

Moving closer...

Identifying skills gaps and developing solutions: Scotland



The Sector Skills Agreement for building services engineering will be the first overarching, coherent and all-encompassing strategy to address the sector's future skills needs. It will be a strategy that all parties commit to and implement in order to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

In creating a Sector Skills Agreement for building services engineering, SummitSkills aims to use authoritative research and extensive consultation to identify skills related issues facing the sector and produce workable solutions to provide employers with the skills they need to develop their business.

Taking the findings, recommendations and feedback from stages one and two SummitSkills was able to map out the main issues affecting the sector and link this to the suggestions that had generated from the consultation so far. A clear series of priorities emerged, and under those a number of programmes that could be developed to support and address these priorities.

For each of the five skills priorities that have been generated we have a vision for what can and will be achieved if the SSA is successful:

Skills Priority	Vision
Professional Image & Competence	A positive image of the sector is promoted to attract and develop a skilled and sustainable workforce
Communication & Information	A one-stop knowledge centre for all building services engineering skills development needs
Training Provision	Pro-active, timely high quality training provision that meets the sector's fast-changing priorities
Funding	Flexible funding to support the skills needed to develop business and workforce
Management & Leadership	Ensuring the sector has the skills it needs to plan and develop profitable and competitive businesses

In the tables to follow SummitSkills takes these priorities and presents a summary of Scotland action plans for consideration. Under each of the five skills priorities we have detailed the employer need, how it links with existing stakeholder policy, the actions that need to be taken against each sector programme, which stakeholders are primarily involved and potential employer engagement.

Also in the tables we show the short-term activity linked to these priorities. Further information on these items, along with details on longer term activity can be found in the full Stage 3 report for Scotland.

Stakeholder involvement

The involvement and commitment of SummitSkills' stakeholders will be crucial in delivering a successful Sector Skills Agreement for the Scottish building services engineering sector.

In seeking to address the issues identified in the work undertaken in Stages 1 & 2 of the Scottish SSA, SummitSkills will be working with and contributing to many Scottish stakeholders' own policies, priorities and programmes. SummitSkills hopes to secure partnership agreements with the following stakeholders to confirm that we can work on and develop the proposals contained with this document:

- Scottish Government
- Scottish Enterprise
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Scottish Qualifications Authority
- Careers Scotland
- learndirect scotland
- Scottish Funding Council
- Futureskills Scotland
- Jobcentre Plus
- Trade Unions

The following actions plans detail how we will seek to address the issues through partnerships to encourage employers, stakeholders and key partners to work closely together to provide a well trained and qualified workforce for the building services engineering sector which can make a significant contribution to the wellbeing and economy of Scotland.

Skills Priority 1: Professional Image and Competence

Promoting a positive image of the sector and develop a skilled and sustainable workforce

The issue	Proposed solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of awareness and mis-perception of the sector deter many suitable people from considering building services engineering careers. Underrepresented groups have either no understanding or a negative perception of the sector: There are people in the sector with a range of experience but are part-qualified or have no qualifications or recognition of competence. Customers do not have an understanding of competence when awarding work to contractors. There are a variety of competence cards which are causing confusion across the sector: Many cards are not actively policed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspirational sector image: Improve careers guidance and active marketing to establish work in the BSE sector as an aspirational career choice for high achievers. Fresh approaches to diversity: Transform the attitudes of students and parents towards vocational and professional careers in the BSE sector. Ensuring everyone in the sector is competent: Implement ways to recognise achievement in terms of qualifications, standards and training which is fit for purpose and meets employer needs. Public recognition of competence: Develop a competence assurance framework against which people can be assessed and registered. A common understanding of competence across the sector which is easy to understand and communicate. Competence card recognition: Benchmark existing skill card schemes for the sector and see if there is scope to develop a common message that meets sector needs, and will raise public awareness of competency in the BSE sector.
Proposed action for employers	Proposed action for partners
<p>Employers to act as ambassadors and role models for the sector with schools.</p> <p>Stakeholder trade associations, including employer members, to market the sector and promote careers information</p>	<p>Careers & Diversity Interest Group develop and steer career strategies and diversity research.</p> <p>Training providers: train new entrant prepare new entrants effectively for the sector.</p> <p>Career advisors and organisations to provide up to date information advice and guidance on the opportunities in the sector</p> <p>Schools motivate interest in the sector and vocational qualifications.</p> <p>LearnDirect Scotland advice line provides clear advice and guidance to all enquirers</p> <p>Trade union: part of the discussions on the possibility of one competency card.</p>
Proposed action for employers	Impact/outcome if successful
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careers routes that are clearly understood by people from all groups and backgrounds to position the sector as the occupation of choice. Flexible methods are established to create a mandatory, fully registered and qualified workforce which is recognised both internally and externally, to raise the image of the sector and its employees. One skill card which recognises competency across the sector which is valued by the workforce and understood by customers.
Proposed action for employers	Short term activity for Scotland:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote online careers map Provide up to date LMI and use sector profiles Partnership and liaison with Careers Scotland on joint working Promote careers DVD Develop employer ambassadors linked to Determined to Succeed Develop sector Skills for Work courses Involvement in skills competitions Conduct further research into minority groups Discuss female funding with the appropriate funding body Partnership working to address diversity issues Developing and implementing industry bespoke schemes which can credit people's prior experience and learning.

Skills Priority 2: Communication and Information

Create a one stop knowledge centre for all building services engineering skills development needs

The issue		Proposed solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on skills development is scattered amongst a variety of sources and is difficult to access, resulting in confusion and skills gaps. Sector LMI is not regularly available. There are a number of sector courses and qualifications that do not meet employer requirements. There is also confusion over training availability and access to public funding. Employers in the sector make a significant contribution to the training and development of staff, especially in supporting and mentoring apprentices, but this contribution is not understood or recognised by Government. The sector needs convincing about the business benefits of training and persuaded to train more than they currently do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SummitSkills knowledge centre: develop and communicate a one stop knowledge centre for sector skills matters. Implement annual LMI surveys and wider research and share business insights to improve competitiveness. Provision clarity: work with the SFC to set up a dedicated Superclass for BSE provision, and develop clarity with providers on authorised progression pathways and course titles. Develop and publicise a course database for upskilling the sector. Apprenticeship cost benefit analysis: develop and refine models that review all the costs, including employer contributions, of apprenticeship training. Proof that training pays: develop and communicate employer case studies to show the benefit of training, clearly defining the contribution that training makes to increased productivity and profitability. 	
Proposed action for employers	Proposed action for partners	Impact/outcome if successful
<p>Employers provide data on apprenticeship costs to help refine cost models and case studies to show training pays.</p> <p>Stakeholder trade associations contribute data to the knowledge centre and help to publicise its availability and value, and proof that training pays.</p>	<p>SQA and other relevant nations funding bodies work with SummitSkills to develop clarity in the sector provision available.</p> <p>Scottish Government to consider the apprenticeship cost benefit models developed to achieve a funding balance for employers.</p> <p>Enterprise companies will work with the Knowledge centre to refine the sector LMI at regional level.</p> <p>HE / HEFCE will share research data on the sector with the knowledge hub.</p> <p>FE will work with SummitSkills to provide clarity in the provision offered through authorised progression routes.</p> <p>Various LMI sources work to develop up to date information on the sector.</p> <p>Regional observatories share information and work with the knowledge hub on sector issues.</p> <p>Trade Union help to promote the proof that training pays.</p>	<p>Short term activity for Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide up-to-date sector LMI Launch and promote Solutions 4 Business website Promote HIE Learning Works website Links to Scottish Union Learning website Work with SFC to develop new 'superclass' Agree use of common course titles Work to reduce NEVS provision and redirect funding Links with learndirect scotland to promote learning opportunities and services Develop apprenticeship cost models with sector and use in discussions to achieve sensible balance between employer and government training contributions Promote workplace learning DVD

Skills Priority 3: Training Provision

Pro-active, timely, high quality public funded provision for all training and fast-changing sector priorities

The issue	Proposed solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some qualification content is seen as out of date or not suitable for sector needs. New content needs to be developed to meet the changing needs of the sector: Non qualification based training is not currently monitored or formally recognised across the sector: There are very few HE establishments offering sector courses which are recognised by the BSE professional bodies; these are also spread unevenly around the UK, with some regions having no provision at all. Employers in Scotland are generally very satisfied with the quality of service and teaching provided by FE colleges and private training providers. NOS and qualification content needs to be developed for renewables and environmental technologies. Until this is done the skills of the sector are lagging behind the market requirements to be able to design, install and maintain new technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant training reflecting NOS at all levels: develop a process to regularly maintain and update qualifications to reflect the real world requirements of employers Accredited training mapped to NOS: develop credit accumulation transfer and ensure manufacturer and non -qualification-based training is mapped to NOS Sustainable entry routes: authorised entry and progression routes into the sector are defined, implemented and promoted for a specific number of people and directly linked to the skill needs of the sector Wider and sustainable HE provision: develop a UK-wide sustainable network of HE provision which is relevant to the needs of employers, to help bridge the gap between sector operatives and professionals Quality assured training provision including quality marks: work with partners to improve the quality of teaching and administration and increase achievement of quality standards. Existing inspection regimes reviewed for the sector and support provided to improve them. Summits/Skills to decide if it develops its own quality mark scheme for the sector. Renewables & Environmental Technologies: develop and implement national occupational standards for current and emerging environmental technologies to embrace craft and professional occupations. Ensure environmental technologies are fully integrated within other activities such as the careers strategy and apprenticeship training frameworks.
Proposed action for employers	Proposed action for partners
<p>Employers: contribute to the development of up to date NOS and a process for accrediting training</p> <p>Trade associations: work with Summits/Skills to support development and implementation of NOS and qualifications, including HE</p> <p>Manufacturers: contribute to develop an accreditation process for the sector</p>	<p>SQA: work in partnership with providers to ensure sector approved qualifications and courses are developed.</p> <p>FE: to ensure their provision reflects the latest NOS delivered in a quality and professional way</p> <p>HE//Professional Bodies: work with Summits/Skills to develop sustainable HE network of degree and sub-degree courses</p> <p>Nations standards bodies: ensure the latest sector NOS are reflected in the qualifications</p> <p>Awarding Bodies: develop qualifications reflecting the latest NOS</p> <p>SQA: work to accredit qualifications</p> <p>Third party certification bodies: work to develop an accreditation process for the sector</p> <p>Scottish Government: help to ensure appropriate inspection regimes maintain quality provision</p>
Proposed action for employers	Proposed action for partners
<p>Employers: contribute to the development of up to date NOS and a process for accrediting training</p> <p>Trade associations: work with Summits/Skills to support development and implementation of NOS and qualifications, including HE</p> <p>Manufacturers: contribute to develop an accreditation process for the sector</p>	<p>A sector qualification strategy which meets the needs of the sector and is updated in a timely fashion.</p> <p>A credit accumulation transfer mechanism to monitor and recognise employer, manufacturer and non qualification based courses</p> <p>Recognised entry and progression routes to maximise recruitment and retention of a diverse range of applicants, minimising potential for partly trained practitioners and linking requirements to LMI</p> <p>A sustainable network of degree and sub degree courses across the UK</p> <p>Employers have confidence that all providers deliver quality training with good communication links between provider, trainee and employer.</p> <p>Updated and maintained NOS and qualifications that reflect renewables and environmental technology skills needs.</p>
Proposed action for employers	Short term activity for Scotland:
<p>Employers: contribute to the development of up to date NOS and a process for accrediting training</p> <p>Trade associations: work with Summits/Skills to support development and implementation of NOS and qualifications, including HE</p> <p>Manufacturers: contribute to develop an accreditation process for the sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue work on renewable energy working group Contribute to SFC HE energy forum Work with partners to ensure sufficient microgeneration provision across Scotland. Work with SBSA on integration of renewable energy in buildings Implementing environmental strategy Continue NOS review and update qualifications once complete Include renewables in NOS and develop new units to support renewables Ensure all provision links back to NOS Consider Get Ready for Work programme and links into sector Partnerships and work with Jobcentre Plus, Local Employment Partnerships, Highlands Employer Coalition, Enterprise Companies Develop appropriate Skills for Work courses Work to reduce bottlenecks in provision Develop SQS Develop and accredit new units to support renewables; consider adding into appropriate MA frameworks

Skills Priority 4: Funding

Flexibility in funding to meet fast-changing skills needs to develop business and workforce

The issue	Proposed solution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult for public funders of training to ensure it is aligned to employer needs. There are also special requirements across the sector for funding to support areas which are outside of the norm e.g. mature adults. A considerable amount of current publicly funded training provision leads to non-economically valuable skills (NEVS) and therefore is not relevant to the sector. There is also a need for new training provision to be funded to meet the changing needs of the sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influencing flexibility of funding: develop employer-centric brokerage for sector skills development, supported by flexible demand-led funding Redeployment of NEVS funding: work with regional and national partners to seek a more effective use of public funding to meet the changing needs of the sector, to increase productivity and skills levels of the workforce 	
<p>Proposed action for employers</p> <p>Employers: promote and support authorised entry and progression routes with their providers.</p> <p>Trade associations: promote and support authorised entry and progression routes with their employers and help to deliver up to date upskilling provision</p>	<p>Proposed action for partners*</p> <p>SFC: work with providers to review and reduce all NEVS funding</p> <p>FE providers: actively reduce any NEVS provision and replace it with new provision demanded by the sector</p> <p>Scottish Government: help to ensure the total funding available for the sector is maintained</p> <p>Trade Unions: to lobby for flexible funding opportunities for the sector</p>	<p>Impact/outcome if successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public funding for training delivers maximum benefit to businesses and individuals. All public funding available is used to support training that is recognised by the sector and demanded by employers. All non-economically valuable skills training is stopped. <p>Short term activity for Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings to discuss non-age-related apprenticeship funding Support training organisations in seeking adequate allocation of apprenticeship funding Secure funding contribution for upskilling Discuss funding contribution toward management training Seek mainstream funding to encourage female recruitment Seek funding to develop upskilling units Ensure funding for renewables training is only available for industry approved and accredited training Lobby for funded ESOL training for migrant workers Raise awareness of ILAs to employers/employees

Skills Priority 5: Management and Leadership

Ensuring the sector has the skills it needs to plan and develop profitable and competitive business

The issue	Proposed solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a skill gap between craft and first line supervisory levels which is currently not being addressed. People on the tools are being placed in supervisory positions without relevant training to maximise effectiveness and productivity. • The sector is very reactive to new opportunities. Generally SMEs and micro-businesses do not actively manage their business to take external drivers into account. As a result the productivity of the sector is low. • There is a general lack of the use of business skills across the sector to formally benchmark the effectiveness of businesses and improve competitiveness. The sector uses informal benchmarking rather than formal methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression and development of first line and middle managers: develop and promote continual professional development opportunities for craft operatives to technician and first line management. Pilot initiatives in business and management skills and encourage employer take-up. • Developing enterprise skills for SMEs and micros: develop and promote various tools to prepare current and future managers of SMEs and micros in the sector with the skills to thrive in a competitive market. Develop and use pilots to encourage wider employer take-up. Develop enterprise national occupational standards relevant for the sector. • Developing skills to increase competitiveness of the sector: develop benchmarking and strategic planning training to help businesses realise the benefits of management and leadership training and increase competitiveness and productivity. Pilot programmes, document and promote benefits achieved.
Proposed action for employers	Proposed action for partners
<p>Large employers: pilot the first line manager training on key sites regionally.</p> <p>Employers: recognise and understand the benefits of management training and be more prepared to train their staff and then promote the benefits.</p> <p>Trade associations: provide training courses and guidance to their employers to encourage management and leadership development.</p>	<p>Scottish Enterprise, H&I Enterprise: help to develop an action learning programme for leaders in the sector.</p> <p>Scottish Government: provide funding for management and leadership training for the sector.</p> <p>SFEDI: promote to employers the benefits of management and leadership training.</p> <p>Trade Unions to promote the benefits of management and leadership training.</p>
Impact/outcome if successful	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved succession planning in SMEs with increased use of supervisory training for first line managers leading to greater effectiveness and sector productivity. • People equipped with increasingly sophisticated business skills to increase competitiveness and proactively develop new business opportunities. • The UK BSE sector is proactive in the exploitation of innovation, service and business competitiveness. 	
Short term activity for Scotland:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Solutions4Business website • Utilise Construction Management Development funding to obtain qualifications. • Promote Certificate in Team Leading and encourage employers to utilise 	

Underpinning programmes: enabling activity

Positioned across all of the priorities and programmes listed inside are two areas that are a fundamental part of any activity carried out under the Sector Skills Agreement. Rather than allocate these under one particular priority or programme, it was felt important that the forming of partnerships and exerting influence on government weaved through most if not all of the programmes planned for the sector and will act as enablers to support the various projects being undertaken.

Partnerships

Setting up networks to foster a partnership culture was seen to be vital following the events around the country. There was much enthusiasm for all parties within the sector working together, but a requirement for some coordinated activity to encourage people to work more closely together.

SummitSkills will be setting up various partnership networks as part of the Sector Skills Agreement and also encouraging other parties to do the same. Employers, providers, manufacturers, government and stakeholders working together: partnership of this kind is the source of a more proactive sector and will enable members to share knowledge and best practice and instill a sense of society into the sector.

Government influence

Ensuring that the sector liaises closely with government will be central to the whole Sector Skills Agreement process. All areas of the SSA will involve helping the various UK governments and their agencies to understand the building services engineering sector and its employer needs. For each skills priority the Government will have a central role, either through learning from the sector and recognising its activity, or directing funding to ensure a structure is in place to support skills development.

What happens next?

SummitSkills will now be meeting with stakeholders in Scotland to discuss the proposed action plans and consider what can and will be both committed to and achieved. By the end of this stage there will be general agreement on where the sector is now in terms of skills needs and skills supply, what needs to happen to deliver the skills needed for the future, and who needs to do what to achieve that.

The consultation process will comprise one to one and group negotiations with stakeholders and wider discussions directly with employers and also through trade associations and professional bodies to share action plans, negotiate and agree on exactly what can and will be achieved.

In addition, a Scotland SSA implementation team will be established which will consist of key local stakeholders as well as influential sector employers in the country who will take responsibility for progressing the action at local level.

This process of discussion, assessment and ultimately endorsement will pave the way for a final agreement at stage 5 which contains solid mechanisms to create a sector that has the right skills, in the right place, at the right time.

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