

Provision: Viewpoint

South East

assessment of current provision
workshop outcomes



Sector Involvement in Training

This is a 'work in progress' document. The views listed throughout these pages were suggested by delegates at the ACP meeting in Gatwick and will contribute to the Sector Skills Agreement for the South East. The recommendation numbers relate to the ACP report.

Use of training providers

Areas such as manufacturer training do not add to the formal qualification base of the sector. If formal mechanisms can be developed to recognise this kind of valuable training, skills development of this type can officially contribute to the sector's skills base.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Develop credit-accumulation transfer and quality assurance with manufacturers and private providers.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Set up some kind of skills/professional passport/personal development plan for building services engineering
- Create a continuing professional development logbook or achievement record
- Use other internal departments or sector contacts to identify usable ideas on short courses accreditation or business case

Employer willingness to pay for training

40% of businesses would be willing to pay more for their training. The sector will need some convincing to fund more than they currently do.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Get the curriculum and training structure right so that employers can see the benefit and value in training.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Show employers the benefits of training through examples of cost vs added value
- Manufacturers working in partnership with training providers to upskill employers and staff in centres

Employer spend on apprentice training

Considerable amounts of money (in this case via an employee's time) is 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:

Develop cost models further to achieve a sensible balance between employer and government training contributions

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Demonstrate the value of training through examples of cost vs added value

Views on content of provision

Qualification content in particular is seen as being in some cases out of date or not suitable enough for the needs of the sector.

RECOMMENDATION 13:

Continually update existing qualifications in line with the sector's requirements. This also includes the development of new content such as environmental technologies

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Work closely with current regional and sub regional networks to strengthen existing dissemination channels
- Develop a training pool initiative – SEEDA funding to encourage consortia of employers and training providers to develop work-based learning – not necessarily qualification based
- Current and future courses should have a useful 'life' – those in use over 15–25 years are 'out of date'
- Employers and providers to engage with SSC's regarding training that is 'fit for purpose'

Views on quality of provision

Generally there is more dissatisfaction with the quality of service and teaching provided by further education than for private training providers. Issues revolve around communication, the quality of teaching, resources and general curriculum planning.

RECOMMENDATION 12:

Work with partners to improve providers' service: administration, teaching and communication

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Use Action for Business standard to develop college's responsiveness and engagement with employers
- Consider the e-portfolio system currently in use by the automotive and/or retail sectors
- Introduce incentives for lecturers to work with employers
- Develop on-line communication for employers to access apprentice progression performance
- Use 'new standard' to drive change in the mindset of providers to be employer focused
- Hold effective and engaging employer forums
- Encourage employers into 'teaching' on courses

The Provision Itself

Rationalising the number of courses and qualifications

There are training courses and qualifications currently in the system that have not been funded for a considerable amount of time. Because there has been no demand for this curriculum we suggest that it is no longer relevant to the sector.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Remove curriculum that has been unfunded in the past three years to remove the confusion in the system.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Create one accessible “bible” which details and explains qualifications with relevant pathways
- Make HE appropriate to the type of learner and their learning styles
- Curriculum should meet requirements now not in 10–15 years time

Technical certificate funding

There is a significant amount of funding directed at stand-alone technical certificates, which offer a theory-based qualification but no work-related experience. People undertaking a full-time technical certificate are typically not employed in the sector and have little prospect of gaining work-based experience to allow them to gain a National Vocational Qualification.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Only fund technical certificates as part of a full-framework apprenticeship or as part of an NVQ.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Use Part ‘p’ (semi qualified) as an example of inappropriate representation of a qualification and misleading learners

Profile of learners

Access to the sector is still dominated by white males. Despite various initiatives and mechanisms being introduced to encourage under-represented groups to join the sector, there seems to have been little impact. There are also significant numbers of non-employed learners, both adults and 16–19s, who are on technical certificates that the sector deems to be non-economically valuable (NEV).

RECOMMENDATION 9:

Reduce the large number of NEV courses and instead develop innovative and sustainable entry and progression routes into the sector for a reduced number of non-employed status learners.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Look at other related sectors for examples of how they attract new entrants and influence parents
- Pool resources and target areas that are specific in the regions
- Promote SEEDA funded skills festivals in 07/08 providing information, advice and guidance and career options advice to influence teachers, parents and students
- Jobcentre Plus is looking at policies to encourage returners and older workers
- Look at acceptable entry qualifications for HE courses i.e. – APEL, Grandad Rights or even Grandma Rights!

Higher education

There are a low number of higher education establishments offering building services engineering courses. This poses a problem for individuals who need to gain a professional qualifications alongside their work.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Develop a sustainable network of providers offering degree and sub-degree courses within all regions.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- SEEDA has university network to which sector skills council should be present re. HE provision
- Create ‘good’ identifiable qualifications for evident gaps that exist i.e. between NC/HNC/FD for experienced and adult learners
- Tap into existing networks such as building services CoVE network
- Have a single point of contact or advice line for employers, not necessarily a local FE college

Expenditure on provision

Based on an analysis of current funding for non-economically valuable skills, there is potentially around £22 million across England that could be redistributed to much needed training provision elsewhere in the sector such as environmental technologies (solar panels, photovoltaic panels for example), business management, benchmarking, supply chain management and apprenticeships for adults.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Seek a more effective use of funding to improve sector productivity performance and skills levels

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Get building services engineering 'marketed' – raise the profile to schools, parents and teachers
- 'Public funding' – 'no, it's my money and I want to see value for money!'
- My money is 'being wasted'
- Funded continuing professional development for existing workforce for new technologies

Provider quality marks and awards

Whilst there is some take-up of quality marks and CoVE status in the region, there is still scope for more providers to achieve quality marks. Essentially if more providers achieve these standards then it should raise the overall quality baseline of the sector's provision.

RECOMMENDATION 11:

Work with provider to increase the achievement of quality marks. Agree criteria of the 'New Standard' in the sector to ensure quality provision is recognised and endorsed.

VIEWS FROM THE GROUP:

- Use the Action for Business mark as the only quality mark
- Using case study material would be helpful i.e. LSC or other quality mark and the Action for Business model
- Have one 'badge' for quality i.e. LSC quality standards
- Quality should really mean quality

Hurdles and Bridges

These 'hurdles' and 'bridges' to achieving great future provision were suggested by meeting delegates.

Hurdles	Bridges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 'Decent staff' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer focused • Up to speed with industry • Better able to communicate with employers • Understand how the business works ● Get involved in writing business plan ● Time frame <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology → demand • Bureaucracy ● Fit for purpose curriculum ● Lack of qualified work force <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. employers as lecturers • e.g. L2s running £m jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jobs on line! ● Relationships: sharing best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get communication right ● Umbrella agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership/working together • Meaningful networks • FE allowed to participate • Be seen to be interfacing with employers (continuing professional development) ● Ambassadors into schools (like science has) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also through supply chain ● Mandatory training requirements (like tendering)

Great Future Provision...

Delegates were asked what three words they would use to sum up great future provision.

Engagement	Empowerment	Collaboration
Excellence	Flexible	Modern
Flexible	Quality	Relevant
Labour Market Intelligence	Sharing	
Focused	Quality	Sustainable
Affordable	Responsive	Relevant
Supply -	Matches -	Demand

These 'practical' and 'challenging' ideas are also the views and suggestions of the meeting delegates.

The most PRACTICAL idea worth doing

- Use 'new standard' to drive forward from Action for Business and CoVE providers' responsiveness to employer needs, whether publicly funded qualifications or full cost provision
- Culture change: colleges to think about acting as businesses, responding in a timely, appropriate manner to the needs of industries they serve
- Use/broaden Action for Business standard and develop it to:
 - a) work with business better (also helps colleges look at responsiveness)
 - b) use skills festivals to help influence young people's information on the sector
- Research case study material on how HE interacts with employers in order to stimulate reflective practice by FE
- Set up online/e-mail service where we can all ask for help or offer advice to the other members to help each other do their roles better and provide support for their demanding roles/jobs
- Partnership agreements with manufacturers and training providers including continuing professional development for staff in centres
- Creation of a 'recognised' building services engineering skills passport/scheme/personal development plan/continuing professional development plan
- Staff within training establishments to be customer led and customer driven. Linked to capturing continuing professional development.

The most CHALLENGING idea worth doing

- More effective use of public funding to address skill needs and raise productivity:
 - integrate sustainable skills in qualifications
 - simplify available qualifications
 - clarify career pathway beyond L3
- Culture change: colleges to think about acting as businesses, responding in a timely, appropriate manner to the needs of industries they serve
- Colleges to work together and focus on sharing good practice and developing networks in addition to using existing networks e.g. Lifelong Learning Networks
- Focusing on relevant labour market intelligence to satisfy the different stakeholders
- To bring all parties together with the same agenda to ensure that we have enough quality staff employed and trained in the building services engineering industry.
- Developing a process to gain accreditation for short course provision that meets the needs of employers that is timely and in place when needed
- Inventive and effective awareness and marketing of sector at grass roots level i.e. schools
- Curriculum mapping exercise to ensure current provision is fit for purpose, via engagement with providers, SSCs and employers

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