HIGHER LEVEL SKILLS
BUSINESS SCENARIOS
HOW TO BROKER APPROPRIATE PROVISION

The following discussion activity is devised to draw out current knowledge of higher level skills and to enable the sharing of good practice. The scenarios are simplified cases based on real employers (all names have been changed).

Discuss and make notes on the following (either short or long term priorities):

1. The possible higher level skills training needs and the type of provision that the employer may require (i.e. delivery, assessment, level).

2. Solutions you may propose to the employer, where you would access information or questions you may ask the employer.

3. Issues that the employer may raise.
Scenario One: Utilitech

Company background: Utilitech is a world class operator of utility infrastructure. It manages and operates the electricity distribution, water and waste water networks in one region of England.

Situation: The organisation has been involved in a number of general and sector specific technical qualifications in the past but has recently identified the need for a water industry specific, higher level, staff development programme. Many employees joined the company as school leavers and over time have completed training to a Level 3 qualification. When a skills audit was carried out it was highlighted that there was now a need to develop their specialist technical knowledge, alongside general leadership and management skills to give them the potential to fulfil senior positions in the future.

Utilitech had previously tried to access general management qualifications to fulfil this need but employees did not feel they were relevant to the sector specific higher level skills required by this increasingly technical industry. It was necessary for any training solution offered to cover the subject areas of water, wastewater and gas treatment and network processes.

The organisation also required a training solution that met both their time constraints and the pressures of commercial enterprise. The length of the programme and delivery pattern needed to correspond with the organisations financial cycle and employees work commitments.

The company had a long standing working relationship with their local university and college who both had experience of working with the industry.

Based on a case study provided by the University of Central Lancashire.
Scenario Two: Brown & Anderson Associates

**Company background:** Based in Newcastle, Brown & Anderson Associates is a communications / marketing agency specialising in advertising, design and public relations. The company employs 15 members of staff and has recently celebrated 25 years in business.

**Situation:** The organisation has recently made the decision to expand their services to include web design. Website design and creation is currently outsourced to another supplier and bringing it in-house will be cost effective and allow more control over solutions offered to clients.

The company wishes to train some of the design team in general website design and up skill one employee to become a Website Designer.

The company’s strategy involves the need for employees to be trained in stages to minimise the effect on the organisation as a whole. The company’s main concern is that whilst employees are training and developing skills the core business operations will be neglected.

Based on a case study provided by Newcastle College.
Scenario Three: City Council

Company background: A City Council who have recently developed a new post of “Physical Activity Coordinator” were struggling to find appropriate candidates.

Situation: The newly developed post of Physical Activity Coordinator was attracting applications from a variety of candidates who broadly matched the following types:

- Degree educated individuals who had the required level of academic knowledge but not the vocational qualifications or soft skills such as communication or working with others
- Lower level educated individuals with the vocational skills but lacking the necessary academic background to carry out the role

The Council needed individuals educated to at least Level 5 with the appropriate soft skills such as communication and working with the general public to effectively carry out the role of Physical Activity Coordinator.

The Council wanted to be heavily involved in developing a suitable qualification to suit their needs and to include relevant on the job training to ensure individuals were ready for employment at the end of the course.

Based on a case study provided by Newcastle University.
Scenario Four: Call to Call Communications

Company background: Call to Call Communications is a multinational company operating in a highly competitive market providing broadband internet, mobile and fixed telecommunications.

Situation: Due to the highly competitive market, the organisation was seeking ways to develop the skills and behaviours of some of their sales and account managers in order to both improve performance and increase sales revenue. Employees were able to access a range of internal training courses but internal research had shown that the courses were predominately product driven and often with short term benefits.

The training department carried out an internal assessment of roles and competencies required and it was found that there was a need for a programme of study that instilled life-long learning skills and gave opportunities for continuous professional development. The main areas for development included:

- Selling skills
- Consultative selling skills
- Business acumen
- Management skills
- Customer relationship management
- Personal development planning
- Team working
- Financial knowledge
- Strategic thinking
- Strategic planning

The programme was to be aimed at Account Managers, many of which did not have qualifications above GCSE or A Levels but had demonstrated commitment and capability within the role.

Call to Call Communications approached an employer gateway of a number of local universities in order to find a training solution.

Based on a case study provided by the University of Sunderland Business School.