

Sector Summary Report IT User Sector

Sector Definition

IT User

IT User data relates to qualifications that cut across and support every sector however as they are easily identifiable they have been treated as a discrete set of qualifications for analysis purposes.

There are links between this sector and the Financial Intermediation and Business Services sector (including Knowledge Intensive Business Services) defined as a priority in the Regional Economic Strategy.

SECTOR OVERVIEW

IT can be broken down into four related communities: the IT Industry, IT Professionals working in all other sectors, Business Managers and IT Users.

IT Users – The IT related skills needs of all those who use IT in their day to day activities. While primarily focused on the needs of employers and the 20 million individuals in the workforce who use IT for their job it also considers the need for all citizens to have skills in the use of IT for reasons of increased employment, social interaction or access to government and other services.

- According to e-skills research in 2006 there were thought to be around 678,000 individuals using IT in their day to day work in the North East region.

	Number of IT Users	% share IT users (England)	General IT user skills gaps %*
North East	678,000	4	27

* NESS 2005, Base = all skills gaps followed up

- Projections for the change in workforce skills, forecasts growth in the number of IT users overall, with particular emphasis on expanding the proportion of users with Advanced and High competency IT user skills, in line with employer demand.

Region	Year 1 Employer Requirements		
	Number to level 2	Number to level 3+	Total
North East	99,009	74,691	173,699
	Year 2 Employer Requirements		
	Number to level 2	Number to level 3+	
	33,374	25,177	58,550

*e-skills Skills Balance Sheet 2007/8

Future Skills Key Demand side issues for 2009/10

IT user skills are cross cutting; and the need for IT skills across all sectors has been identified in the majority of Sector Qualification Strategies published.

Raising the levels of these skills is key to raising productivity in an constantly developing IT landscape.

Sector Qualification & Learning Strategies (SQLS) and Vocational Qualification Reform (VQR)

All Sector Skills Councils have recently completed their SQS and Action Plans. Through this process a variety of new and updated qualifications will emerge that are more closely aligned to the needs of employers. It is anticipated that there will be a need for providers to develop capacity and up skill their workforce to deliver new qualifications. The following is a link to the SQS:- <http://www.e-skills.com/nvq/1844> - (You may have to register on the e-skills website to access the document). Through this process a variety of new and updated qualifications will emerge that are more closely aligned to the needs of employers.

E-Skills are one of the sector skills councils involved in the pilot for the Qualifications Credit Framework and the qualifications they have fast tracked will be considered as priorities.

Within these trials the new QCF ITQ is considered to be a Full Level 2 qualification and is fundable through mainstream allocations and Train to Gain contracts. However the new **Level 2 Design Principles** which have been adopted for the phase 2 trials indicate that the QCF ITQ qualification is likely to change and this will impact on both funding and its eligibility. E-skills are currently considering the implications of this and will be working in consultation with the LSC on ensuring that the developments of ITQ and therefore IT user qualifications keep them in scope for LSC funding in future.

The North East Regional LSC has continued to be actively involved in units of learning trials and has recently contracted with Providers in the region for the delivery of unitised programmes of learning (the QCF ITQ). LSC National Office and DIUS have recently commissioned a project. It is anticipated that this project will inform policy developments around unitisation of qualifications.

Compacts

A sector compact is a non-contractual agreement between the Department for Innovation Universities and Skills, the Learning and Skills Council and a Sector Skills Council to work collaboratively to drive up demand for skills across England through Train to Gain.

The LSC has been working with E-Skills to develop their compact from Autumn 2008. It is anticipated that the flexibilities within the compact will facilitate growth in provision by encouraging employers to engage in more training opportunities, including raising the uptake of apprenticeships.

Train to Gain

ITQ is the only qualification being delivered via Train to Gain and this is considered to be appropriate for the Sector. E-skills' demand intelligence indicates that there is a requirement for a significant increase in the number of ITQs being delivered via Train to Gain activity however a number of the

regions providers have reported great difficulty in identifying candidates without an existing Level 2 qualification. Consideration should be made to the additional Train to Gain level 2 and 3 qualifications lists.

WBL Apprenticeships

There are a wide range of job roles for Apprentices available at Level 2 and 3. The apprenticeship framework IT User (322) is generic focusing on skills rather than a job role allowing the delivery to meet most employers IT needs.

Most businesses use IT to keep track of finances, manage customer relationships, and support the rapid processing of orders and enquiries, control stock and so on. Having the ability to effectively use IT allows an individual to work in the sector of choice. IT user is not normally a job title but a specific skill which employers need of their employees. These skills can then be used to exploit the organisation's IT systems and benefit the business.

Apprentices are employed in a wide variety of businesses organisations and job roles could include, for instance, working in the Finance industry as an Insurance administrator; Design and Printing as a graphic designer; In Retail / Logistics as a stock controller; In IT Industry as IT Website Designer, IT User Support, IT Helpdesk, IT Trainer. These examples shows how diverse the use of IT is as part of a job role.

At the end of the IT User ITQ Apprenticeship / Advanced Apprenticeship programme, candidates will have obtained the IT skills they need, tailored to the sector of their choice.

Focus Recommendations for 09/10

- Monitor and Support the Piloting of unit funding trials within the region to ensure that best practice is fed into the QCF trials assessment.
- Deliver the new qualifications when available.
- Promote New Apprenticeship and Advanced Apprenticeship Frameworks in IT Users.
- Support the sector during the economic downturn.