useful information should also be available from 'best practice' exchanges.

Once again, demonstrate the systematic nature of your management processes by clarifying the following links:

- As with the previous section, the link to strategic planning will be clear, if the information has been used to inform the 'market view' (B.0.2) and this has subsequently been used to inform the general strategic aims and approaches through 'strategy formulation' (B.0.1)

- Stakeholder consultation conclusions will significantly enhance the rationale for the development plan for the deployment of products and services (B.2.1)

- Actual examples of how stakeholder consultation conclusions or best practice information have influenced development planning (B.2.1) and how subsequent delivery has been well received by customers (through feedback in B.1.1) is another important 'quality improvement' opportunity

Section B.2 – Deploy

Completing the application – B.2.1

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.

Perhaps your product development processes have historically been relatively informal, based on your belief that you understand the nature of your sector and your continued interaction with employers - an approach which may have been very effective. However, the Training Quality Standard requires you to show evidence of the quality and effectiveness of your management processes.

For the above reason, the evidence for this section could be presented more effectively, if it focused on a **development plan** for your process provision. However, you should be clear that whilst a development plan can indicate the extent of management's ambition to improve the products and services on offer, it may not show:

- the rationale that predetermined its creation

- the processes in place for reviewing development progress

- the processes in place for evaluating the impact of the new products and services

This will now be considered in more detail.

The development plan

Rationale

You should explain the consultation, research and internal decision-making processes that led to the creation of your development plan. The original aim or approach that initiated the creation of a development plan should be strategic (B.0.1) and there should be a link back to that aim or approach.

There should be multiple sources of evidence that support a sound rationale from the content of your Part B application and they should be referred to in your explanation.

For example, there will be research information from sources including sector-based guidance from documents such as the Sector Qualification Strategy and Sector Skills Agreement (B.0.1). You should refer to the Part B guidance provided by Cogent. Also use national, regional and local labour market intelligence from the 'market analysis' process (B.0.2).

Additionally, consultation outcomes from employers (B.1.1) and stakeholder organisations (B.1.2) will show that your plan is designed to develop products and services to meet employers' needs and sector expectations.

It will also be very important to consider the implications of your development objectives of your existing resources (B.2.3). It makes sense to incorporate resource development targets and related staff-development targets (B.2.2) into the development plan, to demonstrate a cohesive approach to the overall process.

Finally, consideration of the results of evaluation impact studies of the previous development plan, compared with the targets in the new plan, could also demonstrate quality improvement in action.

- What is the process that uses the above information in the production of the development plan?

- Who is responsible for the production of this plan?

- How often do you plan?

Progress review

You should show that you are proactive in achieving the targets in the development plan and that you regularly review progress towards delivering them. Minutes of section or management meetings, in which progress is specifically discussed, could be used as evidence and actions taken to boost underperformance formally recorded.

A relatively simple spreadsheet, listing targets, review dates and outcomes, action taken, etc, would be an effective way of providing evidence of a proactive approach.

Evaluating the impact of new products and services

You should be able to show that you take a close interest in monitoring the impact of new products and services. This should include a planned approach to evaluation, especially of business impact/improvement and specifically include feedback from delivery staff, employers and employer delegates.

How are you going to do this? When? Who is responsible?

Finally, you should show that the results of the evaluation are used constructively and effectively, to inform future 'strategy formulation' (B.0.1) and 'development planning' (B.2.1) processes.

Examples of how successes or failures in this area have tangibly influenced strategy or development planning would significantly enhance your Part B application.

Completing the application – B.2.2

The narrative in this section 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 that 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.

A good starting point would be to explain the general way in which a training solution is delivered to an employer from the point of first contact, right through to the post-delivery evaluation.

You will have explained your procedure for dealing with employer enquiries in the Part A application and reference could be made to this. Your explanation should begin from the point at which the enquiry reaches the sector area.

> *How do you respond to this interest? Who responds? When? What processes are used to establish the needs of the employer (e.g. TNA, ONA, etc)? How do these take account of the business needs of the company? Who is responsible for establishing these needs? If business development staff and technical delivery staff are involved at this point, what integrated working practices are established? If training solutions are agreed, do business development staff continue to be involved throughout the delivery phase, or is this left to technical staff? How is the impact of the training solution evaluated? Who is responsible for the evaluation?*

The explanation will put into context appropriate skills and knowledge for those involved in different aspects of the process. It would be inappropriate to include a 'list' of possible qualifications here, but these should be predetermined for each role in the process and evidence of compliance with these should be provided.

In addition to appropriate skills and knowledge for all staff involved in the delivery of existing products and services, there should be robust evidence of staff development. It would make sense if this formed part of the development plan (B.2.1), because the development and delivery of new or modified products and services will be adversely affected by staff, who do not have the expertise to engage with them. This should also be linked clearly to the deployment of up-to-date resources (B.2.3).

Furthermore, you should leave no doubt about your 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.

Finally, you should have evidence that staff arranging and delivering training solutions are respected by employers (through positive feedback reports, affidavits, etc).

Completing the application – B.2.3

The narrative in this section will need to show that **resources used to arrange and deliver products and services meet sector expectations.**

You should have shown that you have credible products and services (B.2.1) and expert staff (B.2.2). Now you need to show that your non-human resources meet modern industry needs.

Physical resources include your buildings, equipment and teaching/learning materials, but may also include the resources of employers you work with, if delivery takes place in-company.

Just as you may have decided to start with your existing products and services in section B.2.1 and explained how these were formally and systematically designed to meet employer needs, you would need to explain the same about your existing resources, if you choose to do the same here. You will also need to show how you systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the

resources in action and that you are continuously striving to improve resources in support of the improvements to your products and services.

You may feel that you have not been able to show evidence of high-quality and effective management processes for resource development and deployment. If so, you should consider the following.

A comprehensive development planning process (B.2.1) will have considered the resource implications that are attached to the development plan objectives. It will have assessed existing resources against industry expectations, considered employer feedback on resource quality and evaluated the options for resource improvements. The process will have also demonstrated that you have taken account of sector research and that you have consulted with employers and stakeholders.

With the development planning and quality improvement documentation for reference, you can show that you have existing resources that have been proven to meet current sector expectations. You can also show that you have systematic processes in place that ensure your resources continue to improve in line with changing sector expectations.

Once again, you should refer to the Part B guidance provided by Cogent to assist you.

Section B.3 – Perform

Completing the application – B.3.0

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.

There is likely to be a tendency here to simply list results for the training courses recently delivered in process. However, while data that provides evidence of improving results or sustained good performance is important, it should be presented as a continuation of the story of the provision; effectively a culmination of all the hard work of planning and delivering to the employer audience.

The guidance is also 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.

Previously applicants have struggled to understand the distinction between parts B.3.0 and B.3.1. For B.3.0 you need to display all those results that relate to your sector performance objectives and for B.3.1. you need to analyse and evaluate what impact your strategy (B.0), deployment (B.2) and results (B.3.0) have had on the sector.

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 of financial data (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. You should also include issues that were encountered on the journey to achievement and other relevant features, such as trends.

Finally, the Training Quality Standard is not about 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.

Completing the application – B.3.1

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

You need to show 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.

If your original strategy was properly informed (refer to 'strategy formulation' in B.0.1), it will have included specific workforce development priorities or targets, published by Cogent, in documents such as the Sector Qualification Strategy and Sector Skills Agreement. Evidence of your successes in relation to these, will make an invaluable contribution to your sector credibility and sector impact.

5.7. Reviewing your application

Having completed the application using the guidance above, now proceed to review it and 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.

Before reading the application the principal reviewer should become familiar with:

- the Sector Skills Agreement for Cogent

- the sector skills council's 'footprint'

- the sector qualifications strategy

- the Training Quality Standard

- the assessment guidance

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 your sector?

Reviewing B.2

- After reading B.2 are you clear about how your products and services meet sector expectations? (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 your sector?

Section 6:   Readiness for assessment

6.1.   Overview

Having worked through Section 5 of this guide and reviewed and revised your application as appropriate, it is now time for you to consider if you are ready to submit your application. The checklist in this section will help you to arrive at your decision

6.2.   About the checklist

The application writing team should use the checklist which follows in conjunction with the information about preparing for assessment to be found on the Training Quality Standard website: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

Ask each member of your application writing team to complete the checklist.

Compare notes between team members and then decide what to do next.

Remember your project manager will decide at which point your application is ready to be submitted to the assessment body.

6.3.   The Readiness Checklist

The questions here will 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 Training Quality Standard 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[1] to employers for:			Basic eligibility
a) Over 12 months?	Yes ☐	No ☐	
b) Over 3 years?	Yes ☐	No ☐	

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[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, as well as bespoke programmes, specifically designed 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 measuring the business impact.

Readiness checklist	Part B application reference
2. Do you have a formal 'employer-focused' strategy, specifically for your 'area of operation' (sector)? Yes ☐ No ☐	B.0.1 B.0.3
3. Do you regularly and formally consult your employers regarding the training solutions you offer? Yes ☐ No ☐	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 ☐ No ☐ b) Inform your development planning? Yes ☐ No ☐	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 ☐ No ☐	B.2.1
6. Do you have evidence that you are constantly trying to professionally improve/update employer-facing staff? Yes ☐ No ☐	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 ☐ No ☐	B.2.3
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 ☐ No ☐	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 ☐ No ☐	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 ☐ No ☐	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 ☐ No ☐	B.1.1 B.1.2
12. Do sector staff who negotiate with employers over training solutions, work closely with business development colleagues? Yes ☐ No ☐	B.2.2

Readiness checklist	Part B application reference
13. Do you have established processes for determining the training needs of an employer that take into account the impact on their business? Yes ☐　　　No ☐	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 ☐　　　No ☐	B.2.1 B.2.2
15. Do you set 'SMART' strategic performance objectives for your sector employer activities?　　　Yes ☐　　　No ☐	B.0.3
16. Do you systematically review performance against these objectives? Yes ☐　　　No ☐	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 ☐　　　No ☐	B.3.1
18. Can you show clear links between the results of your sector performance reviews and your Quality Improvement System?　Yes ☐　　　No ☐	B.0.3 B.3.1
19. Do you have evidence of improving results or sustained good performance against your performance objectives?　Yes ☐　　　No ☐	B.3.0 B.3.1
20. Do you have evidence of improving results or sustained good performance against national sector benchmarks?　Yes ☐　　　No ☐	B.3.0 B.3.1

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.

   Next Steps: You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this document, which have 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.

Next Steps: You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this document, which have 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.

    Next Steps: You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this document, which have 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.

    Next Steps: You should refer to the Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework and to the earlier sections of this document, which have 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 document. This is because Training Quality Standard Part B requires evidence that established processes are working effectively and this will be more challenging for newer provision.

Section 7:   Next Steps

7.1.   Overview

Working through this guide will help you to prepare your organisation for Training Quality Standard assessment. However, the guide is also a valuable quality development tool. The activities you have completed as you have worked through the different sections will also help you in the context of your involvement with the Process and Nuclear academies and with your work with reference to the Framework for Excellence.

7.2.   Systems and processes

As a result of your work with Section 3, you have now produced a strategy to support your work with employers in your sector.

In order to support your involvement with the Process and Nuclear academies, you should now confirm that as part of the process of creating your strategy, you have also created and implemented systems and processes that will help you to:

- review your strategy on a regular basis (you will need to decide the timescales)

- set and review your strategic aims and objectives

- undertake appropriate market research (you will need to define 'appropriate' in the context of your business)

- demonstrate that you are meeting the needs and expectations of employers in the sector and of the Process and Nuclear sector as a whole. You will need to refer to Cogent, to help you to demonstrate that your work with the sector as a whole, meets needs and expectations.

Take some time to confirm that you have a robust approach to supporting your employers, employer groups and their employees. To achieve this you may wish to consider

- how you evaluate the impact of your work

- how you measure satisfaction with your work

You may wish to specify a range of performance indicators to help you to **evaluate the impact** of what you do. To do this you will probably identify indicators that refer to:

- employers (e.g. those related to enhancements to employee productivity and to whole organisation profitability)

- employer groups (e.g. those that demonstrate how the sector is improving, becoming more efficient or more profitable)

- employees (e.g. those relating to learner achievement, retention, progression, etc)

When you think about **satisfaction**, and specifically about **employer satisfaction**, you may wish to consider doing more than reviewing opinions at the end of programmes, or in line with course and programme review requirements. You may decide to consider checking that, in the opinion of your employers, you are meeting needs and expectations throughout their period of involvement with you.

The Training Quality Standard draws attention to the arranging and the delivery of training solutions. You may wish to confirm that employers are satisfied with both aspects of the service they receive.

You may also wish to check that they are satisfied with delivery and content. Again, these are aspects of the training solutions that are specifically raised in the detail of the Training Quality Standard.

With reference to **continuous improvement**, you may wish to demonstrate that your work with the Training Quality Standard is not a one-off activity.

Therefore, check that you are creating systems and processes that will help you to set up ways of working and to review, refine and update your work.

Contact Cogent about developments within the sector that may be of interest to you.

7.3.   Framework for Excellence

The Framework for Excellence and the Training Quality Standard are replacing existing quality marks used in the sector.

According to recently published guidance on the Framework:

> *"Providers who achieve the TQS will automatically be 'outstanding' across the whole 'responsiveness to employers' performance KPA, for the period for which it is awarded (usually 3 years).*
>
> *In a reciprocal arrangement, from summer 2010 any provider that is in scope for the 'responsiveness to employers' area might need to achieve a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' before they can apply for the TQS."*

See: Framework for Excellence: Putting the Framework into Practice (June 2008) published by the LSC: www.lsc.gov.uk

7.4.   Thinking about assessment and certification

You should remember that this document is not an assessment guide. It is a tool to help you to develop your abilities to meet the requirements of Part B (Process and Nuclear) of the Training Quality Standard and one that will help you to write your application for assessment.

It does not offer guidance on:

- how to apply for assessment

- the detail of the assessment process

- how assessments will be conducted

The organisation with responsibility for assessment should be approached with all queries about assessment and certification.

At the time of writing (December 2008) the most up-to-date information about the Training Quality Standard is to be found at: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

Or by contacting: info@trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

Or by telephoning: 0845 225 1310.

The most useful documents published to date are:

- Introducing the Training Quality Standard (June 2007)

- Frequently asked questions about the Training Quality Standard (June 2007)

- Assessment Guide and Evidence Framework (June 2007)

Information about how to obtain copies of these documents is available from: www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

The choice of time at which to apply for assessment against the Training Quality Standard rests with you. That decision will be influenced by the assessment outcomes that you are looking to achieve.

If you wish to benchmark your practice against the Training Quality Standard, knowing that you are unlikely to be ready for certification, you will use different criteria for determining the timing of your assessment from those used by providers, who believe they have completed their development journey and are ready to seek certification.

You will need to arrive at a decision about the timing of your organisation's assessment that will suit your particular circumstances and development objectives.

7.5.   Updates and improvements

The Training Quality Standard website and the documentation which supports providers working with the standard are updated regularly.

Refer to the website for the most up-to-date guidance, before beginning your work on your Training Quality Standard application.