

On the Horizon

Sector Skills Agreement Stage 5 round-up



Employer involvement is crucial...!

For the Sector Skills Agreement to have the maximum positive impact across the whole sector, it's important that businesses of all sizes get involved. We have regional staff around the UK that can show you how you might be able to take part and importantly benefit from the projects. Call us on 01908 303960 or email enquiries@summitskills.org.uk to find out more.

A new era for building services engineering skills

April 2008 heralds a fresh approach to addressing the sector's skills issues. After months of careful consultation and planning, the Sector Skills Agreement for building services engineering has come to fruition.

What is a Sector Skills Agreement?

The purpose of a Sector Skills Agreement (SSA) is to understand the skills issues facing employers and work with them and stakeholders to develop solutions which will lead to significant skills improvement and longer term productivity benefits for the sector.

In simple terms, it is a deal between employers, training providers and government. Employers lay out what their workforce and skills requirements are now and in the future. In return, the government and providers agree to fund and deliver training tailored to this need, within government policy, providing employers are also willing to make a commitment.

What does our Sector Skills Agreement involve?

The SSA for building services engineering is based around five 'skills priorities' which were developed following detailed consultation around the UK:

- **Image and competence:** promoting a positive image of the sector
- **Communication and Information:** creating a knowledge centre for all sector skills development needs
- **Training Provision:** ensuring proactive, highly quality and relevant training
- **Funding:** flexibility in funding to meet fast-changing needs
- **Management & Leadership:** supporting the sector to plan and develop profitable and competitive businesses

These five priorities underpin the SSA – within those priorities are a number of 'sector programmes' which SummitSkills and its partners will now be rolling out over the forthcoming months and years.

'Sector programmes'

– some examples

Aspirational sector image

Active marketing to establish work in the sector as an aspirational career choice for high achievers.

Proof that training pays

Communicating employer case studies to show the benefit of training, clearly defining the contribution that training makes to increased productivity and profitability.

Renewables and environmental technology

Developing national occupational standards for current and emerging environmental technologies, and ensuring they are fully integrated within other activities such as apprenticeship training frameworks.

Redeployment of funding that is not meeting the sector's needs

Working with regional and national partners to secure a more effective use of public funding into skills that are of economic value to the sector.

Facilitated by

Summit SKILLS

The Sector Skills Council
for Building Services Engineering

HORIZON

the sector skills agreement
for building services engineering



The SSA journey so far

The whole SSA development has been a five stage process. The strength of SummitSkills' work has been its 'bottom-up' approach – from the very start we consulted at regional and national level with employers and stakeholders, ensuring the documents produced at each milestone were a true reflection of the sector's needs in that area.

- **Stage 1:** the sector's skills needs over the short, medium and long term future were assessed.
- **Stage 2:** current sector training provision was analysed in terms of range, nature and employer relevance.
- **Stage 3:** supply and demand were compared and gaps identified. A draft 'action plan' was drawn up with suggested solutions to address these gaps.
- **Stage 4:** SummitSkills liaised with employers, industry partners, providers and funders to gain commitment on the action plans on agree what can and will be achieved.
- **Stage 5:** the final SSA is drawn up, detailing the skills priorities and sector programmes that all partners will contribute to and support.

Some facts along the way...

- 450 face to face interviews with employers conducted and analysed
- Over 475 people consulted in meetings and supported by over 24,000 letters mailed
- Over 1450 hours of desk research and writing
- Over 14,500 calculations carried out
- 39 regional and national reports and summary documents produced
- 28 workshops in each region and country of the UK



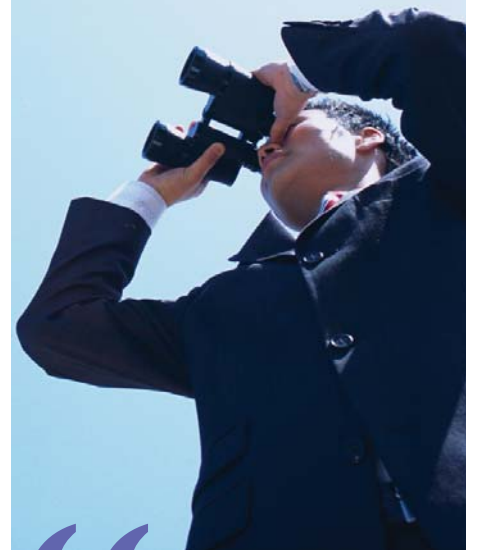
This is just the start!

The project does not finish here, this is simply 'the end of the beginning'. Now we begin a period of implementation and review. The Sector Skills Agreement activities have effectively become SummitSkills' ongoing business plan and we will be working on the projects with our partners from 01 April 2008.

To oversee the projects, 'implementation groups' consisting of employers and other partners will review and monitor progress of the SSA delivery in each English region and UK nation.

We're in this together...

The SSA is not just a 'SummitSkills project'! It has been signed up to by employers and partners all over the UK. As well as our main trade association partners: APHC, ECA, HVCA, SELECT and SNIPEF, there is also a long list of government, careers and funding bodies, plus education and training organisations who will be helping to make the SSA a success. We look forward to working with you all.



Employer views:

"In today's environment it's important that the industry has a voice to accurately represent its needs. This is why we will help to deliver the SSA with fellow employers to move forward the sector's views, interests and initiatives, feed progress back to our associations and encourage further involvement from businesses in the sector."

Paul Kane, Central Group Services Ltd

"We've valued our contribution to the SSA strategic development – employer involvement is vital to the whole process, so it's important now for more businesses to be aware of the plan and contribute, to ensure we move the provision of training to a truly employer-led system."

Steve Craddock, CA Sothers Ltd

"Through the Sector Skills Agreement we can, ultimately, influence the two sectors which are the lifeblood of our industry: education – by recognising our qualification requirements and career opportunities, and our clients – by raising their awareness of our quality, skills and competence."

Dave Ede, Lilleker Bros Ltd

To find out more or to get involved in the Sector Skills Agreement visit www.horizon-ssa.org.uk or call 01908 303960.