

Provision: In Focus

An assessment of current training provision in the
Highlands and Islands Enterprise area

Facilitated by
Summit SKILLS
The Sector Skills Council
for Building Services Engineering

HORIZON

the sector skills agreement
for building services engineering

Sector Involvement In Training

Please refer to the full Assessment of Current Provision report for the detail behind these summaries. The recommendation numbers and priority listings also correlate to the full report.

Employer views on use of training providers

- Of the total training carried out, 41% is done through FE colleges, 39% private training providers, 9% manufacturers, 11% universities. Most employers use more than one provider.
- Areas such as manufacturer training do not add to the formal qualification base of the sector.
- 93% of firms carried out in-house training of some form, which is considerably higher than for Scottish Enterprise region and could be due to the demographics of the region. However, this does not add to the formal qualification base of the sector.
- If formal mechanisms can be developed to recognise this additional valuable training, it could officially contribute to the skills base of the sector, which is important for this region.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

SummitSkills will work with partners to develop credit-accumulation transfer* and quality assurance for manufacturers and non qualification based courses from private training providers. Medium term priority.

Employers willing to pay for training

- In SummitSkills' Sector Needs Analysis, all Scottish building services engineering employers see Level 3 as the standard for the sector.
- Only 40% of businesses in Highlands and Islands would be willing to pay more for training, which is less than in Scottish Enterprise, where 73% were prepared to pay more, where this could be shown to improve skills and productivity.
- The sector will need some convincing to fund more than they currently do.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

SummitSkills will work with partners and the training provider network to make sure that the quality of training the sector receives will maintain the willingness of the sector to invest in it. Short term priority.

Employer spend on apprenticeship training

- SummitSkills has created a 'work-in-progress' model that looks at the cost of funding an apprentice, excluding course fees, time allocated to mentoring and in-house training spend.
- Considerable amounts of money (in this case via an employee's time) are spent on in-house mentoring throughout the course of the training programme.
- There are many hidden costs associated with training staff and employers are already making a significant contribution.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

SummitSkills will develop these models further to assess the total costs of training on employers. This information will be used work with the Scottish Executive, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and partners to achieve a wider recognition of and sensible balance between employer and government contributions to training. Medium term priority.

Employer perspective on quality of training provision

- There is a very high satisfaction rate among employers about the courses provided by both FE colleges and private training providers in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise region.
- However, employers are less satisfied with the quality of provision in Highlands and Islands than they are in Scottish Enterprise.
- Employers are more satisfied with private training providers than with FE colleges.
- FE colleges appear to be performing well in HM Inspectorate of Education inspections.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

SummitSkills will work with partners, stakeholders and providers to ensure that quality of provision remains high, and continues to improve to meet the needs of the sector's learners and employers. Short term priority.

* For instance allowing a manufacturer course to provide credit towards a wider qualification

Employer views on content of training provision

- 30% of the sector interviewed in the Highlands and Islands region feels that the content of provision is not suitable.
- SVQ curriculum is generally thought to be in need of review to take account of the changing needs of the sector relative to new technologies and renewables and removing material which is out of date.
- Technician curriculum seems satisfactory, although there is slight concern that some of the material taught is too specialised and out of date.
- When the research was undertaken the general nature of the HNC/D courses was felt by employers in some cases to detract from their specific requirements. However we are aware that many of these issues will have been addressed in the recent review of HNC/D qualifications by SQA in the last year.
- In addition, SummitSkills has also already begun to address some of these issues as part of its Sector Qualifications Strategy

RECOMMENDATION 12:

SummitSkills will work with the appropriate awarding bodies to update existing qualifications in line with the sector's requirements, to address the issue of unsuitable curriculum content. This will also include the development of new content to meet changing and developing needs in areas of environmental technologies. Medium to long term priority.

The Provision Itself

Defining a 'new' superclass for the building services engineering sector

- Building services engineering sector curriculum is dispersed among both 'Construction' and 'Engineering' departments and discipline data.
- This is replicated in the current Scottish Funding Council superclass system, with building services engineering courses being found in a variety of locations.
- The Scottish Funding Council database is an excellent tool for in-depth analysis of provision in Scotland.
- SummitSkills has suggested a new superclass for building services engineering to enhance and support this excellent tool and provide a single point of analysis for the sector.
- There is also a need to unify course titles for identical courses across different providers to further reduce confusion.
- Headline data on identical SVQ 3 course titles across the various building services engineering disciplines grouped for Scottish Enterprise and H&I Enterprise as well as by individual providers would also be helpful.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

SummitSkills will work with the Scottish Funding Council to incorporate the proposed new superclass for building services engineering provision into the SFC database, standardise course titles, and develop headline data for the sector in an accessible form for partners and stakeholders to review. Short term priority.

Mapping of non-economically valuable skills (NEVS) training provision for Scotland

- Course mapping undertaken by SummitSkills in conjunction with partner trade associations has identified qualifications being delivered in Scotland which are providing the learner with non-economically valuable skills for entry in to the sector.
- A certain amount of current training provision spend in H&I Enterprise is leading to non-economically valuable skills (NEVS) and therefore not relevant for the sector.
- This could potentially affect the quality of work delivered in the sector and the business stability of bona fide Scottish building services engineering sector companies in the region.
- Resources currently spent on NEVS could be re-directed to develop provision in other areas such as environmental technologies and business development which are becoming increasingly important for the productivity of the sector.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

SummitSkills will help to facilitate a dialogue with partners, stakeholders and providers to determine a way forward for the NEVS provision within the sector, ultimately with a view to reduce the existing numbers and to prevent any further increase in the number of NEVS courses developing in the future. Short term priority.

Higher education training provision

- There are a low number of higher education establishments offering building services engineering courses. Currently within Scotland there is only one provider offering undergraduate and graduate provision, and it is in the Scottish Enterprise region. This does not cover HNC/HND sub-degree courses in Scottish Further Education colleges in either building services or building studies.
- This low number is becoming an acute problem for individuals particularly in the Highlands and Islands who need to gain a professional qualification alongside their work.
- A link between UHI Millennium Institute and the University in Scottish Enterprise could facilitate distance learning, together with the development of distance learning courses for the sector where appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

SummitSkills will continue to work with stakeholders in Further and Higher Education to seek to develop and maintain a network of providers offering degree and sub-degree courses across Scotland. The development of alternative distance learning delivery modes may assist with this recommendation. Medium term priority.

Quality marks/awards of providers

- Providers in Scotland have a range of quality marks including Investors in People and SQMS and are utilising these as part of their monitoring and improvement processes.
- SummitSkills is keen to ensure that all providers of building services engineering curriculum engage in the achievement of quality marks.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

SummitSkills will work with providers to increase achievement of relevant quality marks. Essentially it is believed that if more providers achieve these standards then it should raise the overall quality baseline of the sector's provision in Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Medium term priority.

Expenditure on training provision

- The data for Highlands and Islands indicates that the majority of funding is on SVQ3 outcomes.
- Where expenditure is taking place on courses not leading to a recognised qualification, or a qualification aim is not an SVQ, then this may indicate the presence of NEVS courses.
- It is desirable to work with partners to transfer this funding into other training provision which leads to recognised qualifications required in the sector, especially related to environmental technologies, and business management.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

SummitSkills will work with partners, stakeholders and providers to seek a more effective use of the qualification structure, to bring more non-NEVS programmes into recognised qualifications frameworks where possible, to increase the productivity performance and skills levels in the sector. Medium term priority.

Profile Of Learners

Diversity

- Access to the sector is still dominated by white males.
- There is little evidence to suggest females or ethnic minorities are entering the sector through work-based learning routes in any numbers.
- Despite various initiatives to encourage under-represented groups to join the sector, there has been little impact in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise region.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

SummitSkills will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to increase the engagement of women and ethnic minorities within the industry by facilitating innovative progression pathways into the sector. Medium to long term priority.

Mode of delivery and age of participants in sector courses

- The curriculum for the building services engineering sector within Highlands and Islands Enterprise is dominated by apprenticeship training that uses part time day release to deliver the off the job element.
- There is a strong full time provision making up 13% of the total curriculum delivered.
- Scottish Funding Council data does not include age data, however Local Enterprise Company returns for the region show that the vast majority of learners on apprenticeship schemes are, as expected, under 25

RECOMMENDATION 9:

SummitSkills will work with partners, stakeholders and providers to develop sustainable entry and progression routes into the sector for learners, and particularly where applicable for adult entrants over 20 years of age seeking entry to the sector.

Renewable Technologies

- SummitSkills is currently undertaking the development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for current and emerging environmental technologies
- This includes defining competency levels for SVQ levels 3 to 5 and developing one suite of NOS to embrace craft and professional occupations
- SummitSkills will support the implementation of NOS by ensuring a competence based approach is embedded with employers and stakeholders.
- SummitSkills will also ensure that environmental technologies are fully integrated within its SummitSkills activities for Scotland, in particular the careers strategy and apprenticeship training frameworks.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

SummitSkills will continue to work with trade association partners and other stakeholders to ensure the required skills can be developed to support the continual development of these emerging technologies in the Highlands and Islands Enterprise region of Scotland.

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