



Delivering HE in the Workplace

“Higher Education has a vital role in making the country more competitive by promoting the knowledge-based aspects of our economy. By supporting lifelong learning, it gives employers and employees the skills and qualities they need for economic productivity and growth.” HEFCE

HEFCE’s Workforce Development Programme will be delivered through nine strands:

- Supporting projects from HE providers focused on developing employer co-funded provision
- Encouraging further development of the Higher Level Skills Pathfinders
- Working with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the new Employment and Skills Commission and the Sector Skills Council (SSC) Alliance as part of the SSC re-licensing process, to develop proposals inviting the development of SSC co-funding projects
- Working with Foundation Degree Forward to achieve Foundation Degree participation targets
- Working with agencies to provide a range of complementary support to HE providers
- Implementing new and flexible funding arrangements that enable HE providers to respond to fluctuations of the employer market
- Developing the longer term strategy and funding methodology to achieve larger co-funded employer engagement from 2011 onwards
- Implementing an appropriate communications strategy
- Commissioning research and evaluation to support the workforce development programme.

Practical Recommendations

There have been many academic studies around employer engagement (listed in the Useful Links section of the Delivering HE in the Workplace page).

Some of the practical recommendations made can be summarised as follows:

- Talk to employers about their needs – ensure provision is led by demand
- Understand the industry and business you are working in
- Keep a database of employers with brief details of any contact
- Keep in touch with employers on a regular basis – regardless of whether there is an opportunity
- Respond to employer feedback
- Develop a special focus or niche to help employers identify with you as a training provider
- Prepare and maintain good quality documentation
- Do what you can to streamline the administration and bureaucracy
- Ensure that employer are aware of - and able to offer - the amount of time required to support learners
- Use 52 weeks of the year for delivery
- Allow courses to start at any time of the year
- Deliver the learning in the workplace and / or offer distance learning
- Enable the transfer and accumulation of academic credits
- Accredite prior learning and experience (including work based learning)
- Recruit work mentors
- Seek to widen contacts by networking with local agencies
- Get involved with the local Learning and Skills Council, Learning Partnership or Education Business Link
- Exchange information and best practice with colleagues – database and e-mail networks can support this
- Consider a costing and pricing policy, and think about whether you can signpost SME's towards grants for training
- Establish a sound business case for action
- Consider a 'reception' system such as a dedicated help line and contact point
- Start small with a pilot project and then build on experience
- Measure and celebrate the success and communicate this back to the employer

For further information, please visit the 'Useful Links' section on the 'He in the Workplace' page.