

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY PLAN

Project Name: Higher level skills in Business Services

Name of Organisation submitting: Asset Skills

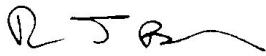
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Declaration:

I confirm that the information given in this plan is correct. I further confirm that all partner organisations mentioned have been consulted and have agreed to take part in our Joint Investment Programme and that they have understood and agreed to their roles, responsibilities and the financial implications for their organisations in taking part. In submitting this plan we commit to leading all aspects of this implementation plan.



Signature:

Name: Richard Beamish

Position: Chief Executive

Organisation: Asset Skills

Date: 09/09/2010

This plan has been agreed by Geoff Russell, Chief Executive of Skills Funding Agency for implementation during the academic year 2010/11

17/09/2010.

SECTION 1: VISION AND PROGRAMME SUMMARY

1 a. Joint Investment Programme Overview

The Joint Investment Programme (JIP) for Strategic Skills is designed to bring together public and private investment to support training and skills in areas where new skills are required in the workforce to capitalise on business and economic opportunities presented by growth sectors.

Taking part in the JIP will enable Asset Skills to engage employers in a co-funded agreement with Government. Asset Skills will work with the Skills Funding Agency, employers and training providers to negotiate, agree, implement, monitor and evaluate relevant skills solutions against specific and identified industry needs.

1 b. Joint Investment Programme – Higher level skills in Business Services - Vision

Business Services is an increasingly important sector of the economy that was identified in the UKCES Skills Audit as being key to economic recovery. The sector delivers essential services to the public and private sector and through this work touches the lives of a high proportion of the population. The work of the sector is described in more detail in the Expression of Interest (EoI) for this project which also describes the increasing trend of public and private sector organisations to outsource ever wider areas of service provision. This trend is expected to grow further in response to cuts in public expenditure due to be announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review in October.

The strategic objectives for this Joint Investment Programme are:

1. To support the growth in opportunity anticipated by many employers, realisation of which will depend on their ability to add value and create economies through more efficient working practices. Their ability to maintain the quality of services whilst delivering savings in cost in such a challenging environment will be crucially important in adding value to the public purse.
2. Enable organisations to deliver more with less. As the services delivered will also have a significant impact on the effective performance of the public or private sector client organisation it is clear there is an urgent requirement to continually raise standards and add value at a time of great economic stringency. Employers recognise the route to improved standards is through raising higher level management skills, encouraging ambition and increasing levels of professionalism across the sector. They also recognise that developing technical and sector specific, management skills at operational level is an important factor in delivering efficiencies.

The vision for this project therefore is to:

1. Deliver a range of mostly new qualifications and Apprenticeships that will raise standards of service delivery and contract management, improve professionalism and create efficiencies by reducing operating costs, recruitment costs and improving success rates for employers when bidding for new business.
2. Use the Asset Skills Virtual Academy for Business Services and the funding support from the Joint Investment Programme to kick start the take up of this range of qualifications and Apprenticeships.
3. Develop a sub project with a small cohort of employers to quantify and measure the benefits described in bullet point 1 above and identify the specific added value to participants.

4. Strengthen the network of training providers to the sector that forms part of the Virtual Academy and further encourage the development of partnerships to enable the learning to be delivered in a flexible manner to meet the needs of the employers in a 24/7 working environment.
5. Encourage further collaboration between employers on the delivery of training, achieving economies of scale through the bundling of candidates from different organisations to create cohorts of a size that enable providers to deliver in a cost effective and sustainable manner.
6. Use the successful delivery of this project to strengthen the role of the SSC and the Virtual Academy as an efficient and responsive delivery partner able to engage with large numbers of employers and providers and bring them together in an effective partnership with government to raise the skills of the workforce in an important area of the economy.

Employers in this sector have always invested in training. However this has to date been generic in nature and often non accredited. Asset Skills has been working to address this issue through the development of the new portfolio of qualifications that will be delivered through this programme and will in turn deliver sector specific skills around contract management, TUPE, successful tender implementation, improved client relationships and customer care amongst many others.

The project is expected to have a measurable impact on the participating employers, their clients and the candidates and will help to develop and improve attractive career pathways. The outcomes described will raise awareness of a sector that, through the sometimes low profile nature of the services provided, is often not sufficiently visible to attract the quality of new recruits required.

The publicity the project has already attracted will continue, through the ongoing work of the Virtual Academy, to raise awareness among employers of the opportunities available to raise higher level skills and improve the quality of service delivery. As a result employers will be able to compete more effectively for new business opportunities in the global marketplace that Business Services has become.

2. Investment

Academic Year Split	Skills Funding Agency Contribution	Employer Contribution	Total Investment
10/11 – Starts and Completions	£282,592	£645,312	£1,290,624
11/12 – Completions only	£362,719		

The Skills Funding Agency 11/12 contribution detailed in this table will be funded from the year 2 budget as set out in the original expression of interest. The detail and information in this plan relates to activity starting in the academic year 2010/11 only.

3. Skills to be delivered

a. Specific levels to be covered by the programme, and volumes for each

Skills	Approximate Volumes
Level 3 target-bearing (full) qualifications	231
Level 4 target-bearing (full) qualifications	58
Advanced Apprenticeships	217

b. Specific qualifications / units to be funded in the programme including likely volumes

Frameworks

- 377 - Apprenticeship in Facilities Management - 217 candidates

Level 3's

- In development - Certificate in Facilities Management - 47 candidates
- 50054934 – ILM Certificate in Facilities Management – 87 candidates
- 50093265 - Certificate in Cleaning Supervision Skills - 77 candidates
- In development - Certificate in Energy Advice (Home) – 20 candidates

Level 4's

- 5008348x - British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM) Certificate in Facilities Management – 58 candidates

4. Providers Engaged

- Westminster Kingsway College
- B-Skill Ltd
- Economic Solutions Ltd
- The Manchester College
- Impact Data & Learning Solutions t/a The Training & Learning Company (TLC)
- City of Bristol College
- Somerset College of Arts & Technology
- Leeds College of Building

5. Employers Engaged

Type	Volume
SMEs	16
Large Employers (1000+)	35

**SECTION 2:
 IMPACT AND SUCCESS**

The following measures are those which Asset Skills will use to assess the JIP's impact and success in the sector against the anticipated outcomes of the programme.

Evidence of achievement of the measures/impacts detailed below will be through quarterly reports on the work of the Virtual Academy for Business Services. The reports will describe the development of partnerships, registration of candidates, efficiency of the delivery models, engagement of employers and take up of membership, problems arising and solutions developed. The principle measures are:

1. Development of a sustainable infrastructure for the delivery of the portfolio of new qualifications and Apprenticeships described in the vision. This will be evidenced through the Virtual Academy for Business services that will:
 - a. work to grow the take up of Apprenticeships from a nil base (new qualification) to 500 per annum by 2014
 - b. grow the take up of NVQs and other higher level accredited qualification registrations by 10% per annum
 - c. maintain an ongoing network of at least 12 high quality providers with a wide geographical spread to enable a flexible delivery model that meets employer needs in a 24/7 working environment
2. The impact of the Joint Investment Programme in supporting employers to do more for less and increasing growth opportunities. This will be measured by working with six employers to benchmark the performance of 2 candidates from each organisation and identify savings they and their organisation have been able to create over the term of the programme in the following areas:
 - The impact on operating cost through the delivery of more effective contract management skills
 - Reduction in recruitment costs through raising the skills of existing staff as opposed to hiring qualified staff from elsewhere
 - Improved success rates in tendering through the existence of a staff development programme
 - Improvement in client relationships and subsequent contract retention
 - Client recognition of improved service delivery as a result of employers investment in the JIP
 - Examples of improved career progression and raised ambition on the part of successful candidates

The outcomes of this sub project will be collated in a report on completion of the project (end July 2011) and will be used through case studies to assist the Virtual Academy in its ongoing promotional role to raise the take up of NVQs and Apprenticeships as described in bullet point 1.

3. Development, through the programme, of new partnerships/collaborations between employers and providers involving 40 employers, 300 candidates and 10 learning providers, to achieve sustainable economies of scale for future delivery evidenced through quarterly surveys of participants conducted by the Virtual Academy.
4. Raised awareness among employers, from the publicity and engagement resulting from this programme, of the opportunities available to raise the higher level skills of the work force and the benefits to service delivery this will deliver. Evidence for this measure already exists in the form of a waiting list of employers keen to participate in year 2 of the JIP should this be approved. This evidence will be supported by quarterly reports on employer engagement activities that target a growth of 10% per annum in database registrations and newsletter take up.
5. Effective delivery of the training detailed within the programme and clear evidence of

employer satisfaction with the outcome - to be evidenced by surveys undertaken with all employers, part way through the programme and on completion.

6. Recognition by employers of the benefits to be reaped from the contribution of government to this joint investment programme – to be evidenced through 6 case studies produced during the lifetime of the project.

SECTION 3: ADDITIONALITY

The learning that will be funded and supported through the Joint Investment Programme and delivered through our providers will be additional to that which the employer would normally invest in as part of its normal business activities. It is the Sector Skills Council's responsibility to make providers in their delivery network aware of the importance of this element of the Joint Investment Programme.

In addition to the anticipated impact and success set out in Section 2, and as a result of this arrangement with Government, the JIP will enable the following:

Additionality will take many forms including the delivery of extra programmes at no charge by providers in addition to the added value delivered through innovation. Specific examples are as follows:

- The JIP will deliver innovative and flexible delivery models, including partnerships between providers, as described in Section 2
- Collaboration between employers has been used to create economies of scale and enable programmes to proceed where numbers from individual employers would have been insufficient for this purpose
- Arrangements are being put in place to create added value in the form of the delivery of additional learning units in recognition of the economies of scale and to enable some candidates to achieve a Diploma
- At least one employer has offered to fully fund one candidate for each part funded candidate through the JIP – still in negotiation and no contract for this yet in place
- The existence of a Virtual Academy training provider forum that is committed to delivering to a sector in which they previously had little or no involvement, through working in partnership with others

SECTION 4: MONITORING AND MEASURING THE PROGRAMME

Monitoring and measuring the performance of the programme will require Asset Skills to meet frequently with the Skills Funding Agency to discuss progress towards the aims and outcomes of the programme. To support this the Skills Funding Agency will supply us with information regarding take-up extracted from the ILR at set points in the academic year. This information will be reconciled with information collected by ourselves from our Providers and Employers and will underpin a quarterly narrative report.

Asset Skills will monitor the delivery of the programme and measure the outputs as detailed in the vision and programme summary (section 1), impact and success (section 2) and Additionality (section 3) in the following way:

With regard to the measurement of the wider impact of the programme on the sector this has largely been covered in section 2. In summary success will comprises:

1. Development of a sustainable infrastructure for the delivery of the qualifications and Apprenticeships described in the vision:
 - Raising the annual registration numbers for Apprenticeships through the Virtual Academy to 500 by 2014 - to be evidenced annually by Academy reports to Asset Skills CEO and SFA returns.
 - Raising the take up of NVQs and other higher level accredited qualifications by 10% per annum. Benchmark figures to be set at end of the Academic year with growth evidenced annually through Academy reports to asset Skills CEO and SFA returns.
 - Maintaining a network of high quality delivery through the Academy of at least 12 providers in priority geographical locations – to be evidenced through membership certificates, and annual reports from the Virtual Academy as submitted to Asset Skills CEO
2. Delivery of a sub project within the JIP comprising six employers to identify the benefits of Apprenticeship and NVQ delivery in terms of improvements delivered in contract management, cost savings, improved client relationships, contract retention rates and reduced costs of recruitment of new staff.

The project group will be facilitated by Asset Skills and the group will meet in December 2010 to agree a timetable for activities. Minutes of meetings will provide evidence of participation and the outcomes of the project group work will be made available through reports and case studies to be published on conclusion of the JIP in August 2011.

3. Development of new partnerships/collaborations involving 40 employers 10 providers and 300 candidates to achieve sustainable economies of scale – to be evidenced through Academy quarterly reports describing courses underway and composition of groups. Case studies will also be published in spring 2011 highlighting best practice in this area and will be used for promotional purposes at Apprenticeship recruitment events planned for Bristol and Cambridge.
4. Raised awareness among employers, from the publicity and engagement undertaken for this programme of opportunities to raise the higher level skills of the workforce. Evidence already exists in the form of a waiting list of employers keen to participate in year 2 should this be approved. Additional evidence of the goal to raise database membership and newsletter take up by 10% over a 12 month period will be provided by quarterly employer engagement returns to Asset Skills Quarterly Main Board meetings.
5. In terms of monitoring the delivery of the programme, this will be overseen by the Academy Director and will comprise the appointment of a sector specialist account manager for each of the employers within the programme together with an account manager for each provider. The process will be pro active and will incorporate monthly monitoring of starts etc as any longer period will remove the potential to fill gaps and may result in funding being unused.

In detail the process comprises:

- Follow up call with each employer in the first week of each month
- Submission of a report from each provider in the first week of each month
- Cross check reports to ensure consistency of feedback and address any disparity
- Monthly monitoring of starters to ensure accurate match against profiles

- Early identification of non starters to fill gaps from existing waiting list
- Written record taken of negative feedback from employers/providers
- Pertinent feedback issues raised to be addressed and outcomes recorded in Management reports
- Submission of Quarterly Academy Management reports
- Completion of satisfaction surveys with employers at the mid point in delivery of each qualification and on conclusion of the programme.
- Preparation of a final report on employer feedback
- Development of case studies as described in Section 2 (Impact and Evaluation)
- Collection of the employer contribution – to be evidenced by statements from providers of income received

SECTION 5: SUSTAINABILITY

Asset Skills intends to sustain this activity in the following way:

Asset Skills will sustain the activity generated by the Joint Investment Programme through the Virtual Academy for Business Services. The Academy already has the following in place:

- A network of training providers, comprising private and FE colleges, committed to the delivery of Apprenticeships, NVQs and other qualifications and to collaboration with other partners to create economies of scale and the development of flexible delivery models
- A programme of employer events, hosted by members of the provider network, to promote registrations to Apprenticeship programmes (this has involved negotiating models and rates for delivery). Events have already taken place in London and Leeds and more are planned for the next three months in Manchester, Newcastle, Cambridge and Bristol. Over 1,000 employers in the relevant area receive details of each event.
- A proactive referral programme that involves the sector account manager generating and taking enquiries, bundling candidates from different employers to develop economic cohorts, placing the cohort of candidates with providers and managing the delivery programme.
- An established employer network and on line forum for the promotion of new initiatives
- An ongoing programme of employer engagement working through a database of over 50,000 contacts (for example this database enabled Asset Skills to make one to one calls to over 600 employers in a three week period to promote the JIP in addition to e shots and newsletters to many more).
- Established employer led Sector Boards provide additional opportunities for promotion of existing programmes and new initiative to be developed.

SECTION 6: FUNDING MODEL

The employer contribution will be collected in the following way:

All employers participating in the JIP have already indicated their agreement to pay 50% of the programme rate. The learning provider will invoice the employer direct for their contribution. The monthly report from the provider will identify which employers have paid and which remain outstanding. Outstanding invoices will be followed up by the Provider Account Manager, initially by letter, moving to telephone calls and as a last resort to visits in the very unlikely event of a persistent late payer.

FURTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The interest generated by this project has been sufficiently strong to create a waiting list of employers keen to participate in year 2 of the JIP should this receive approval. Details can be provided on request.

