The Sector Compact

1. What is the “Sector Compact”?

The sector compact is a non-contractual agreement between the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) to work collaboratively to drive up demand for skills across England through Train to Gain.

The sector compact sets out the specific offer to employers in the sector within Train to Gain and makes a reality of Lord Leitch’s report on skills. In return for additional flexibilities in Train to Gain secured through the sector compact, the ECITB will work with Train to Gain to stimulate demand for higher volume of skills in their sector. The LSC then undertakes to deliver the flexibilities agreed in the compact consistently across England.

The compact sets out the detail of this agreement including the ambition and volumes of increased demand, the specific flexibilities needed to deliver this demand and the phasing of this delivery. The compact covers a period of up to three years and is an integrated part of the Train to Gain offer to employers, not a separate programme.

2. Why have Sector Compacts?

Train to Gain Plan for Growth (published by the Learning and Skills Council in November 2007) sets out a series of “flexibilities” to ensure that Train to Gain evolves and continues to respond to the feedback from employers. One of those flexibilities was to create sector compacts, aiming to identify the key changes needed by employers in a specific sector within Train to Gain in order to deliver increased volumes of learners and meet their specific skills challenges.
3. How long does a Sector Compact last?

Each sector compact will be different, and elements in each sector compact may run for different lengths of time. They are partnerships in which we and the sector can learn how best to drive up demand for skills and then build on what works best. This starts with the plan that each sector compact will run for three years, as from October 2008.

4. What is the desired outcome from the sector compact?

Within Train to Gain the ECITB compact is an agreement that will make it easier for the employer and individual learners to find information and funding to support their skills development and competence assurance and increase productivity.

The Sector Compact therefore provides employers in a sector with three key additional benefits within Train to Gain:

- The commitment to a set of flexibilities over a three year period;
- Access to support for second and repeat qualifications at Level 3; and,
- Access to these flexibilities for all employers within a sector, regardless of size.

In addition to the support already available through Train to Gain, employers in the sector will now be able to access:

- Up to 2,725 Apprenticeships
- 200 Skills Pledge commitments
- 1650 Level two qualifications of which 80% will be first achievements and 20% second achievements
- 3810 Level three qualifications of which 80% will be first achievements and 20% second achievements
- 300 Management and Leadership outcomes
The ECITB is examining ways at supporting up to 1500 potential apprenticeship candidates to obtain high quality work experience leading to employment within the sector.

The compact gives special flexibility for key vocational qualifications to be available for the first time through Train to Gain as repeat qualifications – i.e. employees who have already achieved a full Level 2 or 3 qualifications can now be supported to achieve a second full Level 2 or 3 qualification.

It will also present a coherent and sector-specific set of skills solutions to employers, through the brokerage service, and will increase the level of sector engagement with Train to Gain.

**Accessing support through Train to Gain**

5. **Which companies are eligible for advice and support through Train to Gain?**

All companies based in England are eligible for support through Train to Gain.

These businesses can access support for skills needs through Train to Gain. Funding for skills and qualifications relates to individual employees in these companies – some employees may be eligible for funding support to meet but some may not. Both the skills brokers and colleges and training providers can advise on eligibility for funding support as part of the Train to Gain service.

6. **How can employers access the support from Train to Gain including funding for skills?**

The standard model of accessing Train to Gain support applies in this sector.

Train to Gain Skills brokers and ECITB Account Managers will visit and start the process of analysing how a company’s performance can benefit from investment in employee skills. Both LSC and the ECITB are working together on behalf of employers and will call on each others service on behalf of employers as needed.

For advice on training and development and on qualifications available to employers through Train to Gain, employers can also talk to colleges and training providers.
7. How do employers choose their training provider?

Across England there are hundreds of colleges and training providers with contracts to deliver skills through Train to Gain - both sector specific vocational skills and generic skills including business administration and customer service.

For employers who wish to work with a training provider who does not have a Train to Gain contract, the LSC will work with new providers providing that a minimum number of learners are engaged through the contract. All providers within Train to Gain have to meet a minimum set of requirements and success measures in order to receive, and maintain a provider contract. Without a contract in place a provider cannot receive funding through Train to Gain.

8. Who will arrange the training?

When the employer has decided on their preferred provider, The Train to Gain training provider will arrange delivery of the training direct with the employer.

The offer to employers

9. Which qualifications are supported through Train to Gain funding?

Guidance on the qualifications supported through Train to Gain funding can be found on the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/ttg/latest). Included are:

- All vocational NVQ qualifications at Level 2 and 3
- Basic skills
- All age Apprenticeships
- Skills for Life e.g. literacy, numeracy and English as a foreign language.
- Management & Leadership (companies with 5 – 250 employees); and,

NVQ Qualifications developed by any awarding body, providing that these are available for funding purposes can be supported through Train to Gain.

Funding is available for any individual without a first Level 2 or equivalent. The sector compact gives special flexibility for key qualifications to be available for the first time through Train to Gain as repeat qualifications – i.e. employees who already
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have a NVQ Level 2 or 3 can now be supported to achieve a second NVQ Level 2 or 3.

This flexibility is focussed on the most important qualifications to the sector, as defined by the Engineering Construction Industry employers, who have worked with ECITB to refine/create a list of vocational qualifications that “work” for the sector.

This list changes, as the ECITB and other sector skills councils bring more qualification products to market. The most up-to-date list is available via the LSC web site at the link given above.

10. Is there a time limit for learning to be completed?

No.

11. For further information on the ECITB compact and for any queries, please contact:

The ECITB and LSC are finalising arrangements for delivery of this new offer and will publish further information on their websites

- LSC - Train to Gain website at www.traintogain.gov.uk
- ECITB can be found at www.ECITB.org.uk

If you are an employer or a learner – please contact the Train to Gain service, your ECITB Account Manager or speak to your current provider

If you are a provider – please speak to your LSC partnership manager or contact the Train to Gain service

If you are an LSC colleague - please contact Lorna Rukin

If you are an ECITB colleague - please contact Duncan Weeks