Action For Business Colleges

The Prospectus and Service Standards
Action for Business Colleges

The Workforce Skills Programme (WSP) is a partnership between SEEDA and the 6 South East LSCs. The Action for Business Colleges Standard was commissioned by the Workforce Skills Programme and is one of the 5 key themes of the Programme. The Programme is funded by SEEDA and the LSC, with support from DfES.

The Service Standards were developed in partnership with SEEDA, the 6 LSCs and the Business Links within the South East and in consultation with Further Education Colleges. It is based on a framework and standard developed by Sam White on behalf of these organisations.

Quality South East (QSE)

QSE have been awarded the contract to manage and implement the Action for Business Colleges Accreditation process. They are planning workshops for colleges and Local LSCs and will provide the Assessor support for the Self-Assessment and Development Planning process.

QSE is one of 12 independent Regional Quality Centres in the UK, and was set up in 2001 to provide assessment & accreditation services for the South East region for Investors in People and other quality standards such as LEXCEL and Work Life Balance.

Further Information

All queries relating to the contents and interpretation of the Prospectus should be directed to:

Sam White
Tel: 01344 390491
sam.white@bracknell.ac.uk

All questions relating to the funding of Self-Assessment and Development Planning should be directed to the Action for Business Colleges lead at your Local LSC. Contact names are in Appendix 3.

This document can be downloaded from your Local LSC website from November 2003.

© LSC September 2003
(Workforce Skills Programme, September 2003)

Published by the Learning and Skills Council. Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial educational or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.
Foreword

Since the introduction of the Learning and Skills Council in April 2001, the Further Education Sector has undergone considerable change. One of the most fundamental changes in the adult learning arena has been to bring together the providers of education and training with the end users of training – the individual and the employer - in a much more understanding and strategic way.

The publication of the 21st Century Skills Strategy in July 2003 alongside the new funding relationships with the Further Education sector has enabled the development of creative, innovative and flexible approaches to skills development and training that puts the employer first. The development of the South East Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) and the strong relationship between the South East RDA (SEEDA) and the six South East Learning and Skills Councils, has culminated in the creation of the South East Workforce Skills Programme (WSP). The WSP has at its heart the desire to empower the Further Education sector to better respond to the economic challenges and opportunities in the South East.

One major development of the WSP is the Action for Business Colleges Standard. This Standard has been developed after a wide consultation process involving employers, employer representative groups (especially Business Links), Sector Skills Councils, SEEDA, the Local LSCs, Colleges and AOSEC. The Accreditation process – achieving the Standard itself – may require changes in culture and probably in College structures. However, we see Self-Assessment and Development Planning as valuable opportunities in themselves.

The Steering Group have sought to ensure that the Standard will be a credible mechanism to accredit genuine change in the responsiveness of colleges to the workforce needs of employers. The Standard recognizes the great strides that the sector has made in this area and colleges that receive Action for Business College status will be offering flexible, tailored and cost-effective training to South East employers in a way that benefits the employer, the South East economy and learners.

We would invite you to read this Prospectus and consider whether you would like your College to embark on the initial Self-Assessment part of the process in partnership with your Local LSC and QSE.

Best wishes,

Chris Cherry
Director, WSP

Nick Wilson
Executive Director, Surrey LSC
Chair, WSP Steering Group
ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES

Prospectus and Service Standards

Contents

Section 1

The Action For Business Colleges Programme

Introduction 6

1 Action For Business Colleges 7

1.i The Vision for Action For Business Colleges 7

1.ii The Service Standards for Action For Business Colleges 7-8

1.iii The Action for Business College Selection and Assessment Process 8

1.iv The Action for Business Funding Plan 9-10

1.v The timescale for implementation of Action for Business 10

1.vi Further Information 10

Section 2

The Action for Business Accreditation Service Standards

2. The Action for Business Accreditation Service Standards 11

2.i The Purpose 11

2.ii The Service Standards Structure 11

2.iii The Benefits 11-12

2.iv The Process 12-13

2.v Links to other Quality Assurance Systems 13

2.vi Assessment 13

2.vii The Action for Business Quality/Kitemark 13

2.viii Additional Support 13
## Section 3

### The Action for Business College Standards and the Application Pack

1. **Action For Business Colleges Service Standards Unit Summary**
   - **Section 1 (Standards 1-3)**
     - **Strategic Planning**
       - Standard 1 Strategic Planning
       - Standard 2 Planning Services for Employers
       - Standard 3 Developing a Long Term Strategy
   - **Section 2 (Standards 4-8)**
     - **College Management Systems**
       - Standard 4 Marketing
       - Standard 5 Responsiveness
       - Standard 6 Resources
       - Standard 7 Staffing
       - Standard 8 Finance and Costing
   - **Section 3 (Standards 9-10)**
     - **Delivering Action for Business**
       - Standard 9 Managing Relations with Employers
       - Standard 10 Delivering Products and Services to Employers
   - **Section 4 (Standards 11-12)**
     - **Continuous Improvements**
       - Standard 11 Delivering a Quality and Responsive Service to Employers
       - Standard 12 Developing Effective Professional Networks and Partnerships

   - **Appendix 1**
     - Guidance on Assessment Process
   - **Appendix 2**
     - The South East Workforce Skills Programme - Further Information
   - **Appendix 3**
     - LSC Action for Business Colleges Lead Contacts and EDs Addresses
   - **Appendix 4**
     - Form 1: Action For Business Colleges – Self-Assessment
   - **Appendix 5**
     - Form 2: Action For Business Colleges – Development Plan Grant
   - **Appendix 6**
     - Form 3: Action For Business Colleges – Request for Assessment
   - **Appendix 7**
     - Form 4: Action For Business Colleges – Implementation of Business Plan
   - **Appendix 8**
     - Guidance on the Business Plan Funding
   - **Appendix 9**
     - Action for Business Colleges Funding Flowchart
     - Action for Business Colleges Business Plan Funding Flowchart
Section 1 – The Action For Business Colleges Programme

Introduction

This document sets out the rationale for the development of a network of Action For Business Colleges across the South East region. This flagship development is supported by the South East region’s six Local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), initially as part of the WSP. This Prospectus sets out the plans for the first two years of this development.

The Action for Business College network will seek to deliver:

- Closer working relationships between Colleges and local employers of all kinds
- Improved capacity of Colleges to identify and meet the needs of employers large and small
- Improved understanding by Colleges of their local employer base
- Improved ability of Colleges to accurately refer employers when they are unable to meet their requirements
- Support for Colleges to develop sustainable employer related training activities
- Colleges’ provision and services valued highly by the business community at its agents

The network will play a key role in achieving the vision of the WSP which aims to transform the way in which Colleges and other providers are able to support individuals, employers and communities to become more productive, economically successful and socially inclusive.

The Programme will provide catalyst funding for a network of Colleges to be established as the premiere centres for delivering services for the business community, either with a sector focus or a local or regional dimension, including the voluntary and community sectors, both as employers and a sector in its own right. Colleges will be invited to:

- Review their operations and associated approaches to meeting the needs of employers against the Action for Business Standards
- Produce Development Plans to meet these Standards
- Apply for Action for Business College status
- Apply for additional funding to implement a Business Plan to increase capacity to meet the needs of employers

A support network for Action for Business Colleges will be developed, facilitating the dissemination of best practice across the Network and to other Colleges in the region. There will also be a region-wide marketing campaign, promoting and raising the profile of the Action for Business Standard to employers through business support organisations and representative bodies.

This document sets out implementation arrangements; opportunities for support and capacity development; provides an overview of the Action for Business methodology and approach, and sets out the Service Standards for the Action for Business Colleges.
1 Action For Business Colleges

1.i The Vision for Action For Business Colleges

It is a key objective of the WSP that we must be able to demonstrate improvements in the ways in which Colleges are able to support individuals, employers and communities to become more productive, economically successful, and socially inclusive.

Colleges that are successful in gaining Accreditation will be able to demonstrate close working relationships with the community they serve. They may already have Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status. Action For Business Colleges will be able to secure and demonstrate:

- Improved capacity to identify and meet the needs of employers
- Increased understanding of their local employer base
- Improved supply of training in skills shortage areas, providing flexible training solutions to meet the needs of adults and employers
- Evidence of the trialing of new provision designed to meet the needs of employers, championing new and flexible delivery methods in order to meet employer training needs
- Effective engagement in and contribution to the development of a local/regional network to broker training solutions for employers
- Evidence of good management of relations with employers, in particular effective referral processes and follow up to enquiries, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction.
- A commitment within the College to continue to develop and modify provision to meet the needs of employers and to provide a seamless integration of employer related training activities within the College.
- Staff brokering training solutions designed to meet the needs of employers, and feeding back to the College on employer needs
- Acting as ambassadors to other Colleges across the region, disseminating and sharing good practice with other Action For Business Colleges and Colleges aspiring to meet Action for Business Standards
- A College-wide culture intent on further improving responsiveness to employers and perceiving engagement with the business community as integral to the purpose and future of the College
- Promotion of high standards and be valued highly by the business community and its agents.

1.ii The Service Standards for Action For Business Colleges

It is intended that the Service Standards for Action For Business Colleges will provide a set of criteria against which Colleges can assess their operation and the way in which they deliver services to employers.

The Service Standards may also be used as a tool to assist Colleges to put in place the services and to establish the processes and systems that are needed in order to
respond effectively and efficiently to enquiries from the business community and brokers of workforce development initiatives.

The development of Colleges through use of the Service Standards has many advantages. Through delivering agreed levels of service to the business community and being Accredited as an Action for Business College, Colleges will be recognised by employers and will benefit from access to and engagement in the local networks, the sharing of good practice with other providers and be involved in delivering a front line responsive advice and guidance service to employers that may lead to increased business for Colleges.

It is likely that some Colleges will already meet these Standards and these Colleges will be encouraged to apply for Accreditation in Phase 1.

For Colleges that do not meet the Service Standards, on first assessment, the exercise can be a tool against which they will be able to develop and improve their services for employers.

1.iii The Action for Business College Selection and Assessment Process

All Colleges (from October) are invited to undertake Self-Assessment and to prepare Development Plans in consultation with their Local LSC.

A two-phase Accreditation process is planned:

- **Phase 1 Accreditation - from October 2003** open to CoVEs and existing Colleges that are active in the training market and who already meet/are close to meeting the Standards.

- **Phase 2 Accreditation - from April 2004** applications will be open to Colleges that aspire to provide quality and responsive services to employers.

Local LSCs will work with their Colleges to identify Colleges appropriate for inclusion in Phase 1 or Phase 2.

Local LSCs will work with their Colleges to develop their response to the Service Standards and to help them plan for increased activity within their business community. The Local LSCs will support the Colleges throughout the Self-Assessment, Development Planning and Assessment stages.

There will be a recognised branding and kitemark awarded to approved centres, which are currently under development. Colleges will be provided with a certificate/plaque of approval and will be able to use the kitemark on letter heading and promotional materials. The launch of the kitemark and Phase 1 Colleges will take place in March 2004.

A system of remote Service Sampling, developed by QSE, will be adopted during and after the assessment process to inform the Colleges’ engagement with employers.
1.iv The Action for Business Funding Plan

Development Funding

• All Further Education Colleges are invited to complete Appendix 4 and forward to their Local LSC. Colleges completing Appendix 4 will be entitled to £15,000 development funding from the WSP to Self-Assess against the Standard.

• At the same time, the College should construct a Development Plan to work towards Assessment. Three days of fully funded consultant support is available to aid the Self-Assessment and Development Planning process. Appendix 5 should be used to apply for £15,000 funding to aid the implementation of the Development Plan.

• Colleges that feel they are ready for Assessment should seek the endorsement of their Local LSC. The process to book your Assessment with QSE is explained in Appendix 6.

• Colleges that meet the Standard after the Assessment process and Accreditation panel will be nominated for Action for Business College Status and be entitled to use the branding and kitemark.

• Colleges are then invited to put together a Business Plan and apply through their Local LSC for funding to support the implementation of that plan. Applications will be reviewed by the WSP and the South East Executive Directors to ensure a uniform approach to funding the FE development. Guidance is enclosed as Appendix 8.

• Support may be granted up to £300K over two years. Colleges will be expected to support other Colleges in their development process.

• A simple funding flowchart is enclosed as Appendix 9.

Colleges successful in achieving Action for Business Accreditation can potentially access further funding from the WSP and Local LSCs for activities such as:

• Investment – in staffing time for the development of new products and services, for capital items and for resources

• Growth – linked to target groups, support for courses that will lead to progression onto vocational courses, and for other provision that is vocationally focused

• Employer engagement – funding for fees, subsidies and grants for specific sectors

• Developing joint training ventures and other forms of partnership with other Colleges, providers and employers

• Brokerage – funding for the development of services and the time for staff to engage in developing and contributing to networks and funding for infrastructure costs, such as administration, mapping and networking of services (a separate plan detailing the brokerage model will be produced)

Appropriate solutions to raise responsiveness to, and engagement with the business community are likely to be as diverse as the Colleges and business communities they serve, and may well involve partnerships with other providers, including training providers in the private sector, industry networks and employers.
• All Colleges that complete the Assessment and Accreditation stages and are awarded Action for Business College status will be entitled to display the Action for Business College branding and kitemark. A launch of the Colleges and brand is scheduled for March 2004.

There will be a central evaluation of the Action for Business Programme and this process will include research into what works well and what practice could be transferred and shared on a local and sectoral basis.

Contracting

In order to minimise bureaucracy the Programme will utilise existing contracting processes and systems wherever possible.

Further guidance relating to the Action for Business Development Funding will be released in October 2003 to Local LSCs. Please contact your Local LSC for advice.

1.v The timescales for implementation of Action for Business Colleges
The proposed milestones for 2003/2004 for this aspect of the Programme are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate final Service Standards</td>
<td>October 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Phase of Colleges identified</td>
<td>October 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of regional communications and marketing strategy</td>
<td>October 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessments by Colleges and Development Plans agreed for first phase</td>
<td>From October 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops for Colleges on Assessment processes</td>
<td>From November 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Colleges achieve Standard</td>
<td>From January 04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second phase Colleges identified</td>
<td>March 04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.vi Further Information

If you have any questions about the funding element of this Prospectus, please contact your Local LSC Manager in the first instance. Local LSC addresses are included in Appendix 3. For information on the Prospectus and Service Standards, please contact Sam White (contact details on page 2).
Section 2 – The Action for Business Accreditation Service Standards

2.i The Purpose

The framework is a South East regional accreditation award for all Colleges delivering information, assessment and training services to employers on a local, regional, national or sector basis.

The Service Standards exist to assist Colleges to assess their services and to define the outcomes of a quality service for employers within the context and market place it operates. It uses an individual College-based approach to assess the quality of the business services, and focus upon the key aspects that are critical to the effective management and development of a responsive service to meet the skills needs of employers. The Accreditation process provides a framework for the assessment of systems, but more importantly outcomes, in relation to the Colleges’ ability to meet the workforce development needs of employers.

The Standard is relevant to all Colleges who deliver or aspire to deliver a range of services for employers and is also relevant to other education and training providers, trade unions and voluntary organisations operating within this field.

2.ii The Service Standards Structure

The Standards are split into 4 main sections, each relating to a different priority area:

Section 1, the Strategic Planning section (Standards 1 - 3) focuses on the way in which the College has planned for, and secured commitment and support for its existing or proposed services for employers.

Section 2, looks at College Management Systems (Standards 4 - 8) and examines the support structures that underpin the delivery of skills for employers.

Section 3, Delivering Action for Business (Standards 9 - 10) looks specifically at the services the College delivers, and the outcome evidence to demonstrate they correlate with employer needs.

Section 4 assesses commitment to Continuous Improvement (Standards 11 - 12) and considers the role the College plays in the wider learning and skills community in terms of networking and sharing good practice.

2.iii The Benefits

Colleges working towards the Accreditation may find a number of benefits to this process, which may include:

- Opportunity to review and enhance services, systems and outcomes, as a result of Self-Assessment against the Service Standards.

- Recognition and increased credibility amongst staff, with employers and associated agencies such as Business Link, Banks and other service providers.
• Increased volume of business and income (especially full cost) as a result of enhanced engagement with employers and brokers of business services and the reputational advantages this offers.

• Providing an aid for staff development, recognition and motivation in the workplace.

• Achieving a consistent standard of service delivery. The adoption of and Assessment process undertaken as part of the Accreditation process provides an increased awareness of quality and the importance of a consistent and responsive approach to dealing with employers for all staff involved in delivering front line services. The Standards can also act as a checklist in this context.

2.iv The Process

Once a College has decided to undertake this Assessment and work towards Accreditation as an Action for Business College, there are a number of stages to achievement of this award:

Step 1 Seek approval of Local LSC for grant to support this work. After initial discussions, the enclosed Form 1 (see Appendix 4) should be submitted to the local Executive Director for approval. Once confirmation and approval has been received, the College can undertake the Self-Assessment process and will receive a grant of £15K from your Local LSC to support this process. Each College will also be entitled to consultant support during this time. To apply for consultant support, please visit the home page of the Quality South East website at www.qse.org.uk where you will be guided through the simple application process.

Step 2 College reviews current practices and provides evidence to support the Self-Assessment. Your QSE consultant will advise you on appropriate evidence.

Step 3 Construct a Development Plan and review this with the Local LSC Office. A grant of £15K is available to assist the completion of the Development Plan.

Step 4 Decide in conjunction with the Local LSC whether to apply in Phase 1 or Phase 2 for Accreditation

Step 5 Submit the Development Plan to the Local LSC which should be endorsed by a senior College manager, normally the Director of Quality.

Step 6 To apply for external Assessment, please visit the home page of the Quality South East website at www.qse.org.uk where you will be guided through the simple application process.

Step 7 If agreed with the Local LSC, external Assessment and feedback undertaken. At this point Accreditation will either be awarded or further development points will be identified. Another visit by the Assessor will be required once further development has been undertaken.

Step 8 Once Accreditation has been awarded, key activities will need to be agreed and the Development Plan updated, to form a Business Plan for the College.
Step 9  12 months after Accreditation the Development / Business Plan must be updated and signed off by Local LSC officers. Future development activities and plans relating to the delivery of Action for Business Standards must be built into existing development and planning activities and/or continuous improvement processes. Local LSC officers will monitor this. Re-Assessment will take place after two years and re-accreditation guidance will be published subsequently.

2.v Links to other Quality Assurance Systems

The Action for Business Service Standards support and complements a number of quality and inspection systems including:

- Investors in People
- The ALI/OFSTED Common Inspection Framework
- The Sussex Colleges for Business Framework
- EFQM Excellence Model
- ISO 9000
- The Centres of Vocational Excellence Initiative

2.vi Assessment

To apply for Assessment, please visit the home page of the Quality South East website at www.qse.org.uk where you will be guided through the simple Action for Business Colleges application process.

Quality South East (QSE) is one of 12 independent Regional Quality Centres in the UK, and was set up in 2001 to provide assessment & accreditation services for the South East region for Investors in People and other quality standards such as LEXCEL and Work Life Balance. It is a company limited by guarantee, commercially run but with a ‘not for profit’ policy. Any surplus earned is reinvested to benefit the region’s Skills Strategy. QSE is responsible for the development, accreditation and registration of all Investors in People Advisers and Assessors in the South East region, as well as managing the Action for Business Colleges development, advisory and assessment team.

2.vii The Action for Business Quality/Kitemark

Once the College is Accredited it can use the Action for Business branding and kitemark on stationery, promotional materials and advertising. It will be officially recognised in the form of a certificate and plaque for public display.

The Action for Business Colleges Standard will be marketed to employers through the Business Link/Small Business Services and achievement of the award means enhanced recognition by employers that your College delivers a high quality and responsive service to meet their needs and that you are part of a network of Colleges who will be able to meet their training requirements.

2.viii Additional Support

Please use your Local LSC contact and QSE advisor to help in the first instance.
Section 3 - The Action for Business College Standards and the Application Pack

This section (Section 3) contains the Standards in more detail and provides an assessment plan format that should be used to complete the process.

3.1 The Action for Business College Service Standards Unit Summary

Section 1  Strategic Planning

Unit 1  Strategic Planning

1.1 College mission and corporate objectives
1.2 Strategic and Development Planning
1.3. Role of the Corporation
1.4. Accountability and reporting
1.5. Understanding of mission and corporate objectives by staff and contractors

Unit 2  Planning Services for Employers

2.1 Planning Process
2.2 Engaging Employers in the Planning Process
2.3 Use of Labour Market Intelligence
2.4 Research approach and capability
2.5 Workforce Development Needs Analysis
2.6 Contribution of staff and contractors to planning

Unit 3  Developing a long term strategy

3.1 Planning and establishing objectives and priorities
3.2 Investment Strategy
3.3 Establishing and monitoring targets
3.4 Assessment of risk
3.5 Understanding of long term strategy for meeting the needs of employers
Section 2 College Management Systems (Standards 4-8)

Unit 4 Marketing

4.1 Marketing plan
4.2 Pricing Policy
4.3 Publicity and Marketing activities
4.4 Marketing Resources and Investment
4.5 Review of marketing strategy

Unit 5 Responsiveness

5.1 Current product range
5.2 Employer participation
5.3 Planning and target setting

Unit 6 Resources

6.1 Accommodation and Equipment
6.2 Health and Safety
6.3 Capital Investment

Unit 7 Staffing

7.1 Management and organisational structure responsibility and accountability
7.2 Recruitment of staff
7.3 Development and Training of Staff
7.4 Staff Impact on Service Standards

Unit 8 Finance and Costing

8.1 Business planning process
8.2 Fees and Income Policy
8.3 Financial Management and Accounting System
8.4 Contract management
Section 3  Delivering Action for Business (Standards 9-10)

Unit 9  Managing relations with employers

9.1 Managing the employer journey
9.2 Helping employers to choose suitable products and services
9.3 Maintaining customer contact
9.4 Improving products and services for employers
9.5 Managing employer complaints

Unit 10  Delivering products and services to Employers

10.1 Delivery Methods
10.2 Information assessment and advice services
10.3 Accreditation services
10.4 Customised Programmes
10.5 Flexibility

Section 4  Continuous Improvement (Standards 11-12)

Unit 11  Delivering a Quality and Responsive service to Employers

11.1 Evaluation of services
11.2 Employer feedback
11.3 Customer satisfaction
11.4 Product/curriculum development process

Unit 12  Developing Effective Professional Networks and Partnerships

12.1 Sharing information and good practice
12.2 Operating within networks
THE ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES
SERVICE STANDARDS
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to confirm that they are making the necessary commitment to meet the workforce development needs of employers and that all staff and contractors delivering products and services to employers on behalf of Colleges understand the importance of this commitment.

What you need to do
To make sure that your College has made a clear and unequivocal commitment to meet the workforce development needs of employers you must demonstrate that your College’s mission and corporate objectives articulate your commitment.

You must make sure that your commitment is communicated to, and understood by, all your staff and by contractors delivering services to employers on your behalf. You must also make sure that staff and contractors are aware of what they must do to fulfil your College’s commitments to meet the workforce development needs of employers.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established a planning strategy and an internal communications strategy which advance your College’s objective of meeting the workforce development needs of employers.
**SECTION No:** 1  
**UNIT No:** 1  

**SECTION TITLE:** Strategic Planning and Management  
**UNIT TITLE:** Strategic Planning  

**UNIT DESCRIPTOR:** This unit establishes the high-level commitment and support within the College to meeting the workforce development needs of employers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 College Mission and Corporate Objectives</td>
<td>The direction of the College in relation to meeting the workforce development needs of employers is central to College policy and is endorsed through the College’s mission statement and corporate objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Strategic and Development Planning</td>
<td>Key strategic documents including the strategic plan, College Development Plan and the staff Development Plan reflect the commitment to meeting the workforce development needs of employers and clearly identify the College’s priorities in this area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Role of the Corporation</td>
<td>There is a commitment from the College corporation to support the strategy for meeting the workforce development needs of employers. Progress with the strategy is reviewed regularly at Corporation and at appropriate sub-group meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Accountability and Reporting</td>
<td>There is a clear organisation structure outlining how this area of work is to be managed. Managerial responsibility for meeting the workforce development needs of employers is located in the senior management team. There are clear lines of accountability and there is regular reporting and updating of staff and governors in relation to this area of work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Understanding of mission and corporate objectives by staff and contractors</td>
<td>There is a clearly defined approach to communications which ensures that College staff and contractors delivering products and services to employers of behalf of the College understand the College’s commitment to meet the workforce development needs of employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to gather information about the workforce development needs of employers in a systematic way and to use such information to plan Colleges’ products and services in order to enable them to meet employers’ current workforce development needs and to anticipate employers’ future workforce development needs.

What you need to do
To make sure that your College plans its services in such a way as to meet employer workforce development needs you must make sure that you collect information in a systematic way about those needs from a variety of sources.

You must also make sure that your planning process uses the information about employer workforce development needs which you have gathered in order to improve and update your provision of products and services to employers on a regular basis.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to gathering and using information about employers’ workforce development needs which will help you to meet their current workforce development needs and to anticipate their future workforce development needs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Planning Process</td>
<td>There is an established and effective approach to planning the delivery of products and services to employers. This approach is fully integrated within the College planning cycle, and takes clear and demonstrable account of a range of factors that may influence the scope of the provision including LMI research findings, national and local policy and targets context and broader partnership issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Engaging employers in the Planning Process</td>
<td>The College has a formalised mechanism to embed employer views in corporate planning. Future needs, trends and developments are understood and influence the College mission and values. The views of employer organisations are listened to and acted upon and the College works closely with SSCs, Business Link, FSB, Chambers of Commerce and other appropriate employer networks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Use of Labour Market Intelligence</td>
<td>LMI is collected systematically and used effectively to inform the College’s planning of its provision to meet the employers’ workforce development needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Research Approach and Capability</td>
<td>The College has an established approach to the collection and use of research. Primary and/or secondary research is co-ordinated, accessible, reliable, relevant and up to date. It is analysed and used to support the development of the College’s approach to meeting employers’ workforce development needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This unit describes the way in which the College uses labour market intelligence (LMI) to plan and deliver its products and services for employers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Workforce Development Needs Analysis</td>
<td>Drawing on both internal and external information a formal analysis of the workforce development needs of employers is undertaken at least once a year. This analysis is used within the planning context both to inform current plans and to anticipate the need for new approaches and new products and services which will meet the workforce development needs of employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Contribution of staff and contractors to planning</td>
<td>There is a clearly defined approach to planning products and services for employers which ensures that College staff and, where appropriate contractors, with responsibility for managing and delivering provision to employers, are involved in the planning process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION No:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT No:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION TITLE:</td>
<td>Strategic Planning and Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT TITLE:</td>
<td>Developing a Long Term Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT DESCRIPTOR:</td>
<td>This unit identifies that responsiveness to employer workforce development needs is at the centre of the College’s planning agenda, and is given investment, support and priority within a framework of long-term planning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview

**Why this unit is important**

Colleges need to develop a long-term investment and development strategy which enables them to fulfil their commitment to offer products and services in the marketplace which meet the workforce development needs of employers.

**What you need to do**

To make sure that your College has a long-term strategy which enables you to meet the workforce development needs of employers you need to integrate your planning for this area of work into your College’s strategic planning and review processes and in doing so ensure that adequate investment is made available to support development in this area of your work. As part of your planning process you must set clear, realistic and achievable targets for this area of your work and accurately assess the risks associated with the innovation within the College which your plans require.

You must also make sure that your long-term strategy is understood by your staff and by contractors delivering products and services to employers on your behalf.

**How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers**

When you have completed the above you will have established and communicated to your staff and to contractors delivering your products and services to employers a long-term strategy which will help you to design products and services to help you to meet employers’ workforce development needs.
### UNIT DESCRIPTOR:
This unit identifies that responsiveness to employer workforce development needs is at the centre of the College’s planning agenda, and is given investment, support and priority within a framework of long-term planning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Planning and establishing objectives and priorities</td>
<td>There is a clear long-term commitment to establish and then extend as appropriate the scope and range of products and services offered to employers as part of a focused strategy designed to meet the current and future workforce development needs of the economy. There is the evidence of planning to develop capacity in this field, where appropriate, and to share good practice within the College.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Investment Strategy</td>
<td>There is a commitment to invest in the delivery of provision as a result of the business planning process, which will meet the workforce development needs of employers. Through an effective business planning process, accommodation strategy and strategic planning process, this priority is understood by staff and other stakeholders. There is a recognised and established flexibility within these processes which enable the College to respond appropriately to unplanned and emerging workforce development needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Establishing and monitoring targets</td>
<td>The College identifies and establishes clear and achievable targets for its work with employers and regularly monitors and reviews progress towards meeting these targets. Short and long term (3-5 yr) targets are established, monitored and proactively supported by senior management.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Assessment of Risk</td>
<td>The College assesses risk in relation to the products and services designed for employers and provides a realistic framework through which new developments are supported and encouraged. The College works to establish a culture in which staff are encouraged to innovate and to take risks with new Programmes and products.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Understanding of long term strategy for meeting the needs of employers</td>
<td>There is a clearly defined and effectively communicated system of ensuring that staff and contractors delivering services to employers understand the College’s long-term strategy for meeting employers’ workforce development needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to understand the markets in which they wish to sell their products and services and systematically plan their strategies for selling into those markets.

What you need to do
To make sure that your College systematically plans its approach to marketing and undertakes marketing activities which are relevant to meeting the workforce development needs of employers you must make sure that you have a clearly defined marketing strategy, that you segment your market appropriately and that you design publicity and marketing activities which employers will find appropriate.

You must also review your marketing strategy on a regular basis to confirm that your approach remains relevant to the task of helping you to meet your sales and other development targets.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to marketing which is relevant and which will help your College to meet the workforce development needs of employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Marketing Plan</td>
<td>There is a marketing plan covering the provision of products and services for employers. The plan clearly identifies where resources should be targeted and how marketing can support the College’s strategy for engagement with employers and intermediary organisations. There is clear market segmentation and target setting against local priorities and there is an effective and evaluative approach to marketing products and services to employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Pricing Policy</td>
<td>There is a clearly defined and publicised pricing strategy for the products and services to employers. The College can demonstrate that employers can understand the way in which products and services are priced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Publicity and marketing activities</td>
<td>A series of publicity and marketing activities is undertaken and evaluated in terms of their effectiveness. Feedback from employers and intermediary organisations is collected as part of the evaluation process. As a result of the evaluation, improvements and/or refinements in the way the College markets its services to employers are implemented. College websites should offer up-to-date useful information, which is easy to access and has a focus on the provision of products and services for employers, including links to suitable partner organisations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Marketing Resources and Investment</td>
<td>As a result of an effective business case for the targeting of resources, adequate resources are secured in order to deliver the plan. There is a commitment to allocate sufficient financial and human resources to enable an effective marketing approach to be developed and implemented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Review of marketing strategy</td>
<td>The marketing strategy is regularly reviewed and where necessary amended to ensure it continues to address the workforce development needs of employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to be able to confirm that their products and services meet the workforce development needs of employers.

What you need to do
To make sure your College can demonstrate that its provision is responsive to employers’ workforce development needs you must ensure that your provision has been planned in conjunction with employers and that you systematically gather feedback about participation in your Programmes on a regular basis from employers who use your products and services.

You must set and monitor targets for employer participation in your Programmes and for their use of your products and services, establish the value employers place on your provision and whether they believe your provision is of the right quality.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to confirming with employers the appropriateness of your provision. This will help you to address, and to continue to address, the workforce development needs of employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Current Product Range</td>
<td>There is evidence that the existing range of products and services offered to employers has been designed on the basis of dialogue with employers and products and services are currently meeting employers’ workforce development needs. There is evidence that LMI and sound approaches to needs analysis have been used to inform the planning and design of products and services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Employer Participation</td>
<td>Employer participation rates and targets are being met and there is clear evidence of numbers of employers/employees engaging with the College’s services increasing in line with the College’s targets. There is regular and formal feedback from employers on the value and quality of the services the College offers and labour market intelligence on employer participation is collected and evaluated in order to inform the planning of future provision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Planning and Target Setting</td>
<td>Challenging targets are set for the number of employers/employees that the College seeks to engage for the range of products and services offered. The College constructs and implements a set of employer Service Standards. Targets for participation and the Service Standards are set and monitored. They are in part based upon the number of employers and the College’s penetration rate into employer organisations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to establish approaches to facilities management issues which ensure that products and services delivered to employers are appropriately resourced and that those products and services are delivered to the standards expected by employers.

What you need to do
To make sure your College resources its products and services to employers in such a way as to satisfy their needs and expectations you must assess the suitability and adequacy of premises and equipment used in provision delivered to this group on a regular basis and confirm that the facilities you provide meet the standards expected by employers.

You must also ensure that your resource allocation system assigns adequate investment to this area of your provision.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to resource allocation and facilities management which meets the needs and expectations of employers purchasing your products and services and those considering making such purchases from your College.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Accommodation and Equipment</td>
<td>All premises (on and off site) used in the delivery of provision to employers are assessed and deemed fit for purpose before being used by the College. There is flexibility and choice for Programme participants in terms of locations. There is evidence of adequate industry-standard equipment and resources to support the products and services offered to employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Health and Safety</td>
<td>Checks are made on the adequacy of accommodation in terms of health, safety, cleanliness and other relevant issues. Standards of maintenance and cleaning meet employers’ expectations. There are good quality catering and other facilities and feedback from employers and Programme participants is positive in relation to these aspects of the College’s provision.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Capital Investment</td>
<td>There is evidence over time that the College supports the growth and development of services for employers. This is demonstrated through investments in buildings, equipment, staff and other resources to enable the College to meet the expectations and standards required by employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to be aware of the nature and scope of expertise staff and contractors managing and delivering products and services to employers must possess if they are to meet the workforce development needs of employers, and ensure that those involved in the management and delivery of those products and services possess such expertise.

What you need to do
To make sure that your provision to employers is appropriately managed and delivered you must allocate clear responsibilities for this area of work to your staff and contractors. You must also ensure that you recruit staff who have the level of expertise which enables them to manage deliver your provision to employers to standards which employers expect. You must take steps to ensure that such individuals keep their skills, their industry specific knowledge and their abilities to meet the workforce development needs of employers up-to-date.

You must also monitor the work of your staff and contractors and give them feedback on their performance as appropriate.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to staffing and updating your staff which will help you to meet and to continue to meet the workforce development needs of employers.
 SECTION No: 2                      UNIT No: 7
SECTION TITLE: College Management Systems                      UNIT TITLE: Staffing

UNIT DESCRIPTOR: This unit looks at the impact of staffing issues on the College’s ability to manage and deliver appropriate products and services to employers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Management and Organisational Structure, responsibility and accountability</td>
<td>There is a focused and clear drive through the organisational structure to giving employer engagement (the provision of appropriate products and services to employers) a high profile. There is a clear management structure for this area of work at all levels and staff are aware of this. There are clearly identified posts within the College with responsibility for developing and maintaining relationships with employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Recruitment of Staff</td>
<td>The College has a policy of recruiting staff with recent and current industrial experience and existing staff are encouraged to, and provided with, opportunities to update their sector related skills. Staff employment contracts are flexible and take account of and reflect the requirements of this area of work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Development and Training of Staff</td>
<td>Staff Development Planning takes account of the need to develop staff providing products and services to employers and effectively and adequately funds development opportunities for these staff. There are opportunities for reciprocal secondments and work shadowing between the College and employers and the College enables staff to take up these placements successfully and regularly. Staff and contractors who deliver products and services to employers are regularly monitored and observed and given feedback on their performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Staff impact on Service Standards</td>
<td>Front-line staff are appropriately trained in “employer care” and understand and implement the employer Service Standards. All College staff are aware of the implications of the Service Standards and operate within the framework.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

**Why this unit is important**
Colleges need to operate financial management framework which enables them to meet the expectations of employers purchasing products and services from them for contracting and billing etc and which ensures that investment into this area of work is adequate.

**What you need to do**
To make sure that your provision to employers is appropriately resourced you must establish a financial management framework which ensures that investment in the design and delivery of products and services to employers has a high priority and that the investment needs of this area of work are considered alongside other investment proposals as part of the College’s planning process. You must specify levels of investment and income targets for this area of your work.

You must make sure that your financial management systems are flexible enough to accommodate the varied needs and expectations of employers for proposals, billing etc. Your systems must be able to produce quotations and respond to tenders within the required time frames and in the form expected by employers and funding agencies.

**How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers**
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to financial management for this area of work which will help you to meet and continue to meet the workforce development needs of employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Business Planning Process</td>
<td>The College’s products and services for employers are systematically planned alongside other College provision and resources/investment priorities are made available for this work on an equitable footing. The planning of services is done alongside other College processes and an annual business plan for this area of work is produced. There is evidence of investment to support new areas of development and the investment strategy is flexible enough to take account of needs that may not be evident at the time when the plan is produced. Regular reviews of the plan are undertaken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Fees and Income Policies</td>
<td>There are clear income targets for the delivery of the College’s products and services for employers. There is a defined pricing policy the approach to producing quotations and tenders is clear and consistently applied. Relevant staff understand these processes and have the authority to operate and negotiate within this framework. The College is aware of the pricing policies of its competitors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Financial Management and Accounting System</td>
<td>The College’s financial management systems can accommodate the flexibility required by employers. The requirements for data collection and management information are adequately and satisfactorily met and College reporting systems and timescales for action take account of the flexibility and responsiveness required by staff delivering products and services to employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Contract Management</td>
<td>Responsibility for contract management is clearly defined and is integrated into the customer Standards. Contract management systems are robust, documented and fully integrated within the College financial management system. Contract approval processes are clearly documented and operate effectively and efficiently. Staff responsibilities and authority within this area are clearly defined, understood and adhered to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to ensure that they develop positive working relationships with employers. Doing so will improve their ability to design and deliver products and services to employers which meet their workforce development needs and their expectations of service.

What you need to do
To make sure that your College establishes and operates client management processes which result in effective working relationships with employers you need to demonstrate that those client management systems are responsive to employer expectations and lead to improvements to products and services where necessary.

You must also make sure that you monitor the effectiveness of your client management system to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the needs and expectations of employers.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to managing relationships with employers which is robust, responsive and relevant and which helps you to achieve your objective of offering products and services which meet the workforce development needs of employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Managing the employer journey</td>
<td>There are Service Standards for dealing with employers that are clear and understood by all staff. Employers are clear about how their enquiries and subsequent actions taken will be dealt with. Staff within the Service Standard are identified, with their authorities clearly defined for all curriculum areas and College departments. There is evidence of positive and rapid responses to enquiries from employers. The system for recording enquiries and all follow up actions such as visits, meetings and contracting, is clear, effective and used by all relevant staff. Follow up systems, procedures and timescales are in place and are understood by employers. The College can evidence the employer journey to an agreed Service Standard from initial enquiry to fulfilment of agreed actions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 9.2 Helping employers to choose suitable products and services | The client management process is effective in ensuring employers are aware of the College’s range of products and services. Employers receive relevant information; they are helped to choose appropriate products and services and are followed up regularly. The operation of the client management system is monitored and analysed and its effectiveness is reviewed regularly. | | |

<p>| 9.3 Maintaining customer contact | There is a systematic approach to maintaining contact with employers and responsibility for this is clearly identified in the College’s management structure. There is a detailed set of responsibilities matched to named individuals. | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.4 Improving products and services for employers</td>
<td>The College actively collects feedback from employers. The feedback should solicit views on the overall experience and levels of service, value for money, the content and the delivery of training and future workforce development needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5 Managing employer complaints</td>
<td>The College complaints procedure effectively deals with complaints from employers and has integral standards of service. Outcomes of complaints inform future practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNIT DESCRIPTOR: This unit examines how the College manages relationships with employers.
Overview

Why this unit is important
Colleges need to deliver their products and services in ways which meet the workforce development needs of employers and to communicate information about their flexibility and responsiveness of approach to employers, employer networks and to other interested parties.

What you need to do
To make sure that your College’s products and services are delivered in ways which meet employers’ workforce development needs you must offer a range of delivery options designed to meet those needs. You must ensure that the information advice and guidance you offer to employers is accurate, up-to-date and relevant. If you are also offering accreditation services you must ensure that you communicate the detail and benefit of these services to employers.

You must ensure that your staff and contractors delivering products and services to employers on your behalf understand the benefits of such flexibility and responsiveness and that your College is perceived as flexible in approach, responsive to employer preferences and enthusiastic to work collaboratively with employers.

How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to delivering appropriate and relevant products and services which helps you to achieve your objective of offering products and services which meet the workforce development needs of employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1 Delivery Methods</td>
<td>There are a range of delivery modes tailored to meet the needs of individual employers. Flexible delivery options are available including delivery at employers’ premises and distance learning. Provision is tailored to meet the workforce development needs of employers. Colleges are clear about the limitations of approach. Where the College cannot deliver training to meet the employer needs, employers are effectively referred.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2 Information, Assessment and Advice Services</td>
<td>The College is able to provide a service to help employers to identify their workforce’s development needs. The service includes help with identifying training needs using appropriate diagnostic tools (TNA), directing employers to sources of information and advice and advising on the most suitable training opportunities available to them. The College is a recognised and accredited IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) provider and is operating within the matrix Standards for dealing with employers. There are effective systems for tracking, following up and monitoring the services delivered. All staff involved in delivering these services are appropriately trained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Accreditation Services</td>
<td>The College is able to offer a wide range of accreditation services which include accrediting existing employer provision and tailoring courses to meet employer needs in conjunction with HE Institutions (where appropriate) and awarding bodies. The College has actively sought to develop this approach with employers selling this service directly as well as working with existing employers for whom they deliver customised provision. Evidence is available to support the effectiveness of this approach and this testimony is used in marketing/publicity activities. There is clear commitment to and understanding amongst staff of the benefits of accredited learning opportunities and how to sell those benefits to employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANDARD</td>
<td>INDICATOR</td>
<td>EVIDENCE</td>
<td>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</td>
<td>ACTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4 Customised Programmes</td>
<td>The College has the ability to deliver a range of flexible and specifically tailored Programmes to meet the needs of employers and successfully uses this approach to encourage more employers to buy products and services from the College. The College effectively manages the expectations of the employers. The College promotes a positive image to employers and others, for example, to networks and brokers in this field and has evidence of progression with employees from this entry point to more comprehensive engagement. The College regularly evaluates its expertise, flexibility and success in this field, and this leads to new approaches and ranges of courses becoming available.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5 Flexibility</td>
<td>The College promotes itself and is perceived by employers as offering a flexible and “can do” approach to meeting employers workforce development needs. The anytime, anywhere, any-day approach is valued highly by employers and the service offered by the College can deliver the level of flexibility and breadth of provision required by employers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

**Why this unit is important**
Colleges need to seek feedback from employers who buy their products and use their services to establish if they are meeting their customers’ workforce development needs and to use the feedback they receive to improve existing products and services or to help them to design new ones.

**What you need to do**
To make sure that employers have the opportunity to contribute to your continuous improvement process you must seek feedback from employers in a systematic and way, and use the information you receive to improve your products and services.

You must ensure that you seek feedback throughout the period of an employer’s involvement with the College, from point of entry to end of Programme evaluations and use this feedback to support your continuous improvement processes. This will include using the outcomes of investigations to refine and update existing products and services and using those outcomes to help you to design new Programmes.

**How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers**
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to collecting, analysing and using employer feedback which will help you to achieve your objective of offering products and services which meet the workforce development needs of employers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1 Evaluation of Services</td>
<td>The College actively seeks feedback from employers, staff and students in order to evaluate its services. There is clear, systematic and demonstrable evidence of feedback, how it has been evaluated, and the impact of the feedback upon the service. Responsibility for customer-service issues is clearly identified in the College’s management structure and accurate records are kept of complaints and feedback. There is regular feedback to interested parties regarding the action that is being taken as a result of their comments and positive action is always undertaken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2 Employer Feedback</td>
<td>The College actively seeks specific employer feedback on the service from the point of enquiry. It follows up and analyses information on all employers, (those trading with the College and others) in order to identify improvements. There is a clear system for collecting and analysing feedback and employers are aware of how their feedback is used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3 Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>The College has developed and is implementing a systematic process of assessing employer satisfaction. The College asks consistent questions on their approach and the service received. The College has targets for satisfaction and routinely samples employers for updated data. The College routinely internally tests its own system to improve the service.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.4 Product/ Curriculum Development Process</td>
<td>The College uses employer and staff feedback to monitor how effective its training and other interventions have been and in order to improve/develop new products and services. These processes are formalised and documented. There is a commitment to monitoring and continuous improvement of services, and to ensuring that feedback (both positive and negative) is proactively sought and acted upon.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Overview

**Why this unit is important**
Colleges need to adopt a proactive approach to networking sharing good practice and achievements through their membership of local, regional and national professional networks and networks linked to their areas of expertise.

**What you need to do**
To make sure that your College has the opportunity to share good practice within professional networks and to learn from other members of such networks you must work proactively to develop and foster effective working between yourselves and a range of other organisations and participate fully in the work of the networks and partnerships with which you are involved.

**How fulfilling the requirements will help you to develop your ability to meet the needs of employers**
When you have completed the above you will have established an approach to building professional networks and managing relationships with members of such networks which will help you to achieve your objective of offering products and services which meet the workforce development needs of employers.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION No: 4</th>
<th>UNIT No: 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECTION TITLE: Continuous Improvement</td>
<td>UNIT TITLE: Developing Effective Professional Networks and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT DESCRIPTOR: This unit is about ensuring relationships and partnerships are developed and the College recognises the importance of participation in these networks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### UNIT DECRIPTOR:

This unit is about ensuring relationships and partnerships are developed and the College recognises the importance of participation in these networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>EVIDENCE DESCRIPTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.1 Sharing Information and Good Practice</td>
<td>Both within the College and other professional networks (regional, national, local, sectoral) the College is engaged in providing support and sharing good practice. It is actively involved in identifying opportunities that may arise for partnership and joint working and pursuing and establishing these opportunities. The College ensures that through effective communication, liaison and internal planning this information is disseminated and all available sources of funding for new developments are accessed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2 Operating within Networks</td>
<td>The College develops an approach to networking which is strategic, systematic and ensures that considerable and demonstrable benefits are gained from this investment. Through engaging in networks with other providers, businesses, agencies, community and voluntary groups the College has built the trust and confidence of these groups. The College are fully engaged with the brokerage service and are working in partnership with a range of providers. The College is actively engaged in contributing to these networks and providing the networks with up to date information about its work and expertise, and providing help, support and brokerage to these organisations. The College formalises its relationships with its strategic partners.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1

Guidance on Assessment Process

Once a College has had approval from their Local LSC to undertake Assessment, the College should arrange an Assessment via the QSE website: [www.qse.org.uk](http://www.qse.org.uk)

The Assessment process will necessarily be outcomes led. Colleges will not be expected to complete a portfolio of evidence.

QSE are developing a range of training materials and supporting information to enable Colleges to demonstrate their ability to meet the Standards. It is intended for Assessment undertaken to be outcome, and not process, driven. Thus the process of evidence collation is minimised.

Your QSE advisor will help you to identify appropriate evidence and will be available to guide you through the process.

Due account will be taken of your Colleges’ success with other quality standards and inspections to avoid duplication of effort.

Further guidance will be available subsequently, through QSE.
Appendix 2

The Workforce Skills Programme – Transforming Adult Learning in the South East Region

In September 2002, the Government invited SEEDA, the Regional Development Agency for the South East, and the six Local LSCs located in the region to work together with partners, on developing a Programme capable of transforming adult learning and skills provision for the benefit of individuals, employers and communities.

The vision for the WSP is to transform the way in which Colleges and other providers are able to support individuals, employers and communities to become more productive, economically successful and socially inclusive.

This will be achieved through a partnership led, holistic approach to adult learning planning, driven by the needs of employers and priority groups of learners and focusing on the full engagement of employers.

The WSP has five overarching objectives, which flow from the Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA):

• Improve the planning and funding process for adult learning and skills provision
• Improve productivity of the economically active population at all skills levels; (FRESA Objective 1)
• Build globally competitive, high growth sectors through stronger demand and supply of skills; (FRESA Objective 2)
• Make the most of labour market intelligence enabling individuals and employers to make informed decisions and plan for change; (FRESA Objective 5)
• Contribute to the Department for Education and Skills’ review of the funding of adult learning.

Activities undertaken within the Programme reflect:

• A wish to build on national and regional strategy and policy including the Skills Strategy, Success for All, Trust in FE, LSC Workforce Development Plan and the FRESA;
• The need to bridge the gap between aspirations detailed in these strategies and the reality of the employer and adult skills needs and the FE sector today;
• The focus on addressing the needs of adult learners and employers in an efficient and effective way;
• The need to build on the considerable expertise in the region’s Colleges, providing them with the support, advice and resource they need to develop sustainable and seamless systems of business support;
• The different needs of localities within the region;
• Best use of public funding to meet identified priorities.
The Programme addresses five strands of activity:

- **Action For Business Colleges**
  The Programme will support Colleges wishing to develop their business support function, improving responsiveness to the needs of business.

- **Brokerage**
  The Programme will support further development of brokerage and guidance networks, providing a seamless service to small businesses, offering improved accessibility and availability of information, advice, guidance and assistance in accessing appropriate provision.

- **Sector skills including construction, care and advanced manufacturing**
  The Programme will focus primarily on three areas where there are significant skill shortages across the region. It will work with Colleges to develop and introduce improved, flexible provision, particularly at levels 2 and 3, with Colleges developing centres of excellence.

- **Leadership and Management**
  The Programme will test out new approaches to management and leadership support and will work with providers to embrace best practice.

- **Adults without a level 2 qualification**
  The Programme will support greater engagement in learning by adults without a level 2 qualification, leading to reduced skills gaps by providing free training to those who have not yet got a level 2 qualification.
### Appendix 3

**LSC Action for Business Colleges Lead Contacts and EDs Addresses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Contact Person(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire Learning and Skills Council</td>
<td>Rachel McKellar &lt;br&gt; (Acting ED until further notice) &lt;br&gt; Pacific House &lt;br&gt; Imperial Way &lt;br&gt; Reading &lt;br&gt; Berkshire  RG2 0TF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead: Jim Douglas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council</td>
<td>Hilary Chadwick &lt;br&gt; 25 Thackeray Mall &lt;br&gt; Fareham &lt;br&gt; Hampshire  PO16 0PQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead: Hayley Quinn</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent Learning and Skills Council</td>
<td>Simon Norton &lt;br&gt; 26 Kings Hill Avenue &lt;br&gt; Kings Hill &lt;br&gt; West Malling &lt;br&gt; Kent  ME19 4TE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead: Paul Boast</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Learning and Skills Council</td>
<td>Lynda Purser &lt;br&gt; 24 The Quadrant &lt;br&gt; Abingdon Science Park &lt;br&gt; Off Barton Lane &lt;br&gt; Abingdon &lt;br&gt; Oxfordshire  OX14 3YS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead: Michael Blades</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey Learning and Skills Council</td>
<td>Nick Wilson &lt;br&gt; Technology House &lt;br&gt; 48-54 Goldsworth Road &lt;br&gt; Woking &lt;br&gt; Surrey  GU21 6LE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead: Carol Matthews</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex Learning and Skills Council</td>
<td>Henry Ball &lt;br&gt; Prince’s House &lt;br&gt; 53 Queen’s Road &lt;br&gt; Bright &lt;br&gt; East Sussex  BN1 3XB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead: Vaughan Leyshon</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Skills Programme</td>
<td>c/o SEEDA Headquarters &lt;br&gt; Berkeley House &lt;br&gt; London Square &lt;br&gt; Cross Lanes &lt;br&gt; Guildford &lt;br&gt; Surrey  GU1 1YA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davina Williams (Co-ordinator)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Cherry (Director)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel: 01483 470182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4

FORM 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

Request for support from the Local LSC for the College to work towards Accreditation.

*Development Grant and Consultant Support Application – Self-Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF COLLEGE:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME OF CONTACT:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We wish to apply to become an Action for Business College and to request the £15,000 Self-Assessment Grant and Consultant Support to work towards Self-Assessment.
- We confirm that we will benchmark our current employer engagement position in conjunction with our Local LSC.
- On approval, we will book Consultant support from QSE via their website.
- We ask for the support of the LSC and the WSP in planning our development towards Action for Business College status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNED AND DATED:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION:</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please send to your Local Learning and Skills Council Executive Director.

FOR LSC USE ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Director Signature:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I confirm our endorsement of the application for initial funding and consultant support for Self-Assessment.</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5

FORM 2: DEVELOPMENT PLAN GRANT

ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

Request for support from the Local LSC for the College to work towards Accreditation.

*Development Plan Grant*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF COLLEGE:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME OF CONTACT:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We confirm that we have undertaken the Self-Assessment process.
- We wish to apply for the £15,000 Development Plan Grant.
- We confirm that the funding will be used to prepare or implement a Development Plan to work towards Action for Business Colleges Assessment.
- We confirm that we will work closely with our Local LSC in the development of the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNED AND DATED:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION:</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please send to your Local Learning and Skills Council Executive Director.

FOR LSC USE ONLY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Director Signature:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I confirm that the College has agreed to work with QSE and the Local LSC to prepare its Development Plan. I confirm our support for the Development Plan Grant.</td>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6

FORM 3: REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES
REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

We believe we are now ready to undertake the Assessment against the Action for Business College Standard and we seek approval to undertake Assessment. On approval we will book our Assessment with QSE via their website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME AND ADDRESS OF COLLEGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIRECT CONTACT FOR LSC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel./e-mail:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed and Dated:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal

Please send your Action For Business Colleges Assessment form to your LSC.

Booking Your Assessment

To apply for Assessment, please visit the home page of the Quality South East website at [www.qse.org.uk](http://www.qse.org.uk) where you will be guided through the simple Action for Business Colleges application process.
Appendix 7

**FORM 4: IMPLEMENTATION OF BUSINESS PLAN**

**ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES**

REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

**ACTION FOR BUSINESS ACCREDITED COLLEGES ONLY**

Request for funding from the Local LSC for the implementation of the *Action for Business Colleges* Business Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF COLLEGE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF CONTACT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We confirm that we have been awarded the Action for Business Colleges Accreditation.
- We have developed a Business Plan to implement key actions to embed the work with employers and confirm that the costed actions have been agreed by the College Governing Body.
- The costed action plan has been developed with the support of our Local LSC and has been endorsed by them.
- We understand that the potential funding available, which can be applied for, has been set at a maximum of £300K available over two years.
- We wish to submit this Business Plan for review by the WSP Panel who will assess our request for funding.
- We confirm that any funding allocated will be used to implement the Business Plan as stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNED AND DATED:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please send to your Local Learning and Skills Council Executive Director.

**FOR LSC USE ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive Director Signature:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I confirm that the College has complied with the requirements set out above and support the submission of the Business Plan to the WSP review panel:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes / No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 8

Guidance on the Business Plan Funding

Colleges that achieve Action for Business College status will be entitled to apply for funding to support the implementation of a two-year Business Plan.

The Business Plan will need to be constructed in conjunction with your Local LSC, who will be able to advise you on the specific outcomes that are sought. The plan should include proposals on how the College can contribute to local and regional objectives, including:

- How the College plans to develop its provision to be sensitive to employer need;
- How the College is going to increase the number of learning opportunities for employers;
- How the College could support others in working towards Action for Business College status.

The Application Process

- This funding is only available to Colleges that are Accredited as an Action for Business College.
- The College and the Local LSC agree the Business Plan objectives and outcomes. No specific template will be issued as the plan must be owned by the College. The plan should be costed as far as possible.
- Once the Business Plan is complete, the College should complete Form 4 and forward it to their Local LSC ED for endorsement.
- Each plan will be reviewed by a panel of the six South East EDs, the Director of the WSP and a representative of SEEDA.
- Funding for the plan will be agreed by the panel and Colleges will be notified immediately via their Local LSC. A funding flowchart is included as Appendix 9.
Appendix 9: ACTION FOR BUSINESS COLLEGES - FUNDING FLOWCHART
(To be read in conjunction with the Prospectus)

College submits Form 1 to LLSC

Local LSC endorses Form 1

Local LSC pays £15K for Self-Assessment.
College books QSE Assessor via QSE website

College Self-Assess

College does not proceed to Development Plan

College produces a Development Plan with support from QSE and Local LSC

College submits Form 2 to Local LSC.
Local LSC pays £15K for Development Plan

College works towards implementing Development Plan

College submits Form 3 to Local LSC to apply for Assessment.
College and Local LSC need to agree if Assessment is in Phase 1 or Phase 2

Assessment

PHASE 1: OCT 03 – MAR 04
PHASE 2: APR 04 – MAR 05

College does not meet the Standard

Work with Local LSC to plan re-Assessment (no additional funding)

College meets the Standard

QSE appointed panel agree decisions and validate award of Action for Business College status

Award of Status

RE-ACCREDITATION AFTER TWO YEARS

Eligibility to use branding and kitemark
Construct a costed Business Plan and/or Business Case with Local LSC. Local LSC endorsement

College completes Form 4. College submits agreed Business Plan to LSC and WSP. College applies to WSP panel for funding up to £300K over two years

Local LSC uses discretionary funding if appropriate and/or WSP and SEEDs review Business Plans and agree appropriate funding to support the Business Plan, in line with local and regional objectives

Plan not funded

If approved (fully or partially), College Plan is funded and reports outcomes to Local LSC

Feedback to Local LSC

Feedback to College