

Asset Skills

www.assetskills.org

Property, facilities management, housing and cleaning sectors

Automotive Skills/Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI)

www.motor.org.uk

The retail motor industry

Cogent

www.cogent-ssc.com

Chemical & pharmaceutical, oil, gas, nuclear, petroleum and polymers

ConstructionSkills

www.cskills.org

Construction

Creative & Cultural Skills

www.ccskills.org.uk

Advertising, crafts, music, performing, heritage, design and arts sectors

Energy & Utility Skills

www.euskills.co.uk

Electricity, waste and utilities sectors

e-skills UK

www.e-skills.com

Information technology and telecoms sector and contact centres

Financial Services Skills Council

www.fssc.org.uk

Financial services, insurance and accounting

GoSkills

www.goskills.org

Passenger transport

Government Skills

www.government-skills.gov.uk

Central Government

Improve

www.improveltd.co.uk

Food and drink manufacturing and processing

Lantra

www.lantra.co.uk

Environmental and land-based sector

Lifelong Learning UK

www.lluk.org

Community learning, education, further education, higher education, libraries, work-based learning, training providers

People 1st

www.people1st.co.uk

Hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector

Proskills UK

www.proskills.co.uk

Building products, coatings, mineral processing, extractives, glass and print sectors

SEMTA

www.semta.org.uk

Science, engineering and manufacturing technologies sectors

SkillsActive

www.skillsactive.com

Sport and recreation, health and fitness, outdoors, playwork and caravanning industry

Skillfast-UK

www.skillfast-uk.org

Fashion and textiles

Skills for Care & Development

www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk

Social care, children, early years and young people's workforces in the UK

Skills for Health

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

UK health sector

Skills for Justice

www.skillsforjustice.com

Policing and law enforcement, youth justice, custodial care, community justice, courts service, prosecution services and forensic science

Skills for Logistics

www.skillsforlogistics.org

Freight logistics and wholesaling industry

Skillset

www.skillset.org

Broadcasting, photo imaging, audio visual and publishing sector

Skillsmart Retail Ltd

www.skillsmartretail.com

Retail sector

SummitSkills

www.summitskills.org.uk

Building services engineering sector

Empowering Employers – Building Employer Influence

Relicensing Sector Skills Councils



HM GOVERNMENT



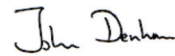
UK COMMISSION FOR
EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Education and training are changing, and striving to become far more responsive to your needs as an employer. As these changes take place, there are opportunities for you to benefit and to be heard.

Together, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UK Commission) and the UK Government, Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Government, and Welsh Assembly Government believe that a sectoral approach is the best way to reach employers. Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) enable you to have your collective voice heard. This document outlines the benefits of getting involved with the SSC for your sector and how you can do that.

SSCs are about to go through a rigorous process to determine whether their licence from the UK Government and the devolved administrations should be renewed. As SSCs represent employers, your views are being sought on how they are performing. This is important because the UK Government and the devolved administrations are giving SSCs increasing levels of influence over skills policy, qualification reform and the way in which learning provision is delivered.

Ministerial Endorsement



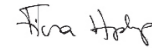
John Denham
Secretary of State for Innovation,
Universities and Skills



John Hutton
Secretary of State for Business,
Enterprise and Regulatory Reform



James Purnell
Secretary of State for Work
and Pensions



Fiona Hyslop
Cabinet Secretary for Education and
Lifelong Learning, Scottish Government



Sir Reg Empey MLA
Minister for Employment and Learning,
Northern Ireland Assembly



Jane Hutt
Minister for Children, Education and
Lifelong Learning, Welsh Assembly
Government

As an employer, you recognise that developing your workforce and making best use of their skills can increase your productivity and competitiveness. Enhancing skills to help unemployed people find work will also create a wider pool of talent to help you recruit to your workforce. We recognise that our support and co-operation will help you to do this. We are committed to having a skills system which is responsive to your needs. Your influence and leadership can help make sure that the right supply of training is available to meet your demand for skills.

To help us to support you, we need to know what skills issues you face. We think that the best way to achieve this is through the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for your industry. SSCs are led by employers and have the expertise to offer you and businesses of all sizes the opportunity to work collectively to identify the skills you need now and into the future.

Over the coming months, the new UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UK Commission) will carry out an assessment of SSCs, and those that clearly demonstrate their effectiveness and show they have the potential to move forward will be licensed to continue operating beyond 2009.

We are asking for your help and support in two ways. If you are already working with your SSC, please let the UK Commission know what your experience so far has been like. And if you have not yet been contacted by your SSC, then do give them a call and make your voice heard. We want to know what you have to say.

A message from Sir Mike Rake

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UK Commission) aims to raise UK prosperity and opportunity by improving employment and skills. Our ambition is that the UK will become a world-class leader in productivity, in employment, in securing a fair and inclusive society. Our aim is to secure a world class profile on skills and an 80% employment rate by 2020.

We know that 75% of the 2020 workforce is already employed. We know that five million people in the UK have problems with literacy and a startling seven million are not fully numerate. Without real change we risk up to six million people being left behind as we strive to compete in an increasingly globalised world. The social and economic consequences of failing to address this issue are not difficult to see. We need to act now rather than take the risk that this analysis might be wrong.

The UK Commission will be putting direct and independent advice to Ministers with a specific focus on how we can simplify the skills environment and make it clearer for users. The Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are critical to achieving these objectives. They are the key link between employers in each part of the economy and the education and training system. Through their research on employers' needs, they provide vital intelligence to help ensure that learning provision and qualifications meet the evolving needs of business and of a dynamic labour market.

The relicensing of SSCs is one of the top priorities for the UK Commission in our first year of operation. We will set high standards for all SSCs and will expect continuous improvement in their performance year on year. I have asked Charlie Mayfield, Chair of the John Lewis Partnership, to lead this important work on relicensing and on helping SSCs to build the high performance workforce needed to secure the UK's position in a fiercely competitive global economy.



Sir Mike Rake
Chairman, UK Commission



About Sector Skills Councils

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are independent, employer-led, UK-wide organisations designed to build a skills system that is driven by employer demand. There are currently 25 SSCs covering over 90% of the economy and they all work towards the following four key goals:

- reduced skills gaps and shortages
- improved productivity, business and public service performance
- increased opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce
- improved learning supply through National Occupational Standards, apprenticeships, and further and higher education.

SSCs have been established and developed during the last five years and in that time they have built strong working relationships with the UK Government and the devolved administrations, training providers, bodies which fund training and other important skills stakeholders. They have played a leading role on a range of skills issues, including:

- working with employers to identify future skills needs
- developing skills and training solutions
- setting occupational standards
- influencing and shaping the future development of qualifications
- designing apprenticeship frameworks
- encouraging greater investment in training
- providing labour market information that assists in long-term business planning.

SSCs have done a great deal of work on behalf of employers, but there are many challenges which lie ahead. We need to be sure that the SSCs are up to that challenge, and that is why the new UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UK Commission) will assess the performance of SSCs over the coming months. While there is no intention of embarking on a wholesale re-structuring of the network, the Commission will want to identify any potential for collaboration or consolidation across the network of SSCs, where this would help simplify the skills environment and make it clearer for employers.

Reaping the rewards – How SSCs support your skill needs

- **Qualifications and training relevant to your needs** – A skills system that is influenced by you can produce a more appropriately skilled workforce. This means having a skills system which provides the training you require when it is required, along with qualifications that better reflect skills in the workplace.
- **Helping your workforce develop their skills** – An effective workforce needs people with a range of technical, vocational and professional skills. A responsive skills system should help you create a long term, flexible workforce with fewer difficulties recruiting and retaining staff with the skills you require.
- **Maximising skills investment** – The right skills system should encourage and support you to make a greater investment in training. With your strong and effective leadership, employees will increasingly demand the opportunity to develop new skills and thereby help to fill skills gaps.
- **Building contacts** – SSCs should be seen as a first port of call for employers wishing to find out about the latest innovations in skills. Working with other skills bodies, SSCs can point employers of all sizes towards training that meets their business needs.
- **Giving you information relevant to your business needs** – SSCs can offer you access to better labour market information, which will help you reduce the likelihood of skills shortages and skills gaps in your business. Armed with accurate intelligence about employment and skills trends in your sector, you can face the business challenges ahead with greater confidence and play a part in the national and global economy.
- **Ensuring the skills system is responsive to your needs as employers** – Regardless of the size of your company, your voice as an employer is vital in ensuring that SSCs can influence the skills system in the right way and make it more responsive to your needs. We want to make sure that your voice is not only heard by training providers, but by the UK Government and the devolved administrations and the different organisations that fund and support the skills system. SSCs are UK-wide bodies, so they are ideally placed to reflect any national, and /or regional differences which may affect how your company operates. And we want you to work with the SSC for your sector to influence skills at all levels, from basic skills such as literacy and numeracy to graduate and higher level qualifications offered in higher education.



How to Have Your Say

Contacting your SSC – To ensure a more responsive skills system SSCs need to know the issues you face and to ensure that skills solutions meet your needs. Why don't you find out more about the SSC for your sector? The industries and skill areas they currently cover and their web site addresses can be found on the back page of this document.

Your views on how employers should exert their influence – We need to consider how SSCs can do more, with your support, to exert influence on the UK Government and the devolved administrations, stakeholders and the vast range of education and training providers on which you depend.

We want to know:

- How do you think employers in your sector should be able to influence the skills system in the UK?

Your views on how SSCs are performing – The most fundamental test of each SSC will be whether it carries the confidence and support of its industry.

We want to know:

- What do you think your SSC is currently doing well, and what could they do better?
- In the future, would you like to see your SSC (either collaboratively or individually) developing actions in areas which they are not currently doing? What are these?

You can post your views to the contact address below or online at www.ukces.org.uk/relicensing. Find out more information by visiting the UK Commission website at www.ukces.org.uk

Simon Perryman
Director of SSC Performance and Relicensing,
UK Commission for Employment and Skills,
3 Callflex Business Park,
Golden Smithies Lane,
Wath upon Dearne,
S63 7ER

The assessment process will be fully transparent so any comments you make will be made available to the SSC concerned for their consideration.



Next Steps

Relicensing Assessment Framework

The relicensing process will include a rigorous assessment of each SSC by independent third party assessors. The independent assessor will be looking for evidence that the SSC:

- has the confidence, approval and support of sector employers
- provides a clear, credible and coherent voice for employers on the skills and qualifications requirements of the sector
- has set ambitious and realistic targets
- is well led and managed
- can demonstrate that it has had a positive and constructive impact on skills within its sector
- can demonstrate how their sector has developed and changed since the original licence was granted and that it represents a significant sector of the economy.

Relicensing Process and Timescales

There are four steps in the relicensing process.

1. Every SSC will advise the UK Commission by 15th August 2008 when they intend to submit a business case for a new licence and also outline what they have each achieved to date.
2. SSCs can submit their Business Case for relicensing between September 2008 and June 2009.
3. An independent assessor will then review the business case, gather evidence on the SSC's performance and produce a report for the UK Commission on its findings.
4. The Commissioners will then review the assessors report and make a recommendation to the UK Government and the devolved administrations on whether a new licence should be awarded

A more detailed Prospectus setting out the detailed criteria and process for SSC assessment is also available. This is available on the UK Commission website at www.ukces.org.uk/relicensing.

Endorsements

The following organisations have been consulted in producing this document and are working to ensure that the skills system is better able to understand and meet the needs of employers and the workforce.

