

Skills for Business Network Employability Guide

A Skills

Toolkit

for Employers

**Produced by Asset Skills
as part of the Employability Project**



Introduction

What is the Employability Guide?

The employability guide offers employers a selection of tools that can be used to identify and develop the skills needed by the workforce to do a job effectively. The tools are based on the skills identified in the Employability Matrix.

What is the Employability Matrix?

The Employability Matrix has been developed in response to a series of research based focus groups and employer engagement work across several sectors in the UK. Employers were asked to report what skills they expected from their staff. This information has been pulled together to provide a useful tool for both employers and employees called the Employability Matrix. This document should help ensure people have the skills they need to get work, stay in work and contribute effectively to the workplace.

Is it valid?

The skills included in the matrix are consistent with the findings from international research as well as surveys by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Learning and Skills Network (LSN).

I am an employer – how can I use the matrix?

Employers can use this matrix as a checklist to see which of the skills they need for staff to be effective in their job roles. This information can help produce job descriptions, inform recruitment and selection practices and assist you to identify training needs among existing staff. Examples of how to use the matrix are contained within this guide.

Where can I go for more information?

If you would like to find out more about any of the content within this guide, please contact Asset Skills on 01604 233 336 or visit the website www.assetskills.org

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The tools are simply guidance documents and users may find that they need to be tweaked to suit their individual needs. However, the employability skills statements work well as a checklist of skills which are often taken for granted or come with the assumption that someone already has them. This isn't always the case and it can prove costly to ignore.

These skills could also determine whether a person will fit in with the organisational culture of a business.

Tool 1:

The business case for employability skills

Why do employers need to invest in employability skills?

Government research has shown that the key reason for the UK lagging behind other nations in terms of productivity and competitiveness is because of serious and persistent gaps in our national skills base.

Bringing it a little closer to home

Those gaps are often measured by data that shows 'hard to fill vacancies' and 'skills gaps'.

Hard to fill vacancies prove that we need to increase the skills of job seekers. Skills gaps show the need to improve the skills of people in work – and maybe in your organisation.

The graph below shows between 29% and 42 % of the people applying for jobs in the UK do not have the right skills. It also shows that up to 1 in 5 companies have employees that do not have the right skills to do the job they are currently employed to do.

A closer look at the skills gaps within companies in England shows the most common shortfalls occur in **team working, customer handling, communication, problem solving, literacy and numeracy**. And it is not only low skilled occupations that lack these key skills:

- Over half of staff working in personal services (customer care or client liaison roles) have skills gaps in working as a team
- More than 6 out of 10 sales staff lack customer handling skills
- Nearly half of managers do not have the required standards of problem solving skills

% Hard to fill vacancies and skills by country



Skills lacking overall and by occupation

	All 2003	All 2004	All 2005	Managers	Professionals	Associate Profs.	Administrative	Skilled Trades	Personal services	Sales	Operatives	Elementary Occupations
<i>Unweighted base</i>	112,789	85,175	109,310	10,661	8,413	5,284	10,883	8,133	9,020	21,627	9,769	25,520
<i>Weighted base (000s)</i>	1,176	1,241	1,059	115	69	65	114	81	91	218	81	226
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Skills lacking												
Team working	52	47	48	47	35	41	43	39	55	48	50	55
Customer-handling skills	55	47	46	34	30	39	52	33	47	63	29	51
Technical and practical skills	43	45	44	31	52	53	36	64	47	36	56	43
Oral communication	n/a	n/a	42	42	28	30	39	36	43	44	47	48
Problem-solving skills	47	40	40	45	36	41	44	43	41	38	43	38
Written communication	n/a	n/a	29	29	28	34	39	30	36	20	34	27
Management skills	32	25	26	76	30	23	23	18	16	23	11	15
General IT user skills	29	26	23	28	33	33	51	17	18	19	18	10
Literacy skills	24	19	22	10	18	22	24	23	32	16	27	27
Numeracy skills	21	16	21	14	16	17	18	19	21	20	28	26
Office admin skills	n/a	20	20	31	22	23	55	15	11	15	8	8
IT professional skills	13	12	12	19	26	21	29	9	8	7	5	5
Foreign Languages	7	9	9	13	5	4	7	6	13	8	12	11

Source: NESS05, NESS04, and NESS03

Base. All skills gaps followed up.

Note. Column percentages do not sum up to 100 per cent because of multiple responses

It is estimated skills gaps cost a typical firm with 50 employees £165,000 in lost revenue each year. This equates to a cost of £10 billion to the UK economy per year.¹

One in six employers (16%) in England are experiencing skills gaps in their workforce – equivalent to 1.3 million workers. Nearly eight in ten (79%) say it has had an impact on their business.²

¹National Audit Office

²National Employer Skills Survey 2005, Learning and Skills Council

What benefits will it bring?

Improving employees' skills helps employers address important workplace issues and improve business productivity.³

Benefit	Employer example
Increased productivity	Increasing the skills of employees has enabled DHL Aviation to attract and retain good people increasing productivity rates by 12%
Reduced wastage	The Co-operative Group's Centre of Excellence for Cleaning provides recognised qualifications for its employees. This initiative has boosted loyalty and consistently raised cleaning standards. As a result the life cycle of fixtures and fittings on site has been extended (eg, the life span of carpets has doubled).
Cost savings	By improving the skills of existing drivers, Fowler Welch Coolchain has negated the need for on-site accommodation for new foreign drivers, saving £200,000. The initiative has also reduced the number of foreign drivers procured by foreign agencies, saving £248,000 a year in agency and interpreter costs.
Health and Safety (reduced accident rates)	Since introducing a skills check at induction, the number of reportable accidents during 2005 (in the areas where new starters were deployed) at Pirelli Tyres was cut by 35%. Minor accidents reduced by 16% and the severity of accidents was also cut. First Bus have seen a 30% drop in staff injuries since their skills training was increased.
Absence management	Pirelli Tyres' Lifelong Learning Centre has contributed towards reducing absence levels which has saved the company £300,000.
Recruitment and retention	Providing workplace skills development helped FirstGroup plc, UK Bus Division, save a minimum of £2.8 million (4.1% of driver turnover) in recruitment costs. Dolland and Aitchison saved more than £100,000 a year in recruitment costs after investing in staff skills and training. Employer loyalty grew as staff increasingly opted for internal progression.
Increased staff morale	Norfolk County Services increased their staff satisfaction by 20%. Feedback from staff surveys indicated that support for learning and development of literacy and numeracy skills played a key part in this improvement. Sainsbury's has reported that training their staff has helped deliver better customer service and improved the life of their staff
Reputation management	Walkers Snack Foods' skills programme helped them become recognised as an employer of choice.

³National Audit Office (2008)

Benefit	Employer example
Organisational culture and change	The Skills for Life programme has helped VT Shipbuilding staff adapt to its new hi-tech facility and increased productivity by 20%.
Improved organisational relationships	Since developing a successful workplace skills programme relations between Midlands Mainline management and the rail unions (the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association) have been improved through having a common learning agenda.
Leadership and Management	On closure of its factory, Royal Doulton used Skills for Life to develop the skills of those leaving the industry, giving them the confidence to secure new employment.
Improved competitiveness	Bradgate Bakery has met production targets and ensured the continuation of commercial contracts by attracting an ethnically diverse workforce and developing a learning culture within the organisation. First Bus has seen a 41% rise in customer satisfaction measures over ten months.

“If you have the right people with the right skills and if staff feel that they are employable, they will continue to raise the standard of their work and the overall performance of the company as their confidence improves...if you can motivate them, there is a tremendous boost in performance”

Sam Maroli, Interservfm

How much will it cost?

It's easy to be put off training by the perceived costs and despite knowing the benefits it can still seem like a big expense to start with.

However, there are a range of flexible training options available these days that would mean developing your staff need not be as costly as you might think.

Flexible work-based learning, employee champions, work shadowing or 'buddy' systems are cost effective ways of training and can also empower your staff.

E-learning is also considered an extremely cost-effective method of training and courses start from under £20. E-learning eliminates many of the costs associated with traditional training including:

- reduction of employees' travel time, travel expenses and time lost due to hours spent off site
- employees being able to learn at a time pace and place to suit the individual and organisation's needs
- learning that is available for all levels of ability and can be accessed at any stage

Funding

For employees without a level 2 qualification*, funding may be available for training to help them reach that level and get an NVQ qualification.

If your employee has an identified literacy or numeracy problem, they are very likely to be eligible for funding. The following contacts will be able to offer advice on your staff's eligibility for funding.

- Learn Direct – 08000 150 750
- Train to Gain Brokers - 0800 015 55 45
- Asset Skills Helpline for advice and guidance on careers, qualifications, training and funding – 0800 056 7160

* *Equivalent to five GCSEs at grade C or above.*

HOWEVER, IF YOU ARE THINKING OF INVESTING IN YOUR EMPLOYEES' SKILLS – WHY NOT MAKE THE SKILLS PLEDGE?

“They [employees] have to have a degree of credibility...they have to be positive, trustworthy and honest and they have got to have good interpersonal skills. They need to be able to communicate with all age groups from every walk of life”

James Scott Lee, Chancellors Estate Agent

Tool 2:

The Skills Pledge & Train to Gain

When you make the Skills Pledge¹ you make skills mean business. With one-to-one consultancy from training experts, you identify training of real, practical value to your company. You support your employees as they gain the skills to make your business succeed and grow. And you as a business reap the benefits in employee productivity, motivation, confidence and retention.

The Skills Pledge is a public commitment; a promise to drive your business forwards by training your employees. It is voluntary - you fulfil it in your own time and your own way. And you're supported with impartial advice from the Government's Train to Gain service.

Train to Gain Skills Brokers put together an action plan that's tailored to your organisation and your employees. From basic skills to high-level specialist training, they find the right courses from the right providers, and organise a schedule that suits you.

They also let you know if you're eligible for funding, perhaps to cover training costs or contribute towards the wages of employees being away on courses, if your company has less than 50 staff*.

Click here to find out more about how to make the Skills Pledge and what it can mean for your business (includes case studies)

If you are not viewing this guide electronically, you can also access the information by visiting <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employersSkillsPledge.html>

Basic Skills Employer Pledge (Wales)

The Basic Skills Employer Pledge has been developed as part of the National Strategy to reduce the substantial number of adults in Wales with poor literacy and numeracy skills. It is intended for all private and public sector companies and organisations, whatever their size. It allows them to demonstrate their commitment to the National Strategy in a concrete way.

The Basic Skills Employer Pledge means that an employer pledges to *'help employees with poor basic skills to improve these basic skills'*. That is all you have to do to enter the Pledge Scheme. However, to get a Pledge Award you have to do a bit more than just give a commitment. In brief, your company or organisation has to produce an Action Plan.

For more information about the Basic Skills Employer Pledge please visit:

<http://www.basic-skills-wales.org/bsastrategy/resources/Employers.Pledge.UK1.pdf>

*Wording is taken from <http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employersSkillsPledge.html>

¹The policy background around funding for level 2, Train to Gain, the Skills Pledge, 14-19 Curriculum and diplomas apply to England only

Tool 3:

Employability explained

Frequently asked questions on employability

What do you mean by employability?

Employability defines the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required by individuals to seek, obtain and sustain employment at all levels in the labour market – a list of these skills can be found in the Employability Matrix

- Employability affects different groups of people including: young people; entrants to employment; the unemployed; people in the workforce; graduates and managers. In fact, employability concerns everyone at all levels of education and experience.
- The employability process is a continual one – skills will need to be updated as an individual progresses through their working lives.
- The level of skills required will change depending on the sector, the role, economic and social factors and personal circumstances.
- Employability depends on the way in which an individual uses their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours in the context of work.
- Employability skills do not ensure that the individual is job ready, but work ready (further training may be required to acquire job specific skills).
- Employers have a responsibility to create a culture conducive to learning and development.

What exactly are employability skills, behaviours and attitudes?

Employers have identified a broad range of employability skills, the most common of which are:

- Communication
- Team working
- Customer handling skills
- Problem solving skills
- Management skills
- General IT user skills
- Literacy skills
- Numeracy skills

“Teamwork is essential...Communication skills are also very important. Finally people skills are fundamental; this could make the difference between winning a client and losing one”

Sara Ticehurst, Cushman & Wakefield

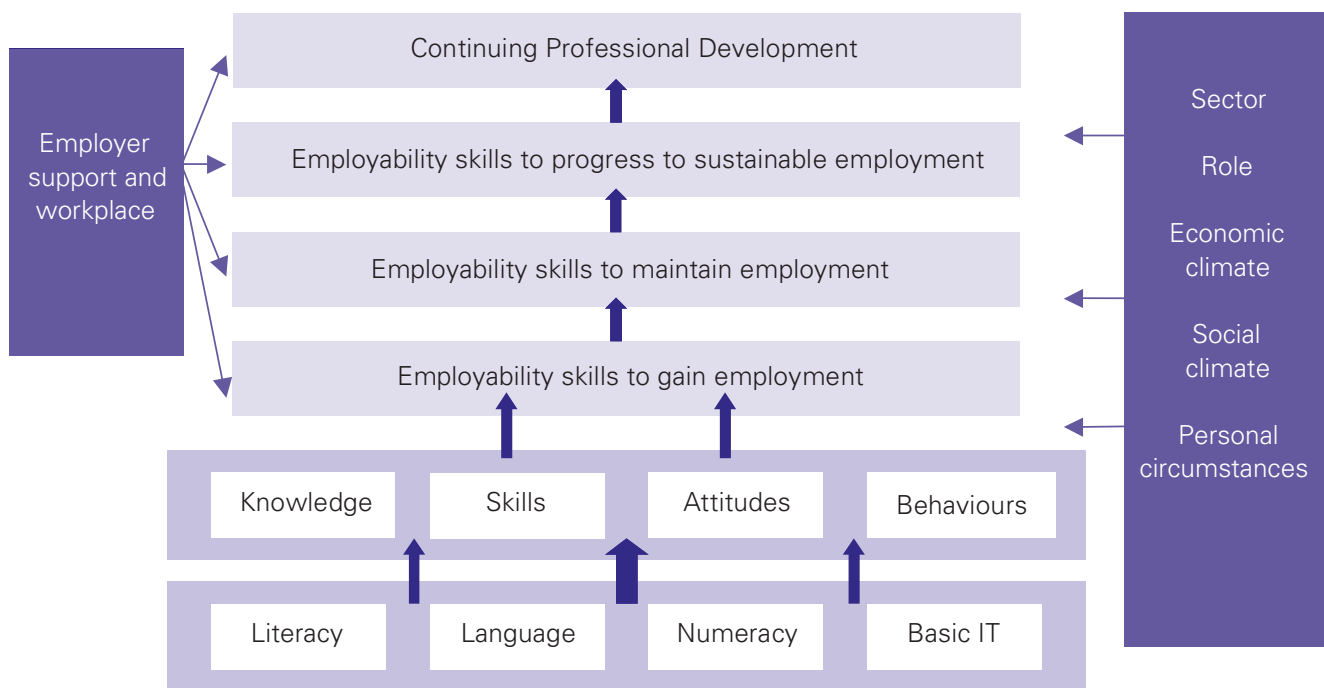
Why is it important to my business?

Research tells us that employers are unhappy with the level of skills they are getting from their recruits (including graduates). The main problems are that many workers can not communicate effectively, take instruction, turn up on time or work as a team. Even individuals with good technical knowledge or have achieved well academically are not meeting the expectations of employers. Some employers state these skills are also lacking within their existing staff too. Without these skills, businesses are finding their performance and profits are seriously affected.

What difference will employability make to me and my business?

Employability skills help your staff with the following types of activity:

- Communicate effectively with colleagues and customers
- Build better working relationships and ensure customers have confidence in your business
- Plan their time and other resources to achieve goals and make sure that deadlines and service standards are met
- Work with others in a team, identifying individual roles and how they can support others
- Identify strengths and weaknesses and how any problems can be addressed
- Follow instructions and use initiative so they can manage their own workload



These are just a few examples but there are other benefits too...

Investment in employees and their employability skills can lead to:

- Higher staff retention
- Reduced absence levels
- Reduced recruitment and induction costs
- Improved staff motivation and confidence
- Improved performance and productivity
- Higher customer satisfaction

Individuals may be less likely to leave if they feel they are invested in and are important to the company. This in turn cuts replacement costs. With fewer new staff, induction costs are also reduced and knowledge and expertise of existing staff remains in the company. If this saving was then reinvested into further training for staff, the company is likely to see benefits from improved motivation and confidence among workers. Customer satisfaction levels are also likely to improve and staff are less likely to take time off for stress related reasons as they feel more proficient at their job.

Diagram 1: Literacy, language, numeracy and basic IT skills underpin the employability skills that are required to gain work, keep work and progress to sustainable employment and Continuing Professional Development. The diagram also shows the influential factors that affect the development of Employability Skills such as the sector they work in, personal circumstances and employer support.

“If staff feel that that they are employable, they can continue to raise the standard of their work and the overall performance of the company as their confidence improves...if you can motivate them, there is a tremendous boost in performance”

Sam Maroli, Interservfm

Shouldn't schools teach these skills?

Yes they should – and increasingly they do.

- New functional skills are being introduced for all young people who get back to the basics of language and numeracy.
- The nature of the world of work and the skills needed to get along at work now form part of the curriculum for all 14-19 year olds in education. This includes work experience and placements, training in entrepreneurship and Specialised Diplomas that teach employability skills in a sector based context.
- Job profiles are being developed for a wide range of roles which identify the precise mix of employability skills needed to be successful. These are being used by careers advisors and teachers to try and bring 'real life' work contexts into the classrooms.
- There are also a wide range of employability qualifications being developed by awarding bodies that can help individuals gain the skills they need to be successful at work – contact www.assetskills.org for more details.

However, many individuals who lack employability skills have left school and are already in the workplace. Even employees who have the basic levels of skills need support and opportunities to improve their skills and take them to the next level.

For example, a cleaner needs communication skills to talk to colleagues, customers and the public if say, they are working in a shopping centre and may need to answer questions for the time or directions to the toilets. A cleaning manager will also need communication skills to talk to colleagues but they will have to explain instructions clearly, be able to motivate staff, talk to clients to try and sell the benefits of using their cleaning company and negotiate contracts. These are all higher level skills but they require communication skills to do them.

What support is there to help me develop employability skills in my business?

- Refer to the Asset Skills and SfBN Employability Guide
- Contact your Sector Skills Council – Click here for contact details or visit www.ukces.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=16
- Visit Learn Direct - www.learndirect-business.co.uk/ or call 08000 150 750

Learn Direct Business provides online and work-based training to help companies develop and become more efficient by offering solutions for your skills and business needs.

- Visit Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk or call 0845 600 9 006

Business Link can provide you with information and advice on how to improve your business. They will be able to fast track you to the support you need on a local basis.

For Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, the following organisations are available and offer similar support to Business Link:

- Flexible Support for Business www.business-support-wales.gov.uk or call 03000 6 03000
- Invest NI www.investni.com or call 028 9023 9090
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise www.hiebusiness.co.uk or call 0845 609 6611
- Business Gateway www.bgateway.com or call 0845 609 6611

England Only

- Visit Train to Gain - www.traintogain.gov.uk or call 0800 015 55 45

The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Train to Gain service provides impartial, independent advice on training to businesses across England. It can help businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness by ensuring that employees have the right skills to do the best job. Train to Gain gives you access to a skills broker who will carry out a needs analysis of training within your business and help you assess what skills your business has now and what you will need in the future.

Tool 4:

Employability skills: are they for us?

The tick box chart on the following page is a quick survey designed to find out if a lack of employability skills among your staff are causing problems in your day to day operations.

If you find that you are ticking the boxes labelled 'all the time' and 'regularly', you could benefit from investing in some employability skills training.

There are many ways in which you can train your staff. It doesn't have to be big or expensive and you may be able to get some help to pay for it. Please see the Tool 8: Training Needs Analysis and Tool 9: In-House Training for ideas on developing your staff.

How often do your staff have difficulties with the following?	All the time	Regularly	Now & then	Never
1 Customer Care: face-to-face contact with customers, helping them with queries, questions or problems				
2 Customer Care: dealing with customers on the phone				
3 Reading and understanding information (graphs, charts, words, diagrams)				
4 Following instructions – written or oral: following instructions in the right order; doing everything required				
5 Following Health and Safety practices and procedures				
6 Listening and asking questions				
7 Learning from mistakes and accepting feedback in a constructive manner				
8 Making estimates, measuring and calculating				
9 Recording information accurately				
10 Dealing with people, problems and situations effectively				
11 Planning and managing time including punctuality and time-keeping				
12 Working independently and as part of a team				
13 Carrying out multiple tasks				
14 Showing a willingness to learn and adapt to new working practices				
15 Contributing to team sharing of information and experience				
16 Assessing situations and identifying problems				
17 Adapting to changing requirements and situations				
18 Taking action and finding solutions to problems				
19 Selecting the right tools for the job				
20 Show interest, initiative and effort				
21 Acting responsible in work situations and towards others				

How often do you feel that your organisation has difficulties with the following?	All the time	Regularly	Now & then	Never
21 Staff flexibility: willingness to learn and work in different jobs				
22 Staff turnover/recruitment: recruiting and keeping the right staff for the jobs you have				
23 Absenteeism: avoiding work or training because of insecurity and lack confidence				
24 Meeting production targets: delays or errors to production schedules caused by skills gaps in staff				
25 Using technology to communicate and complete tasks				
26 Developing people: conducting staff appraisals and identify clear career paths for progression				

Investing and taking interest in your staff's employability skills could help you improve your business if you have ticked "All the time" or "Regularly" for any of the statements above.

Tool 5:

The Employability Matrix

The Employability Matrix has been developed in response to series of research based focus groups and employer engagement work across several sectors in the UK. Employers were asked to report what skills they expected from their employees. This information should provide a useful tool for employers, employees and anyone involved in making sure people have the skills they need to get work and stay in work.

The matrix can be used in a number of ways:

Employers can use the matrix as a checklist to see which of the skills they need for staff to be effective in their job roles. This information can help produce job descriptions, inform recruitment and selection practices and assist you to identify training needs among existing staff.

Employees can use the matrix to help them understand employer expectations and as a prompt for CVs, job applications and identifying areas for self-development.

Training providers and education institutions can use the matrix to inform the development of their course and programme materials or target specific skills to offer bespoke training for employers.

The skills are labelled as either FLT or L2+. The skills labelled FLT are skills expected at base or entry level or from workers in low skilled occupations (also for employees working at NVQ Level 1 and below). L2+ skills are skills we would expect to see from an individual who wants to progress in the workplace or take on roles at NVQ Level 2 or above.

The matrix is deliberately generic so it can apply to a greater number of users. The statements can be put in context to make more sense for your operating environment.

After the matrix on the following page, there is an example of how the matrix might look for the health care sector for individuals working within entry level occupations. Please note that this is an example only and the matrix can be adapted for use in all sectors.

Code	Employability Statements	Level
A	Fundamental Skills: the skills needed as a base for further development	FLT or L2+
A 1	Communication	
A 1.1	Read and understand information shown in a variety of ways (eg, words, graphs, charts and pictures)	FLT
A 1.2	Write and speak so others pay attention and understand	FLT
A 1.3	Listen and ask questions to understand and value other people's points of view	FLT
A 1.4	Share information using ICT such as email and telephones	FLT
A 1.5	Use science, IT and maths skills to explain ideas and make them clear	L2+
A 2	Use numbers	
A 2.1	Decide what needs to be measured or added up	FLT
A 2.2	Watch and write down data in the correct way using the right tools	FLT
A 2.3	Make estimates and check calculations	FLT
A3	Manage information	
A 3.1	Find, gather and organise information using IT and IT systems	FLT
A 3.2	Access, analyse and apply knowledge and skills from a number of areas (eg, the arts, languages, science, technology, maths, social sciences)	L2+
B	Personal Management Skills: the personal skills, qualities, attributes, attitudes and behaviours that drive one's potential for growth	
B 1	Demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours	
B 1.1	Feel good about yourself and be confident	FLT
B 1.2	Display positive body language	FLT
B 1.3	Deal with people, problems and situations in an honest, true and decent way	FLT
B 1.4	Be aware of your own and other people's good efforts	FLT
B 1.5	Take care of your own health and hygiene	FLT
B 1.6	Show interest, initiative and effort	FLT
B 1.7	Make sure that the way you look and the way you dress suits the place you work	FLT
B 1.8	Be able to travel to work on their own (if necessary)	FLT
B 1.9	Turn up to work on time (or let employer know why you will not be there on time)	FLT
B 2	Be responsible	
B 2.1	Set goals in order of when they should be done	L2+
B 2.2	Make sure home and work life are balanced	L2+
B 2.3	Manage your own personal finances	FLT
B 2.4	Plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals	L2+

Code	Employability Statements	Level
B 2.5	Assess, weigh and manage risk	L2+
B 2.6	Be answerable for your actions and the actions of your group	FLT
B 2.7	Be socially responsible and contribute to your community	FLT
B 2.8	Act responsibly with alcohol and medications	FLT
B 2.9	Be aware of law on the misuse of substances	FLT
B 3	Be adaptable	
B 3.1	Work on your own or as part of a team	FLT
B 3.2	Carry out multiple tasks or projects	L2+
B 3.3	Find and suggest new ways to achieve goals and get the job done and achieve goals	L2+
B 3.4	Be open and respond well to change	FLT
B 3.5	Learn from your mistakes and accept feedback	FLT
B 3.6	Cope with uncertainty	FLT
B 4	Learn continuously	
B 4.1	Be willing to keep on learning and find ways to improve yourself	FLT
B 4.2	Look at what you are good at and what you need to improve	FLT
B 4.3	Set your own learning goals	L2+
B 4.4	Identify and access learning sources and opportunities	L2+
B 4.5	Plan for and achieve your learning goals	L2+
B 5	Work safely	
B 5.1	Be aware of own and group health and safety rules and act in line with these	FLT
C	Teamwork Skills: the skills and attributes needed to contribute effectively	
C1	Work with others	
C 1.1	Understand the roles people play in a group and how you can best work with them	L2+
C 1.2	Ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear	L2+
C 1.3	Be flexible: give respect, be open to and supportive of other people's thoughts, opinions and contributions	FLT
C 1.4	Accept and respect that people are different and may have different views and ways of working	FLT
C 1.5	Accept and provide feedback in a positive way	FLT
C 1.6	Help a team by sharing information and skills you are good at	FLT
C 1.7	Lead or support and motivate a team to achieve high standards	L2+
C 1.8	Understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions	L2+
C.1.9	Manage and resolve conflict	L2+

Code	Employability Statements	Level
C 2	Think and solve problems	
C 2.1	Tell a person in charge if there is a problem	FLT
C 2.2	Assess situations and identify problems	FLT
C 2.3	Ask for other points of view and assess them based on facts	L2+
C 2.4	Be aware of how a problem can be down to different reasons such as people making mistakes, PCs not working how they should, people not speaking or listening well enough	L2+
C 2.5	Find the cause of a problem	L2+
C 2.6	Find new and creative ways to solve a problem	L2+
C 2.7	Be happy to use science, IT and maths as ways to think, gain and share knowledge, solve problems and decide what to do	L2+
C 2.8	Evaluate solutions to help give advice or recommendations	L2+
C 2.9	Implement solutions	FLT
C 2.10	Continuously monitor the success of a project or task and identify ways to improve	L2+
C 3	Participate in projects and tasks	
C 3.1	Carry out a project or task from start to finish with well laid out aims and outcomes	FLT
C 3.2	Plan or design a project or task from start to finish with well laid out aims and outcomes	L2+
C 3.3	Develop a plan, ask for feedback, test, change plan if needed and put into action	L2+
C 3.4	Work to agreed quality standards and plans	FLT
C 3.5	Use the correct tools and machines for a task or project	FLT
C 3.6	Adapt to changing requirements and information	FLT
C.3.7	Always check how well a project or task was carried out and find ways to make it better	L2+
C 4	Customer care	
C 4.1	Talk and listen well to customers	FLT
C 4.2	Help customers and deal with their questions and problems	FLT
C 4.3	Develop productive relationships with customers	L2+
C 4.4	Build customer confidence in the level of service	L2+

Tool 6:

Setting the Matrix in context

The example below shows how the matrix has been adapted for use in the health care sector. However, the matrix on pages 14-17 can be contextualised for use in every sector.

Benefits of contextualising the matrix for your sector:

- Improve your understanding of the job roles in your company
- Develop more detailed job descriptions and more useful person specifications
- Improve recruitment and retention processes allowing you to match candidates to jobs more effectively and take on recruits that culturally fit with your business
- Have a template to appraise staff against the skills needed for their job
- Create training materials or guidance on employees 'weak' areas – or provide information to training providers so they can produce bespoke training programmes

Example 1: Health Care Sector Employability Matrix

1. Functional skills – *the practical skills needed in communication, mathematics and technology Communication and customer care*

- Communicate appropriately with others at work eg, speak politely to service users/patients/ relatives/ clients.
- Listen and respond to simple information, ask questions to clarify understanding eg, follow instructions from your supervisor and check that you've understood.
- Respond appropriately to queries and complaints eg, deal with simple queries where possible and refer difficult ones to a senior member of staff.
- Take part in discussions on familiar topics eg, briefly chat with people to put them at ease.
- Complete simple forms eg, fill in personal details.
- Read and understand short texts eg, notices and signs in the workplace.

Minimum standard Adult Literacy Entry Level 3 or SCQF 3

Use mathematics

- Read and understand simple symbols, diagrams and charts eg, a work roster.
- Extract numerical information from lists, tables, diagrams and simple charts eg, find the number of meals required.
- Tackle practical number problems using simple calculations eg, measure cleaning liquids.
- Contribute to simple audits or surveys relevant to own work area.
- Record simple numerical information eg, use a tick sheet.

Minimum standard Adult Numeracy Entry Level 3 or SCQF 3

Use technology

- Use technology appropriately eg, use the intranet.
- Follow and understand the need for security practices eg, keep your password or code confidential.

Minimum standard Functional Skills Entry Level 3

2. Teamwork – *the skills and attributes needed to contribute towards productive healthcare*

Work with others

- Work with others towards achieving shared goals eg, make sure all the meal trolleys are put out on time.
- Respect and be open to the thoughts, opinions and contributions of others eg, listen to other people's points of view.
- Recognise and respect people's diversity, individual differences and perspectives eg, respect a request for a vegetarian meal.
- Learn from your mistakes and accept feedback eg, accept advice from your supervisor.

Solving problems

- Follow a given procedure in response to a problem eg, report broken equipment.

3. Personal – *the personal skills, qualities, attributes and behaviours that contribute towards productive healthcare*

Demonstrate positive attitudes & behaviours

- Deal with people, problems and situations with honesty and integrity eg, [handing in lost items](#).
- Recognise and reflect on your own and other people's good efforts eg, [give and receive praise and encouragement](#).
- Take care of your personal health, including hygiene and appearance.
- Make an effort and show interest in your work.
- Suggest alternative ways to get the job done.

Be responsible

- Meet timekeeping and attendance requirements.
- Be aware of health and safety practices and procedures (including preventing infection), and act in accordance with these eg, [washing your hands regularly or lifting items correctly](#).
- Understand your rights and responsibilities in the workplace eg, [meet timekeeping requirements](#).
- Understand confidentiality.
- Manage the balance of your work and personal life.
- Plan and manage time and resources to achieve goals under direct supervision eg, [decide what to do first when given more than one task](#).
- Be accountable for your actions eg, [reporting incidents promptly](#).

Be adaptable

- Be open and respond constructively to change eg, [learn to use new equipment](#).
- Cope with uncertainty eg, [change work patterns or report that someone has collapsed](#).

Learn continuously

- Be willing to continuously learn and grow eg, [attend training courses](#).
- Assess personal strengths and areas for development, with support eg, [as part of your Personal Development Review \(PDR\)](#).
- Make use of learning sources and opportunities eg, [use a learning centre, if available](#).
- Plan for and achieve your learning goals with support from supervisor eg, [as part of your PDR](#).

Setting the Matrix in context - Example 2: Sector Employability Toolkit (SETs)

Recruitment toolkits have been developed by nine Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Standards Setting Body (SSB) through a joint national project between Sector Skills Development Agency, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and the Learning & Skills Council (LSC). The materials were developed using the employability matrix.

These include:

- A recruitment checklist which states the requirements of people entering the industry. For example, a license to operate.
- An employability checklist which covers the skills and behaviours expected of recruits.
- A framework for a two week sector specific pre employment training programme.

These frameworks can be used by the LSC, employers, providers and skills brokers to inform the design of pre employment programmes.

It is anticipated that employers will wish to tailor these to ensure the training meets their individual recruitment needs.

Materials are currently available for the following industries:

- Cleaning
- Health
- Construction
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Security
- Sport and Leisure
- Transport
- Retail
- Textiles

More sector coverage may be planned or you could use the templates to produce your own toolkit.

More information can be found at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/London/Providers/local-employment-partnerships>

The link will take you to examples of the recruitment checklist, employability checklist, training programmes and training workbooks.

Tool 7:

Recruitment and Selection (R&S) Tool for Employers/HR Managers

This tool is based on the Employability Matrix. The table below is split into two skills levels – the first half contains 'Entry Level Skills' which an employer would expect to see among staff just entering the workforce or working in low-skilled occupations. The second half contains 'Skills for Progression' – the additional skills employers want from their staff as they progress. (Please note these skills are in addition to the Entry Level Skills.)

The employability skills listed in the table cover all responses from employers and not all job roles will require all these skills. We expect differences will exist in different sectors, occupations and organisations.

How to use this tool:

Step 1: Identify a job role in your organisation – this may be one that you are about to start recruiting for

Step 2: Insert the current job description for your reference

Step 3: Use the checklist (first column) to identify which employability skills are needed for the specified job role – you may wish to add other skills to the table and insert new rows

Step 4: Move across to the column labelled 'Job Description' and follow the prompt questions in the box below

Step 5: Continue to move along the columns, answering the questions and ticking the appropriate skills against the checklist

Step 6: Once all columns have been filled, you will see whether there is consistency in your R&S process or where you can make improvements. You may wish to update R&S documents or systems to reflect the employability needs of your business.

You could promote the employability skills relevant to your business or against a specific Job Description with schools or Education Business Partnerships to your local Job Centre Plus office so that teachers, advisors, pupils and jobseekers are aware of what it takes to work for your company. This could increase the potential pool of labour and raise awareness of your business at the same time.

If you are not viewing this document electronically:

Education Business Partnerships can be accessed via: www.nebpn.org

Job Centre Plus Offices can be accessed via: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/index.html

Job Role:

Job Description:

Employability Skills	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Entry Level Skills - FLT	<p>What activities will be carried out in this job role? Which of the following skills are needed for those tasks? (please tick the boxes which apply)</p>	<p>Which skills are currently mentioned in the job description for this role? Are they the same as the previous column? (please tick the boxes which apply)</p>	<p>Does the application form or interview (or other selection process) ask for evidence of these skills? Tick which skills the recruitment process currently covers. Are there any gaps? Can they be filled?</p>	<p>Do you have an appraisal or training needs analysis system set up to monitor performance of existing staff? Do you need to monitor any of the employability skills as part of this process?</p>
Communication				
Read and understand information shown in a variety of ways (e.g. words, graphs, charts and pictures)				
Write and speak so others listen and understand				
Listen and ask questions to understand other people's points of view				
Share information using ICT such as email and telephones				
Use numbers				
Understand how to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers and when each should be used				
Observe and record data in the correct way using the right tools				
Make estimates and check calculations				
Manage information				
Find and use information using IT and IT systems				

Employability Skills	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Personal Management Skills: the personal skills, qualities, attributes, attitudes and behaviours that drives one's potential for growth				
Demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours				
Feel good about yourself and be confident				
Display positive body language				
Be honest				
Be aware of your own and other people's good efforts				
Take care of your own health and hygiene				
Show interest, initiative and effort				
Make sure that the way you look and the way you dress suits the place you work				
Be able to travel to work on their own (if necessary)				
Turn up to work on time (or let employer know why you will not be there on time)				
Be responsible				
Manage your own personal finances				
Be answerable for your actions and the actions of your group				
Be socially responsible (where appropriate) and aware of your community				
Act responsibly with alcohol and medications				
Be aware of law on the misuse of substances				

Employability Skills	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Be adaptable				
Work on your own or as part of a team				
Be open and respond well to simple changes				
Learn from your mistakes and accept feedback				
Learn continuously				
Be willing to keep on learning and find ways to improve yourself				
Look at what you are good at and what you need to improve				
Work safely				
Be aware of own and group health and safety rules and act in line with these				
Teamwork Skills: the skills and attributes needed to contribute effectively				
Work with others				
Respect other people's thoughts, opinions and contributions				
Accept and respect people's diversity				
Accept and provide feedback in a positive way				
Help a team by sharing information and skills you are good at				

Employability Skills	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Think and solve problems				
Follow correct procedures in an emergency or if there is a problem				
Assess situations and identify problems				
Implement solutions				
Participate in projects and tasks				
Carry out a project or task from start to finish with well laid out aims and outcomes				
Work to agreed quality standards and plans				
Use the correct tools and machines for a task or project				
Adapt to simple changes in requirements and information				
Customer care				
Talk and listen well to customers				
Help customers and deal with their questions and problems				

Skills for Progression - L2+

	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Fundamental Skills: the skills needed as a base for further development	<p>What activities will be carried out in this job role? Which of the following skills are needed for those tasks? (please tick the boxes which apply)</p>	<p>Which skills are currently mentioned in the job description for this role? Are they the same as the previous column? (please tick the boxes which apply)</p>	<p>Does the application form or interview (or other selection process) ask for evidence of these skills? Tick which skills the recruitment process currently covers. Are there any gaps? Can they be filled?</p>	<p>Do you have an appraisal or training needs analysis system set up to monitor performance of existing staff? Do you need to monitor any of the employability skills as part of this process?</p>
Communication				
Use scientific, technological and mathematical terminology to explain ideas and make them clear when appropriate				
Manage information				
Access, analyse and apply knowledge and skills from a number of areas to link ideas together				
Personal Management Skills: the personal skills, qualities, attributes, attitudes and behaviours that drives one's potential for growth				
Be responsible				
Prioritise goals and activities				
Work towards a work/life balance				
Plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals				
Assess, weigh and manage risk				

Skills for Progression - L2+	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Be adaptable				
Carry out multiple tasks or projects				
Find and suggest new ways to achieve goals and get the job done				
Cope with uncertainty				
Learn continuously				
Set your own learning goals				
Identify and access learning sources and opportunities				
Plan for and achieve your learning goals				
Teamwork Skills: the skills and attributes needed to contribute effectively				
Work with others				
Understand the roles people play in a group and how you can best work with them				
Ensure that a team's purpose and objectives are clear				
Lead or support and motivate a team to achieve high standards				
Understand the role of conflict in a group to reach solutions				
Manage and resolve conflict				
Think and solve problems				
Ask for other points of view and assess them based on facts				
Be aware of how a problem can be down to different reasons such as people making mistakes, PCs not working how they should, people not speaking or listening well enough				

Skills for Progression - L2+	Job Role & Activities	Job Description	Recruitment and Selection	Appraisal or Training Needs Analysis
Find the cause of a problem				
Find new and creative ways to solve a problem				
Be happy to use science, IT and maths as ways to think, gain and share knowledge, solve problems and decide what to do				
Evaluate solutions to help give advice or recommendations				
Continuously monitor the success of a project or task and identify ways to improve				
Participate in projects and tasks				
Plan or design a project or task from start to finish with well laid out aims and outcomes				
Develop a plan, ask for feedback, test, change plan if needed and put into action				
Always check how well a project or task was carried out and find ways to make it better				
Customer care				
Develop productive relationships with customers				
Build customer confidence in the level of service				

Tool 8:

Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

What does a TNA do?

This analysis takes account of the company's business objectives, organisational structure and operating environment to assess the current working practices and procedures. It aims to identify where they could be improved to help maximise the company's efficiency, effectiveness and profit through the development of skills among employees.

How can this tool help employers?

This document assists an employer to gather all the relevant information together. It poses questions which can help make an informed decision on aspects like changing working practices or increasing staff training and development activities.

Where has it come from?

This tool has been developed from examples used by consultants and other organisations that carry out organisational or training needs analysis. An employer may wish to contact these agents to carry out the analysis on their behalf, or they may like to call their Sector Skills Council to help identify next steps. In any case this document will give employers an idea of the kind of information that will help move their organisation forward.

Before completing the document, it would be helpful to gather any supporting documents that contain the following information:

- Business aims and objectives and mission statement
- Training strategy including details of training budget
- Organisational structure chart
- Recruitment and Selection documents such as Job Descriptions, Person Specifications, Application Forms, Interview Structures
- Induction materials such as Staff Handbook or Standard Operating Procedures for job roles

Section 1: Company overview, business objectives and business drivers

Company overview

- How was the business started?
- What are your organisation's main markets, products and services?

How many employees are employed at your organisation?

The number of employees is the number of "full-time equivalents". For example, if you employ 10 part-time staff, report that as "5". If you employ 5 full-time and 5 part-time, report that as "7.5". An informed estimate is acceptable.

Organisational aims and objectives

1. Business objectives: what would you like to achieve and by when?

Business drivers:

External eg,

- Do you have any new competition?
- Are you still selling to the same customers?
- Do they still have the same demands?
- Are legal, political, social, technological or economic changes having an effect on your business?

Internal eg, what are you targets in relation to sales, manufacturing errors, customer satisfaction?

Key Performance Indicators

How do you measure costs, efficiency, customer satisfaction, quality, absence? How do you monitor performance? What Key Performance Indicators do you have eg, targets achieved, sales volumes, inspections, clients monitoring visits?

Section 2: Recruitment, skills and training

Recruitment:

- How do you select new employees?
- Are any vacancies hard to fill or are there any issues around the recruitment or retention of staff? Are you expecting any changes in staffing levels or structures due to retirement, promotion or staff leaving?

Skills and training:

- Has your organisation had any critical incidents in the past – has anything gone wrong, nearly gone wrong or hadn't gone as well as hoped? Would an improvement in people skills or knowledge have prevented this from happening?
- Are there any trends or issues in customer feedback received – does this relate to employees skills?
- What would you like to improve on and what do you need to achieve this?
- Do you have any skills shortages/hard to fill vacancies/ skills needed for new technology, expansion or redundancy?

What is your training strategy? (Include training budget/spend per employee)

Blank response area for training strategy.

Skills training/updating: Are you currently undertaking training and development?

Blank response area for skills training/development.

How close is your current workforce to meeting any regulatory training targets (%)?

Blank response area for regulatory training targets.

Section 3: Structure of work roles

Structure of work roles

Where do/can the management team have a role in supporting skills development within the workforce?

Where do/can supervisors/team leaders have a role in supporting employability skills development within the workforce?

What opportunities exist for operatives/ junior level staff to contribute towards skills development within the company (job sharing, work shadowing, 'buddy' systems)

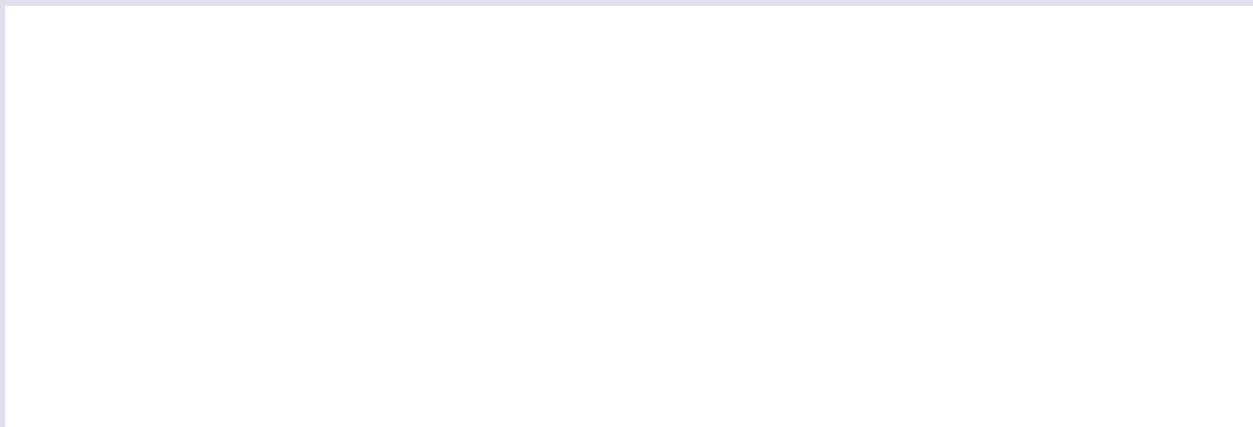
Section 4: Engaging staff in skills development; presenting skills development opportunities to employees

Engaging staff in skills development

What is needed to engage the following staff in developing skills?

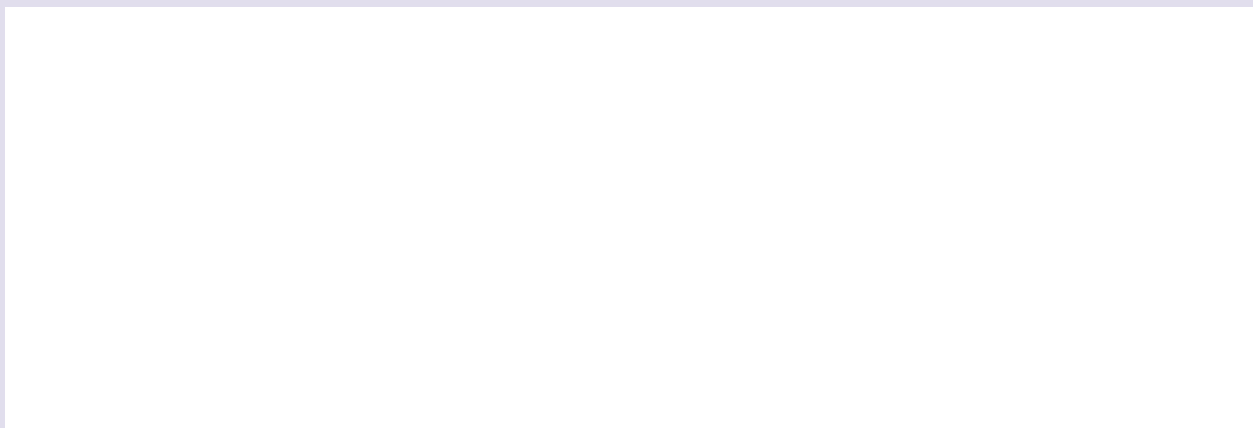
Senior management:

(Business case, training policies, champions, business levers)

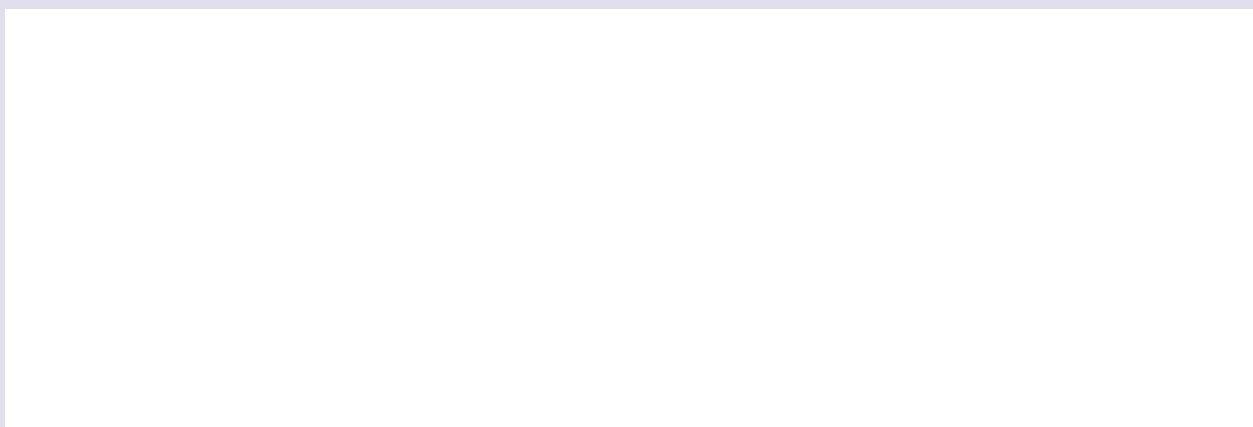


Line management/supervisors/team leaders:

(Training Needs Analysis (TNA), appraisals, team meetings)



Trainers:



Trade union: (Union learning representatives, TU officials)



Presenting skills development opportunities to employees

Raising awareness:

(How can employees learn how to improve their skills – eg, through a company newsletter, company policies, notices, confidential screening, training interviews, social events)



Section 5: External agencies/support:

(Do you have any preferred external support agencies? - eg, Business Link, Learndirect, Skills for Life Training Providers, Sector Skills Councils)

A large, empty rectangular box with a light purple border, intended for the user to write their preferred external support agencies.

Section 6: Opportunities for employability skills delivery

Could any of the following processes be improved?

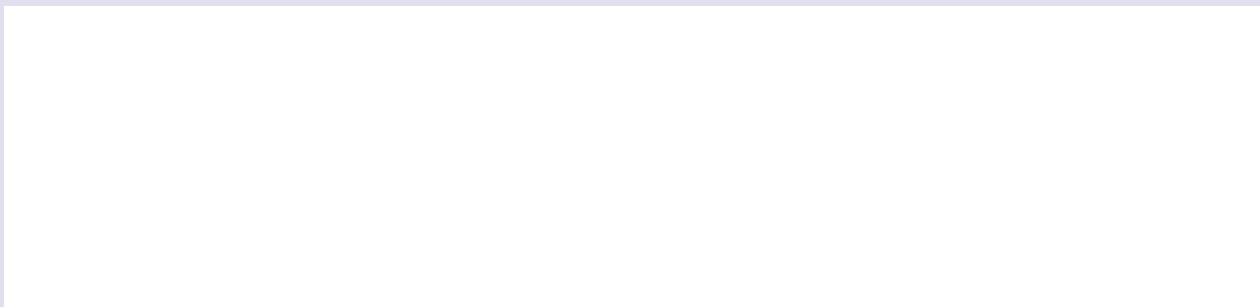
Recruitment:

(Job applications, interviews, aptitude testing)



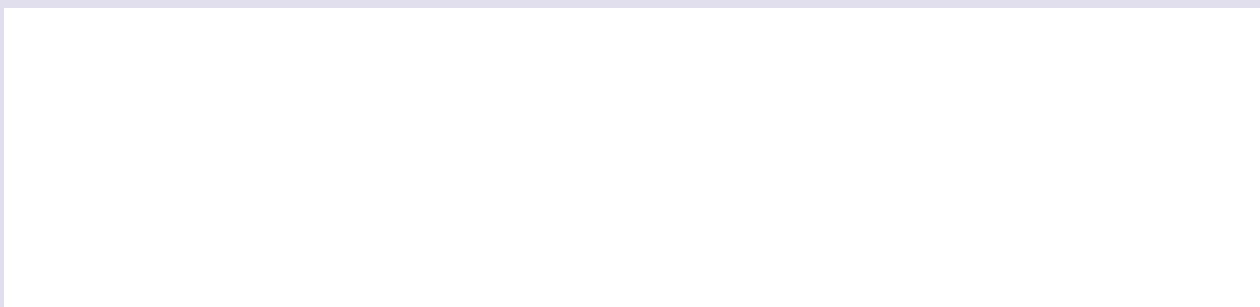
Induction training:

(Initial assessment, skills training, policies and operating procedures)



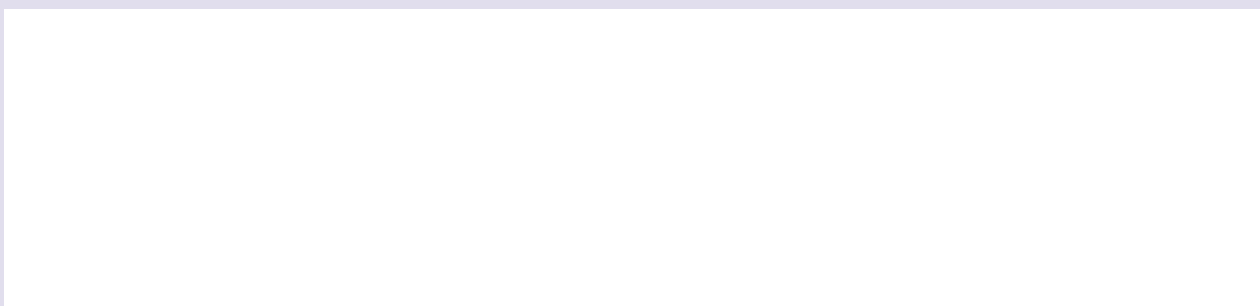
Workplace learning:

(Timing, location, individual, group, on/off site)



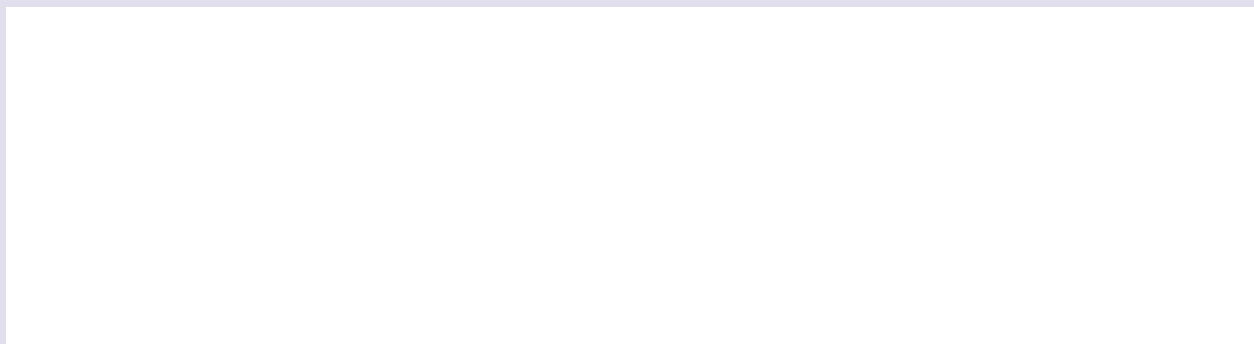
Learning materials:

(Company documentation, workbooks/sheets, tutor delivered, mentoring)



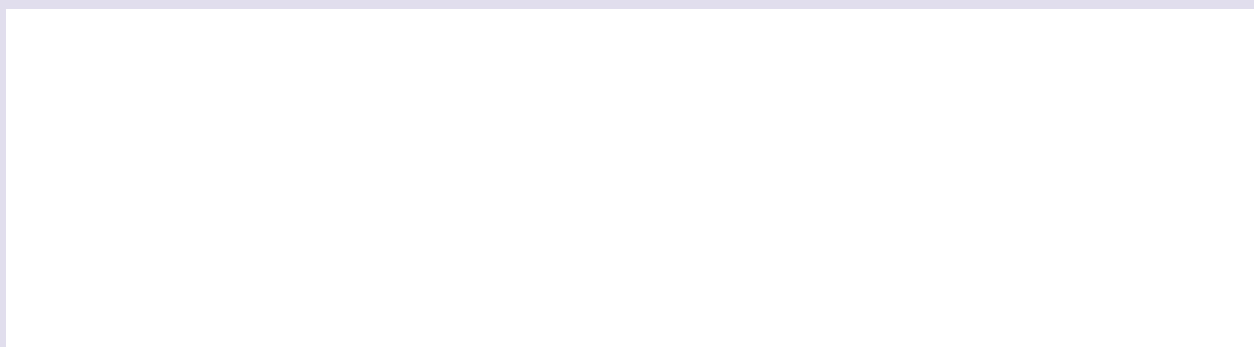
Learning materials:

(Company documentation, workbooks/sheets, tutor delivered, mentoring)

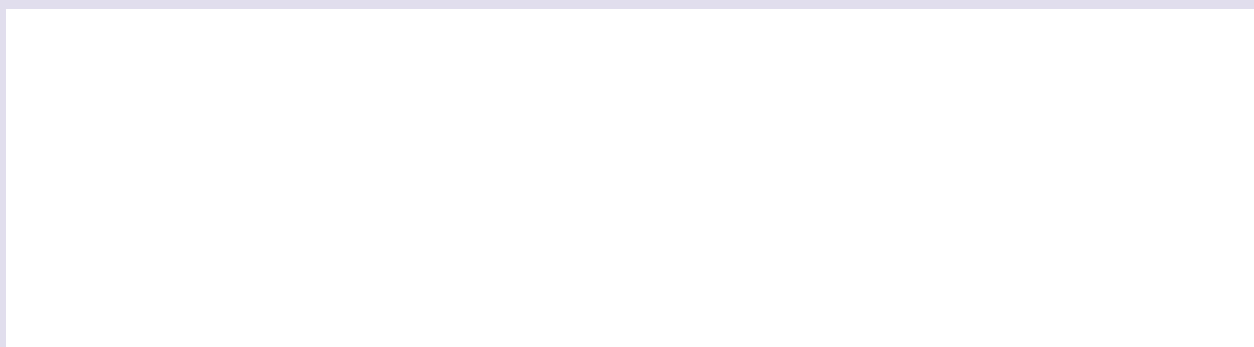


Learning support:

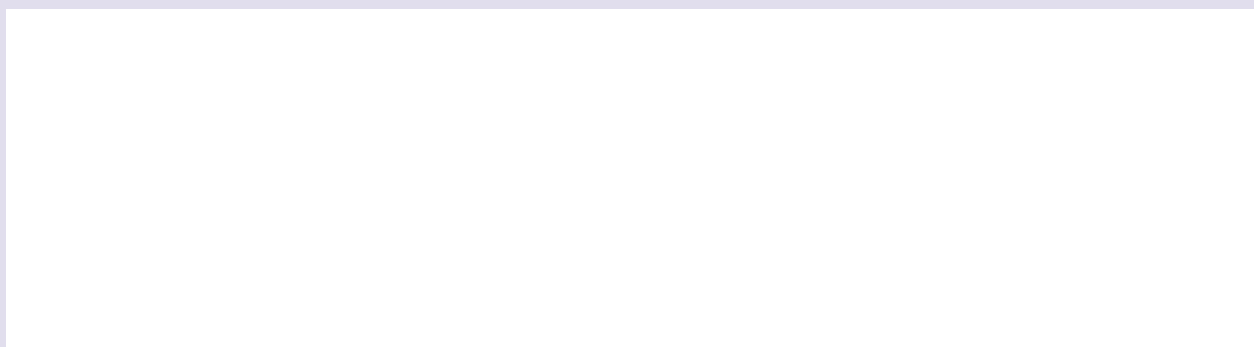
(Trainers, trade union reps, team leaders, tutors)



Use of IT: do staff have access to email, internet, intranet or online networks?



Do all staff have job descriptions and contracts?



Next steps

- Analyse findings from each section to see if changes should and could be made. Are the proposed changes in line with the original business objectives and drivers set out in this document?
- Identify whether this can be done internally or whether external support is required?
- If you wish to carry out internal training, refer to Tool 9: In House Training
- If external support is required, the following agencies will be able to provide guidance and support:
 - Train to Gain - www.traintogain.gov.uk or call 0800 015 55 45 (England only)
 - Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk or call 0845 600 9 006 (see page 10 for Home Nation equivalents)
 - Learn Direct - www.learndirect-business.co.uk/ or call 08000 150 750 (see page 10 for Scottish equivalent)

Case Study:

“Here's how a Training Needs Analysis improved our performance”

Energy and telecommunications consultancy provider, The Inenco Group Ltd, is based in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire. The company carried out a TNA and was able to tailor its own training, boost staff motivation, and reduce staff turnover⁴.

The full case study can be found in the Appendix to this guide.

⁴Case Study taken from Invest Northern Ireland www.investni.com

Tool 9:

In House Training

In house training is usually carried out by a member of your own staff at a time that suits you. It can be in the form of a talk, a practical course or simple job shadowing. It can also include training manuals and staff handbooks. While in house training can be cheaper than other forms of training there can be some distinct disadvantages. You may not have suitable trainer or the necessary skills in house. You also risk passing on existing inefficiencies or bad practice.

The options:

Informal in-house training

Learning for most employees comes from informal on the job training. Even the smallest businesses with no training budget can carry out in house training.

Job shadowing involves one person showing another all the aspects of a particular job and can cover a lot of ground. It is suitable for training new employees as part of the induction process.

Coaching involves regular reviews of an employee's progress. It is typically carried out by line managers who advise employees on how to improve their performance. It provides employees with feedback and can be used to introduce new tasks or responsibilities.

Mentoring is typically used for employees at senior management and chief executive level and is a personal way to coach and advise senior staff. The role is best carried out by someone other than a line manager, possibly someone from outside of the company, who has the skills and experience to guide the employee and suggest practical solutions. However, mentoring by line managers can also provide effective in house training as they will have a good understanding of business needs and also the employee's role.

Passing on training or cascading involves one employee going on external training and returning to pass on their knowledge to other employees. It helps to

keep costs down but is more suitable for skills such as IT. Cascading information through the business can be an effective in house training method, although you must ensure that the initial person starting the training cascade is appropriately qualified. You could consider sending some staff on a train-the-trainer course. Their knowledge can then be passed on efficiently and effectively through the business.

Knowledge banks eg, a reference book or CD-Rom library, intranet and handbooks are an effective way of providing basic information that employees can access at their convenience. They are a way of holding information on office procedures and how to do basic tasks.

Formal in house training

Distance-learning courses are provided by an outside trainer. Courses may offer nationally recognised qualifications on completion. They are usually flexible and can be completed during work at a time that suits everyone. They can also work out much cheaper than other training options.

Placement schemes allow staff to develop skills by working or training outside their normal workplace. Employees may be placed with another company or at a training establishment. Courses can run as day-release schemes, in the evening or over longer periods of time, for example, where the employee works with another company to gain experience.

External courses are provided by specialists and can be tailored to your specific business needs. They are available for a wide range of subjects and skills and some offer recognised qualifications at the end. However, an external training course takes the employee away from their place of work. This may not be convenient, especially if you have to train a whole department at once. External training can also be the most expensive option.

There are some clear advantages to in house training:

- lower costs than external training
- less disruption and time-wastage as staff can train in the workplace
- specific to your individual business needs
- staff may feel less intimidated learning with their colleagues rather than a group of strangers

However, there are also some disadvantages:

- you risk passing on bad business habits from one member of staff to the others
- you might not have the time, facilities or expertise in house and providing bad training can be demoralising and have a negative impact on standards
- staff may not take it seriously because it's not a "real" course
- employees not being entirely honest about problems and difficulties as they fear it may be used against them

Whatever type of training you choose to use, you should always take the time afterwards to see if it was effective and did what you wanted it to.

Evaluating training effectiveness

Evaluating your training allows you to work towards improving it. There are several ways to get an accurate picture of what your training has achieved and what the limitations are.

Employee performance evaluations

Review the impact of the training on the employee's performance, as part of a regular appraisal process. This is a good time to discuss any additional training needs.

Business performance evaluations

Training can be evaluated by measuring tangible performance indicators, such as sales, production costs, output, absenteeism and staff turnover.

Qualitative improvements may be just as important. This could include higher quality goods and services, better teamwork, fewer customer complaints and greater innovation within your business.

Employee feedback

Ask your employees:

- if the training was relevant to their job and their level of expertise
- how they will put their learning into action
- for feedback on the training method
- what worked and what didn't
- what could be improved

Remember that the company's expectations may not be the same as employees' expectations.

Timing is important. The longer the delay between the training and the evaluation, the less reliable the results are going to be. Evaluation also needs to be tailored according to the objective of the training. If, for example, the training was focused on teaching interpersonal skills, you can observe how they interact with others to determine the effectiveness of the training. If the training was designed to impart technical skills, then a practical test will do the job.

This section on In-House Training has been extracted from www.businesslink.gov.uk and is subject to Crown Copyright Protection. Any attempts to copy this material must first have written permission from Business Link.

Tool 10:

Employability Qualifications and Programmes

Employability qualifications and programmes can help support individuals to gain the skills they need to enter employment and make effective contributions at work. Having gained recognition for their employability skills, employers can be more confident when employing people that perhaps have not had previous work experience or have been out of the workplace for a length of time.

The Employability Skills Programme works with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) customers, recognising their different backgrounds, needs and goals and helps them to:

- Enhance their employability skills
- Improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills
- Secure and sustain employment
- Continue their learning journey with support once they gain employment.

The Programme will enable customers to work towards nationally approved basic skills and employability qualifications through:

- Activities that will enhance their employability skills
- Opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding of the local labour market
- Opportunities to update their job search skills, to participate in guaranteed interview and to spend trial weeks with local employers
- Personalised literacy, language and numeracy programmes embedded within the delivery of the employability curriculum.
- Progress reviews every 3 weeks.

All Jobcentre Plus customers claiming benefit or credits who are aged 18 or over and have a literacy, language or numeracy need at Level 1 or below are eligible for the Programme.

JCP Advisers identify customers eligible for referral to an initial assessment with a contracted provider on the basis of light touch or more formal screening for basic skills needs.

Learners who have or are working towards an Entry Level 3 literacy qualification should also undertake an approved employability skills qualification. A range of employability qualifications have been developed by awarding bodies and are available for use. Asset Skills are responsible for approving employability qualifications subject to agreement from the Sector Skills Councils Employability Peer Review Group. It has already worked with number of awarding bodies to ensure a consistent, high quality approach to developing employability qualifications.

Please note that the Employability Skills Programme is an England only offer but the employability qualifications can be used across the UK.

End Note:

Asset Skills Employability Project & UKCES

Asset Skills lead on the Employability Project across the 25 Sector Skills Councils (Skills for Business Network)

Employability skills are central to gaining and keeping employment as well as career progression. The lack of such skills, particularly in elementary entry level occupations, is often referred to as one reason for the United Kingdom's long tail of underachievement. The Leitch report reinforced the need for a good platform of basic and employability skills.

Investing in employability skills can have significant impacts upon the productivity and performance of UK businesses. Understanding that people are the key to achieving competitive advantage is the first step to realising a number of benefits including improved retention and turnover rates, a motivated workforce and enhanced levels of operation.

What is the project team doing?

- Supporting Sector Skills Councils to integrate employability issues within their core activities including National Occupational Standards (NOS), qualifications and employer engagement
- Making sure employability skills needed by employers are identified and included within training provision and opportunities for skills development
- Raising employer awareness and engagement with employability and supporting them in meeting the Skills Pledge requirements
- Influencing awarding bodies, funders, training providers and other key stakeholders to ensure employability issues are addressed
- Working with national stakeholders across the four Home Nations to influence employability programmes
- Ensuring employability skills are addressed within compulsory education curriculum developments as well as further and higher education

A detailed Implementation Plan has been produced which provides detailed approaches on each of these strands. A full version of the SfBN Employability Strategy can be obtained from: tmorris@assetskills.org

Asset Skills is also supporting the UK Commission for Employment and Skills

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills seeks to establish and agree a national standard for employability that will

- provide an employer-endorsed benchmark for employability across sectors and levels of employment
- describe in plain language those attitudes, underpinning knowledge and skills that make up a comprehensive and employer agreed framework for employability
- structure that framework in levels so that it can apply to young people and adults at all ages and attainment levels
- set out teaching and assessment expectations to ensure the education and training system can actually inculcate the attitudes, knowledge and skills required, and assure employers that the capabilities can be successfully applied in the world of work
- possibly offer an 'employability kitemark' against which learning programmes and/or qualifications can be accredited to offer assurance to employers that job applicants can perform to the expected standard

For more information on the UKCES Employability Project click [here](#) or visit:

www.ukces.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=4593

Appendix

Case Study: Here's how Training Need Analysis improved our performance

Here's how Training Needs Analysis improved our performance

Energy and telecommunications consultancy provider, The Inenco Group Ltd, is based in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire. The company underwent a management buyout last year. Director Chris Lee explains how a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) allowed the company to tailor its training and boost staff motivation.

What we did

Assess current provision

"Our TNA originated with a staff survey conducted prior to the management buyout, which showed that staff felt under-developed and neglected. Training was one of the chosen means of addressing this issue, as well as being part of our aim to pursue Investors in People (IIP) accreditation. Training was previously available but it was conducted on an ad-hoc basis with no proper evaluation of whether it supported our business goals.

"We set up a focus group made up of departmental managers and began with a review of current training provision, coupled with an analysis of what skills the company needed in the light of our corporate objectives. This allowed us to identify skill gaps and areas for improvement. Recommendations were then passed to the Board for approval and our intentions communicated to all staff."

Conduct staff interviews

"We originally thought that we would have to interview all 140 staff to assess individual training needs. We approached Business Link for guidance and they recommended grouping staff according to their role. "The group approach worked well, allowing us to identify specific skill sets for each role in a relatively short space of time. The meetings also enabled us to ask staff about their personal goals within the company and to explore the types of training that would be appropriate for different parts of the business."

Make decisions

"On completion of staff interviews, we set priorities and a timetable, which has now become a formal company training plan with an allocated budget. We got further advice on training methods from Business Link and now make much more use of external courses.

"We also use more internal coaching and mentoring schemes, which are proving highly cost-effective, and have formulated a post-training questionnaire to help us evaluate the success of the training against our objectives. Overall, staff morale and attitude have improved noticeably and we're confident that this will decrease staff turnover."

What I'd do differently

Encourage initiative

"The management focus group we set up was useful for kick-starting our TNA, but we probably relied on it too heavily. These days, we encourage initiative among all staff members by holding regular review and feedback sessions. This way everyone in the company takes responsibility for maintaining and improving training standards."

Simplify paperwork

"We wanted our TNA to be thorough and well documented. However, at one stage, we got bogged down with producing a series of over-complicated spreadsheets. Too much information, poorly presented, can stop you seeing the wood for the trees. Now, we stick to simple tables and include only the key points."

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Thank You. We hope you found this guide useful

If you have any comments about this guide or employability in general please contact

employability@assetskills.org

Exeter

2 The Courtyard
48 New North Road
Exeter EX4 4EP
Tel: 01392 423399
Fax: 01392 423373
exeter@assetskills.org

Northampton

Sol House
29 St Katherine's Street
Northampton NN1 2QZ
Tel: 01604 233336
Fax: 01604 233573
northampton@assetskills.org

Aberfeldy (Asset Skills Scotland)

Bank House
Bank Street
Aberfeldy
Perthshire PH15 2BB
Scotland
Tel: 01887 829171
Fax: 01887 820913
scotland@assetskills.org

Asset Skills Wales

wales@assetskills.org

Asset Skills Northern Ireland

northernireland@assetskills.org