



Department  
for Education

# **Employer Involvement in the Qualifications Delivery and Assessment – Case Studies**

**Research report**

**April 2014**

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# City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>500/8564/5</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

## The qualification

The Diploma is one of a suite of qualifications which “meet the needs of learners in a centre-based environment who may wish to work within the forestry or arboriculture industry or progress to further learning and/or training. These qualifications allow learners to develop underpinning knowledge whilst practising skills that could be used within employment in the forestry or arboriculture industry”<sup>1</sup>.

Employer involvement in the qualification is mandatory, and awarded 10 credits through achievement of the mandatory unit “Undertake and Review Work Related Experience in the Land-based Industries”. A second unit stipulates the completion of a project; other units cover topics such as soil science; plant science; planting and aftercare as well as a range of optional units.

The work placement must be of a minimum of 150 hours, or four weeks on each year of the two year course.

## The nature of employer involvement

Employers are involved closely with the college in selecting units for delivery, as are universities. The college tries to engage flexibly with the employer involvement agenda by being industry-led, and this is one such example. Employers are involved in influencing the delivery and also the actual course content, and are further involved in assessment.

For this course, employers are very involved with the college and in such activities as maintaining trees and hedgerows along train tracks and under power lines. The college

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<sup>1</sup> Level 3 Certificate, Subsidiary Diploma, 90-Credit Diploma, Diploma, Extended Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture (0077-03) Version 2.0, City and Guilds, August 2012

is also involved with the Forestry Commission.

The sector – like many others – is dominated by SMEs. They are invited to stakeholder events and they also review modules for the college, along with larger companies. In addition, the college employs guest speakers and lecturers from industry. Many lecturers at the college work part-time as they are themselves, business owners. This is understood to be a common feature of qualifications delivery and assessment in the land-based sector, where historically more employers have a dual role than possibly in any other sector.

Forestry and arboriculture is very specialist, and will require certification in chainsaw use to work in the industry. Business owners are often also qualified in assessing chainsaw use, which provides an additional income. This arrangement works very well because it means that the college is offering industry relevant teaching.

It is unlikely that the learners will find work experience themselves; therefore the college helps learners to source placements. Typically, placements are undertaken with a range of different types of companies, including:

- The Forestry Commission
- Nurseries
- SMEs
- Contractors working for utility companies

The employer is involved in formal assessment of the work placement unit. This is a graded unit, determined both by the learner's punctuality and work assessment. In addition to the contribution to the formal assessment of this unit, the employer is further engaged through providing informal feedback to the college on the learner's progress. Although an informal measure, this form of involvement is highly valued by the college.

The process is managed by the college through visits to the employer's premises to ensure the learner is learning in a safe environment, and then again on completion of the placement to obtain feedback.

Two key challenges are encountered by the college in maintaining employer involvement:

1. ensuring sufficient staff capacity to cover employer visits and to complete the necessary paperwork to fulfil Health and Safety requirements
2. the lack of a formal interface or forum for the college and industry to come together

## Benefits of employer involvement

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

For the learner, they have the opportunity to experience work, network with other learners and potential employers. The extra skills gained in the workplace, gives them a taste of the real working environment.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

Employers have the ability to 'mould' the learners to industry requirements, and benefit from the experience by adding to their talent pool as they need.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The college maintain its links with industry through employer involvement in qualifications delivery and assessment and builds a reputation amongst industry employers.

## City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Countryside Management (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Countryside Management (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>500/8561/X</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

### The qualification

A work placement is a mandatory component of the course, which must be of a minimum of 150 hours, or four weeks on each year of the two year course.

Learners on the course at the college are predominantly aged 16-18, with some mature learners seeking employment in the land-based sector as a career change. These mature learners will typically already have a degree, but choose to study the Diploma because of its strong practical element. To those without a degree, the Diploma can be more appealing as it offers a more practical focus and does not entail the same level of cost to the learner.

Learners gain a strong background in ecology and population, combined with particular components required by employers such as plant, animal and fungi identification. The college has been offering the Diploma for 10 years.

### The nature of employer involvement

City and Guilds include many units to choose from in their specification. Employers are involved closely with the college in selecting units for delivery, as are universities. The college tries to engage flexibly with the employer involvement agenda by being industry-led, and this is one such example. Employers are involved in influencing the delivery and also the actual course content, and are further involved in assessment.

SMEs are invited to stakeholder events and they also review modules for the college, along with larger companies. In addition, the college employs guest speakers and lecturers from industry. Many lecturers at the college work part-time as they are themselves, business owners.

It is unlikely that the learner will find work experience themselves, therefore the college helps learners to source placements. Typically, placements are undertaken with a range

of different types of companies, including:

- Parks
- Local Authority County Ecologist Department

The employer is involved in formal assessment of the work placement unit. This is a graded unit, determined both by the learner's punctuality and work assessment. In addition to the contribution to the formal assessment of this unit, the employer is further engaged through providing informal feedback to the college on the learner's progress. Although an informal measure, this form of involvement is highly valued by the college.

The process is managed by the college through visits to the employer's premises to ensure the learner is learning in a safe environment, and then again on completion of the placement to obtain feedback.

Two key challenges are encountered by the college in maintaining employer involvement:

1. ensuring sufficient staff capacity to cover employer visits and to complete the necessary paperwork to fulfil Health and Safety requirements
2. the lack of a formal interface or forum for the college and industry to come together, which needs to be addressed

In the absence of such an education/industry forum, professional bodies and large organisations are seen as the most helpful source of advice because of their specialist knowledge, such organisations include the Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

For the learner, they have the opportunity to experience work, network with other learners and potential employers. The extra skills gained in the workplace, gives them a taste of the real working environment.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

Employers have the ability to 'mould' the learners to industry requirements, and benefit from the experience by adding to their talent pool as they need.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The college maintain its links with industry through employer involvement in qualifications delivery and assessment and builds a reputation amongst industry employers.

# ABC Level 4 Diploma in Technical Textiles and Apparel (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>ABC Awards</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>ABC Level 4 Diploma In Technical Textiles and Apparel (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>601/1784/9</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

## The qualification

In response to a major step change in the manufacturing sector, particularly in terms of demand for high end products manufactured for aerospace<sup>2</sup>, automotive and healthcare, a new set of advanced skills at level 4 needed to be developed. The Sector Skills Council, along with an employer and a training and research facility, supported by other intermediary associates, engaged and consulted a range of employers in 2012 to identify the skills needs in the sector. The Diploma aims to develop learners' understanding and skills in new technologies such as anti-microbial applications and fire resistant treatments in the textiles sector<sup>3</sup>. It will equip individuals with manufacturing and engineering know-how; in particular, new product development, an essential part of developing a balanced portfolio needed to maintain competitive advantage for UK companies. The Diploma is designed either for those who are new to the industry (aged 18/19+) or those who are already working in the industry; it is also part of the Creative Skillset Level 4 Higher Apprenticeship in Fashion and Textiles.

The qualification requires learners to achieve a minimum of 90 credits from one of two pathways:

1. Technical Textiles (TT)
2. Product Development and Sourcing (PDS)

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, Boeing has approached UK companies to weave components for their Dreamliner aircraft.

<sup>3</sup> ABC Awards website 'Level 4 Diploma in Technical Textiles and Apparel (Technical Textiles)' page: <http://www.abcawards.co.uk/fashion-and-textiles/sewing-and-textiles/level-4-diploma-in-technical-textiles-and-apparel-technical-textiles-/1661/>

Assessment is via internal assessment, internal and external moderation.

The currency and relevance of learning at this level is emphasised by the requirement that the delivery of the units has to be complemented with “shop floor” experience, i.e. in the workplace; and the assessment must also take place in the workplace for those units linked to competence.

There are some 38 units available for the learner, a flavour includes:

- Fibres and technical textiles (mandatory – TT)
- Portfolio management of new products (optional – PDS)
- Biodegradable textiles (optional – TT)
- Planning and managing the outsourcing process in manufacturing (optional – PDS)
- Anti-microbial applications for textile products (optional –TT)
- Outsourcing costs in manufacturing (optional – PDS)

### **The nature of employer involvement**

The Diploma – which has recently become available for delivery – consists of two pathways each of which involved extensive employer consultations; the technical textiles pathway was led by the training facility and the sourcing pathway by the employer designed in response to general employer take up of the pilot programme, Advanced Skills for Advanced Manufacturing (ASAM).

The employer trained 12 industrialists who then delivered the training to learners, enabling them to benefit from very current and relevant experience. Eight of these industrialists have been retained by the employer to-date. Employer involvement is also crucial in the assessment of the Diploma, with employers providing expert witnesses<sup>4</sup> who work in partnership with college assessors.

To date, three centres have started delivering the qualification but there are challenges to providers and colleges to commit to involvement in delivery and assessment. The Level 4 Diploma is more strategic in nature than extant level 2 and level 3 qualifications, requiring input from senior people in industry to truly make the qualification fit for purpose. Accessing the required level of industry knowledge can therefore prove challenging for centres.

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<sup>4</sup> Expert witnesses, for example, check a product is fit for purpose – check that it is exactly as it should be if the learner was working at that level in business.

## Benefits of employer involvement

### 1. Benefits to the learner

Learners develop new product management skills, which are more aspirational and provide the learner with a sustainable career path for the future. The involvement of employers – in particular, senior industrialists – helps learners to think strategically. The learner will be equipped to enter a market that will demand those higher skills. Greater detail and explanation for each pathway is available in the Framework documentation<sup>5</sup>.

### 2. Benefits to the employer

For the employer, advanced textile technology know-how is passed on. The training addresses a gap in skills needs, helping employers to survive, make the transition into new markets and improve their commercial success. This is essential for an industry which is witnessing a revival in the UK, in the wake of increasing prices of foreign imports. There is a growing demand for employees skilled in managing the manufacturing and balanced sourcing process.

### 3. Benefits to the provider

The provider is offering the training that employers are demanding. The training was trialled with 22 companies and 150 learners. An independent third party evaluation of the training then deemed it to be a “world class training programme”. The involvement of employers is crucial for centres, to maintain its currency and relevance, particularly as there is a view that current BA and MA programmes are not meeting the needs of industry. The industry needs candidates that are work-ready and the involvement of employers will help colleges working in partnership with industry leaders to deliver to this agenda.

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<sup>5</sup> Visit <http://www.afo.sscalliance.org/frameworks-library/index.cfm> and search Fashion and Textiles.

# City & Guilds Level 3 Principal Learning in Construction and the Built Environment

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds Level 3 Principal Learning in Construction and the Built Environment</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>600/6481/X</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

## The qualification

The City & Guilds' "Construction and the Built Environment Principal Learning" level 3 course<sup>6</sup> is designed to give learners practical experience relevant to the construction and built industries, and to prepare learners for further and higher education. The course will develop understanding of the construction and built industries, and will teach learners about the extent and significance of the built environment.

Industry interaction is encouraged throughout the course specification and guidance for teachers encourages the incorporation into the programme of learning the use of a realistic working environment.

"The most realistic work environment would be a design or planning office and any form of work placement, work experience or work shadowing in such an environment would prove invaluable. If this is not available then presentations by design or planning professionals would be very useful."

Each module is provided with an "Opportunities for applied learning" subsection, which suggests useful group exercises involving interaction with the industry. A number of opportunities for applied learning (50% of the course) are identified with learners – working in small groups – allocated one well-established development, one development

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<sup>6</sup> Main page for the City and Guilds level 3 "Construction and the Built Environment Principal Learning".  
<http://www.cityandguilds.com/Courses-and-Qualifications/construction/construction/2764-principal-learning-for-construction-and-built-environment/level-3>.

in the process of construction and one development at the 'drawing-board' stage.

Suggested activities for industry interaction include:

- visits to construction sites, local authority planning offices, architects' offices and design studios (for modules 1, 3 and 5);
- talks from experienced services providers (Module 3);
- trips to see first-hand the installation of primary services (Module 3);
- on-site health and safety or tool-box<sup>7</sup> talks (Module 4); and,
- shadowing health and safety officers (Module 4).

### **The nature of employer involvement**

School guidance in respect of industry careers and qualifications is limited and there is in particular a dearth of information about Higher National Certificates and Diplomas.

Clients of the participant employer tend to associate construction with bricklaying, and often do not realise the extent of managerial jobs in the sector. There is reluctance on the part of schools to permit visits from industry professionals to raise awareness, even though this is a service that the employer has offered.

The training provider was involved in piloting this Diploma, which involved considerable work on much of the content. As part of this the learners were required to complete a minimum of 10 days' work experience/placement. Many of the learners found their own work experience, which included approaching employers directly which, in the case of the employer, was facilitated by a national organisation.

The employer takes on 10 low-achieving learners a year who work one day a week with them – depending on the learner. They operate the same system for work experience in college holidays and also offer part time work in the summer period. This provides learners with vocational experience that will help them at college.

The training provider has a dedicated work placement officer, and for the Principal Learning qualification a few placements were obtained in this way. But one of the real issues in the construction industry is overcoming the perception often held by some

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<sup>7</sup> A short presentation to the workforce on a single aspect of health and safety, HSE, January 2014

employers that such youngsters are cheap labour.

The pilot was also run by another training provider which delivered both the Level 2 and Level 3 Diploma; at the higher level, the Diploma – of which the Level 3 Principal Learning was a part – was undertaken by learners as a means to progress to professional careers in the construction industry, such as Quantity Surveyors or Architects.

Industry involvement was invaluable in developing the content of the Diploma, since those working in the industry had the ability and opportunity to bring the content alive i.e. to interpret the Principal Learning specification in a practical way, whereas college and school staff had tended to view the content as largely theoretical.

In addition to providing work experience placements, employers were involved in:

- developing learners' projects – these being linked closely to the workplace
- writing assignments
- mentoring learners

Day to day, learners studied full-time: 3 days a week in school; 1 day a week in the workplace with an employer; 1 day a week on project work.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The learner experiences the real working environment, learns first-hand valuable lessons, such as when things go wrong and how to deal with problems. This kind of experience isn't always possible to gain in a college environment. In the pilot, employer involvement in the learner interview process gave learners a valuable opportunity to develop interview skills, practising on real employers. This 'real-life' experience is viewed as the most important part of employer involvement, developing in learners a valuable 'work ethic'.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

Employers can monitor the progress of learners. The industry is crying out for individuals with a decent, well-rounded knowledge. As well as the obvious benefits of having an extra pair of hands in the workplace, employers benefit from a young perspective, or a fresh way of thinking, which can challenge traditional approaches and prompt employers to reflect on their own practice.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The opportunity to learn more about the industry, develop professional knowledge of

modern methods of construction.

## Pre-apprenticeship Level 2 programme of study in IT – including Pearson BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Information Technology (Specialist) (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>Pearson</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>Pre-apprenticeship Level 2 programme of study in IT – including the Pearson BTEC Level 2 Diploma In Information Technology (Specialist) (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>600/1418/0</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

### The qualification

The programme is a pre-apprenticeship level 2 in IT which prepares learners for level 3 apprenticeships<sup>8</sup>. It consists of the Pearson BTEC Level 2 Diploma In Information Technology (Specialist); English and mathematics, employability skills, personal and professional development and work experience.

The aim of the programme was to build a pipeline of future apprentices to help overcome the skills gap within the North East region, and was developed with the aid of the college's existing working relationships with employers. E-skills UK, with funds from the UKCES' Employer Investment Fund, selected a college to run a pilot pre-apprenticeship programme at level 2.

The pre-apprenticeship programme was designed to give young people a taste of what a technology career is like and attract more of them into the sector. It enables school leavers to develop the skills, qualifications and experience they need to secure an apprenticeship or full-time job.

### The nature of employer involvement

Employers were initially involved in curriculum development inception meetings, and contributed to the planning of the programme to ensure that it met their needs. They are further involved throughout the programme on live projects by providing guest speakers,

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<sup>8</sup> For more information see: <http://www.e-skills.com/education/he-and-fe/pre-apprenticeships-and-traineeships/>

site-visits, employee-mentors, and enhancing the college's staff industry knowledge.

Although employers are not involved in the marking of assessments, they do moderate projects, and offer peer review and assessment of the skills requirements built into the qualification, skills such as technical and employability. Wherever possible they provide subject matter experts to set out ideas for projects, as well as moderate the completed projects.

Employers are involved in a range of activities associated with the pre-apprenticeship programme:

- Contributing to the curriculum design
- Providing work experience and work placements
- Providing coaching and mentoring
- Setting projects
- Acting as expert witnesses and providing testimony to learners' ability
- Acting as assessors or participating in assessment teams
- Providing facilities and resources to support employability skills development, including interview training and CV support

For input into the programmes the employers did not require any training, but staff who directly interact with the learners, work very closely with college staff which prompts a mutual mentoring system.

The different types of contribution made by employers are managed by the Academy Team at the college interviewed for this case study; the Director liaises directly with organisations' senior management and the curriculum manager and team leaders work closely with organisations' operations staff.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

Learners benefit from direct access to the employers by building their network of contacts but also by being inspired by these role models within the sector. By learners understanding the breadth of opportunities within the industry, it helps to reassure them that numerous roles are available and thus building their confidence in potential employment. This will strengthen their self-esteem. Learners will also benefit from developing the transferable skills required for recruitment into, and progression within, the sector.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The employer will be directly involved in creating "a future employment pipeline" into

their organisation; one that is developed, designed, and flexible to meet their needs. This gives them a means to address the skills gap within their organisation locally, and also enables them to make a direct contribution to their bottom line.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

For the college, they are involved in the delivery of training that is enabling young people to secure jobs, helping the region, and benefitting the wider community. Being involved in this programme helps to differentiate the college from its competitors through the enhanced employer engagement and involvement of local big and small employers. The use of e-skills UK helps to highlight the benefit to employers of working with a local college rather than relying entirely on universities for graduates.

# TLM Level 3 Certificate in Open Systems Computing (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>The Learning Machine (TLM)</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>TLM Level 3 Certificate in Open Systems Computing (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>601/1421/6</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

## The qualification

The aim of the Certificate is to “support accelerated progression and improve continuity with supporting technologies” that are less expensive than pre-existing systems such as VLEs (Virtual Learning Environments), and replace them with “free and open source based tools”.

The new qualification has been developed in a collaborative partnership of the AO, a trade association for open source software companies and a professional association concerned with the promotion of learning with technology. The trade association has an ambition for the qualification to connect the industry with schools by facilitating direct input into the curriculum and staff development.

Employer involvement is a mandatory requirement in the assessment process for the qualification. Assessment is to take place in real rather than contrived contexts<sup>9</sup>. This can be achieved via a series of opportunities<sup>10</sup>:

- Partaking in work experience with a company where the learner can make a meaningful programming contribution that contributes to at least one of the Certificate’s two units
- Presenting proposals to critical experts
- Testing code involving third parties
- Providing regular updates on their progress to a work-place mentor

Learners will also be encouraged to seek paid internships, such as the over-18 ‘Google Summer of Code’ stipends. These placements will be recognised as an extension of a project after the qualification has been completed, and can form part of an

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9 The Specification for TLM Level 3 Diploma in Open Systems Computing (QCF), p6.

10 These are **recommended** example methods of the type of cooperation expected.

apprenticeship.

## **The nature of employer involvement**

The qualification, accredited by The Learning Machine (TLM) and developed by the trade association, involves mandatory employer involvement. The trade association's members are targeted as potential placement providers, as they share business principles and collaborate on projects. The trade association, with guidance by TLM, is also considering the possibility of members becoming assessors or moderators.

The Certificate is a new qualification that will see employers involved in a number of ways, including:

- Offering work experience and placements
- Setting projects
- Coaching and mentoring
- Assessing and moderating

Employer involvement will depend upon the level of interest in the qualification and in the amount of time that members can offer in support of the learners. The trade association is willing to provide support to these SME employers in the provision of "hands on" training. Employers will be expected to contribute to the content of exam papers, support teachers and assessors, and also to help learners by providing real world contexts in which to complete coursework.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The learner will benefit from interacting with the industry, both in obtaining relevant knowledge, and through the input from real world situations in a corporate environment to support coursework and learning.

Currently, expertise is obtained through extensive personal study as open source technology skills are not taught in compulsory school subjects. Therefore, the qualification would make those interested in pursuing a career in technology aware of the sector.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The Certificate meets the trade association's objectives on a number of levels:

- Raising awareness of open source technology

- Widening the skills pool from which to employ; currently there are few recruits with knowledge of open source technologies
- Increasing diversity within the workforce of the industry

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

For the provider, teachers will learn through the assessment process, without having to take time out of teaching or face the cost of going on a training course. Future employer involvement would enable formal delegation of some of the moderation to be passed onto the trade association's members, meaning the qualification could become self-sustaining. If the trade association could pay its members for some of their input, the qualification is more likely to be sustainable.

## VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	VTCT
<b>Qualification name:</b>	VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing (QCF)
<b>Number:</b>	500/8976/6
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	Recommended

### The qualification

The VTCT “Level 2 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing” is intended to teach women’s hairdressing to people with little or no prior experience and is appropriate for learners aged 16 and over. The Diploma has been designed to develop learners as hairdressers and focuses on practical skills in cutting, dressing, shampooing and colouring and finishing hair. Key knowledge of consulting and advising clients on services, products and techniques alongside the health and safety requirements involved in hairdressing underpin the practical content of the qualification.

In total, seven mandatory units must be completed, together with a minimum of three optional units.

Upon completion, learners can progress to a range of further learning opportunities, such as NVQs or other vocationally-related qualifications at level 3, employment in a salon as a junior stylist or to work as an independent hairdresser. Learners are required to produce a portfolio of evidence to confirm knowledge and understanding and demonstrate competence through observations.

Information provided by VTCT states that employer involvement in classes is actively encouraged for the “VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing”. Additionally, VTCT has arranged forums with businesses which will inform the future design and development of this qualification.

### The nature of employer involvement

Whilst not formally recommended in the qualification’s specification employer engagement in delivering sessions and assessment is actively encouraged through centre support mechanisms.

Employer involvement is an essential requirement for those learners who choose to undertake the qualification (typically in a college setting with a college salon) in order to register as a State Registered Hairdresser. In order for this to happen those learners

then must have direct contact with employers throughout their training and assessment. State registration of hairdressers is however completely voluntary and not all learners choose this route. However the involvement of employers serves to improve the learning experience and helps create a valuable link between training providers and employers. More recently VTCT has set up a number of industry and employer forums to involve these stakeholders in the future design, development, delivery and assessment of vocational qualifications.

The employer is involved primarily through the provision of work experience/placements in the salon, offering mentoring and support to learners and creating an environment for them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. All of the assessment is carried out in college however.

The main role of the employer in this qualification is in 'moulding' the trainee; helping them to build people skills, employability skills and 'real world' experience. This acts as a motivator to learners, but also to the employer, giving them the opportunity to be involved in motivating and educating 'the next generation'.

Generally, all of the employer's staff are involved in some capacity; the trainees support each of the stylists, assisting with technical services and customer service. Involvement presents few challenges, but where difficulties arise this is usually due to the attitude or level of competence of the trainee.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The learner benefits from being able to engage and commit to a real working environment; working under pressure and dealing with customers who have paid for services. Working in a trading salon provides a true insight to the profession. Learners benefit from observing and working alongside a variety of qualified staff whilst also meeting potential employers and making the most of networking opportunities. They also benefit from obtaining references for job applications – from a 'real employer', rather than the training organisation.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

Employers benefit on a number of levels. Employer involvement helps to ensure learners have the required level of skill for the profession. Employers may meet potential employees. Employers have the opportunity to help shape centre provision and in turn the new generation of hairdressers.

Employers also stay abreast of current education policy that is likely to impact on current and future employees. Employers also benefit through developing the coaching and

mentoring skills of their staff.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

Providers benefit from a raised profile as their learners are in contact with the community; learners' skills are also showcased potentially improving their chances of employment. After experiencing the real working environment learners are able to give valuable feedback to the centre on what they have learned and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses which can feed into their individual learning plans. This can then be integrated into further teaching and assessments.

The fact that the learner is acquiring employability skills in a real working environment is invaluable; these really cannot be taught in any other way. There are the wider benefits associated with employer, trainer and trainee collaboration.

# VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>VTCT</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>600/8660/9</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

## The qualification

The Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies is a qualification that has been specifically designed to “develop learners’ practical skills by covering the following mandatory units; facial skincare, waxing, eyelash and eyebrow treatments, manicure, pedicure, client care and health and safety.”<sup>11</sup> Learners will also gain underpinning knowledge of anatomy and physiology, health and safety and customer care to support the skills gained during their course.

Learners develop their knowledge and understanding of the practical skills in beauty therapy to a high level of occupational ability, to enable them to perform beauty therapy treatments in a salon.

## The nature of employer involvement

Whilst not formally recommended in the qualification’s specification; employer engagement is actively encouraged through centre support mechanisms, and this involves employer input in the delivery of training as well as the assessment of learners.

Having direct contact with employers throughout their training and assessment is essential for learners (typically within a college setting with a college salon) as it enables them to become eligible for professional beauty treatment insurance and work as an employed and/or self-employed beauty therapist. This direct employer engagement greatly enhances the learning experience. Learners are inspired by those who are successful in an area in which they wish to follow and by learning from people currently active in industry. The involvement of employers helps to create a valuable link between training providers and employers, in terms of post-course job placements for

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<sup>11</sup> From the specification of the VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies (QCF), in the Qualifications section of the VTCT website. Available at <http://www.vtct.org.uk/>

learners.

More recently VTCT has set up a number of industry and employer forums to involve these stakeholders in the future design, development, delivery and assessment of vocational qualifications. Assessment takes place via work placements/work experience, expert witness/testimony and coaching/mentoring.

One of the participant training providers delivers the VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies course full-time to 14-19 year olds, and from which they benefit from 1 day a week work experience. A commercial salon is also operated as part of the course. Assessment is via observation and portfolio of evidence and the course runs for a year. Employers are involved in coaching/mentoring, work experience and witness testimony validation of assessments in the salon. The provider develops relationships with local salons through a nominated business development person.

Relationships with salons are not formalised but they have been ongoing for a number of years. All salons have to commit to checks run by a local education business partnership to make sure they provide a safe environment for the provider's learners. The relationship with local salons has been in place since the provider opened its own commercial salon in 2010. It works with many employers – and the setup with the VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies is a typical arrangement.

The relationship is managed through telephone, e-mail communications and visits, and the employer conducts assessment observations, mentoring and overseeing/supervising practical work.

The majority of the provision offered by another training provider interviewed leads to Vocationally Related Qualifications (VRQs) and the arrangement to offer the VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies arose through staff and learners seeking either voluntary work experience placement or part time employment.

This provider's learners either work part time within the industry or attend voluntarily in their own time. The full time provision changed radically 2 years ago when the provider was encouraged to move away from NVQ to VRQ type qualifications. In essence this meant that work placement was no longer mandatory – it is however desirable and actively encouraged.

Although in VRQs the provision of work placements is desirable and actively encouraged, the removal of a mandatory requirement for such employer involvement removed the element of responsibility from individual providers for the completion of Health and Safety checks and documentation.

“It is essential that learners who undertake a qualification (typically in a college setting with a college salon) that qualifies them to gain insurance to work as an employed and/or self-employed beauty therapist must have direct contact with employers throughout their training and assessment. This is seen as greatly enhancing the learning experience by learning from people currently active in industry, learners are inspired by those who are successful in an area in which they wish to follow.”

Awarding Organisation

### **Difficulty engaging with small and medium sized employers**

The second provider reports that it is very difficult to engage with employers. Even where training organisations attend employer events, showcases, trade shows etc., attendance can be poor. Most employers in the beauty therapy sector are SMEs, and unable to justify the expense incurred by engaging in partnerships other than through a work-based or apprenticeship route.

This provider believes employers must be realistic and understand that thorough underpinning knowledge and practice will equip future staff with the skills required for the industry. They also noted the difficulties they experience with employers not trained in coaching, mentoring or assessment techniques.

The first provider notes that it is difficult for learners to gain experience that is really valuable – lots of employers are happy for learners to answer the phones, make drinks, make up treatment couches etc. but not many let them practise with their clients - because some procedures are painful and very intimate and the client is not sure of the skill level of the learner. Most learners start on reception duties and work their way up to painting nails, providing head massages, pedicures, then they progress to waxing, then ear piercing.

This provider praised VTCT for employing staff who have worked in the industry. Employer involvement however in the VTCT Level 2 Diploma in Beauty Therapy Studies is not mandatory.

Ensuring employer involvement is harder in beauty than for example in hairdressing because of the almost clinical nature of some of the procedures. Beauty salons can be quite small so there is a practical reason of there not always being much room for another person; the treatment space is naturally intended to be private.

## Benefits of employer involvement

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The learner benefits from engaging and committing with the workplace; they acquire real life experience; these learners have a much better experience than perhaps participating as guinea pigs in college salons with low expectations.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The employer benefits from the opportunities to engage in coaching, mentoring and assessment. They are able to train a new generation and might have a role in ensuring provision in the industry is what it needs it to be.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The provider benefits from delivery and quality monitoring – it is able to deliver training that is valuable to employers and produces motivate and enthusiastic learners. There are the wider benefits associated with employer, trainer and trainee collaboration.

# City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>601/0717/0</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

## The qualification

The qualification is intended to allow learners to learn, develop and practise the skills required for employment and/or career progression in the catering and hospitality sector.

The qualification includes one unit that is intended to “enable the learner to develop the knowledge and understanding to apply the personal skills required within the workplace in the catering and hospitality industry. A high level of interpersonal skills is required of those working in this industry which must be maintained when working under pressure. In this unit learners will explore what is an acceptable personal image and the types of behaviours associated with professionalism in the industry. They will practise communication and team working”.<sup>12</sup>

The qualification specification recommends a number of different delivery strategies for the qualification, amongst these:

“Work placements should be encouraged in local restaurants, cafes, pubs and hotels where access to the public is possible. Equally, guest speakers from local employers and visits to local restaurants, hotels and conferences should be encouraged.

It may benefit candidates if practical activities are delivered in a realistic working environment, but this is not a requirement of the qualification.”

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<sup>12</sup> City and Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Professional Cookery (7100-12), Qualification handbook for centres QAN (601/0717/0), Version 1.1 (September 2013), August 2013

The specification encourages the integration of wider learning opportunities, beyond the completion of external assessments.

The qualification is assessed through a combination of practical demonstration, assignments, observations and the development of a portfolio. Throughout delivery and assessment the focus on workplace skills within the catering and hospitality industry is of paramount importance.

### **The nature of employer involvement**

The qualification gives learners an understanding of how practical hospitality and catering operations work. It is taught in kitchens in the college. The learners spend 17 hours per week at the college.

Employers are involved in a number of ways, including:

- Second marking of synoptic tests – usually chefs from local restaurants or hotels (recommended as good practice by the AO and generally achieved by the college)
- The college holds a lot of events involving local employers, mainly about networking
- Employer forums and chef forums
- Work experience
- Some lecturers are part-time chefs

There is no written contract in place with the employers involved, other than with those who are employing apprentices. The current arrangements have been in place for ‘a long time,’ and the college finds it gets easier to arrange employer involvement as more and more learners are working in the local area.

Work experience is monitored by the college. Learners work alongside chefs, mainly to develop employability skills and experience the ‘stress’ and ‘pressure’ of a real catering environment, rather than in the ‘practice kitchen’ in the college.

Various local employers are involved with the college, and these include both hotels and restaurants. Where industry practitioners conduct ‘second marking’, this is performed alongside college staff. Independent tutors conduct this assessment where it is not possible to secure the services of a working chef although these instances are relatively uncommon.

Assessment is generally carried out in a skills development class, although in some circumstances it can take place in a realistic working environment, for example if

learners are unable to sit the initial assessment or have to re-take it.

The college staff tend to build up working relationships with individuals in local companies, however this can prove challenging on occasions because those working in the industry typically only remain with an employer for a few years before moving on.

The college provides employers with an outline of what they are looking for in terms of work experience and an indication of the level that the learner is working at. College staff generally do not require support to work with employers, as many of them are still in the industry themselves.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

Learners experience the benefit of working in a wider range of workplaces and therefore gain a more realistic view of what the industry is about. They are able to understand the industry and its requirements better and become better equipped to enter it.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The main benefit to the employer is the opportunity to see a range of learners and assess them over time before committing to employing them. The learners are able to do some useful work which is of benefit to the employer. Learners are more employable, and they will have been assessed on the skills required to obtain employment as a chef.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

Employer involvement enhances the reputation of the employer and the profile of the learners; the latter are perceived as being more employable, which draws a positive reflection on the provider. Employer involvement gives greater validity and value to the course in the eyes of employers.

## Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>Pearson</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music Technology (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>500/7716/8</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>

### The qualification

The Pearson “BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music Technology” is designed to provide learners with a body of musical and technical knowledge which is both widely applicable and suited to the needs of the music industry<sup>13</sup>. The extended diploma is equivalent to college education, and is intended to prepare learners for employment or higher education; its purpose is to extend and deepen the specialist work-related focus of precursor qualifications.

The Diploma consists of five mandatory units, covering listening skills for music technologists; music production techniques; planning and delivering a music project; sequencing systems and techniques; the sound and music industry. Learners can choose from 25 optional units covering topics such as acoustics, arrangement, composition, DJ performance, music and sound for the moving image, freelancing, amongst others.

As the qualification specification states *“there is potential for the qualification to prepare learners for appropriate direct employment in the vocational sector and it is suitable for those who have decided that they clearly wish to enter a particular specialist area of work. It is broadly equivalent to three GCE A Levels.”*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Statement of purpose for the Edexcel “BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Music Technology”. <http://www.edexcel.com/migrationdocuments/BTEC%20Nationals%20from%202010/SoP-50077168-Pearson%20BTEC%20Level%203%20Extended%20Diploma%20in%20Music%20Technology.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Pearson Music and Music Technology (QCF) Specification for first teaching September 2010, Issue 4

## The nature of employer involvement

Employer involvement is recommended as part of qualification delivery and assessment, with emphasis on the practical application of the assessment and grading criteria, as well as using practical activities in course delivery and work experience.

The qualification specification recommends certain modes of delivery and, in reference to part-time learners, suggests a number of means by which providers should aim to enhance the vocational nature of the qualification:

- “liaising with employers to ensure a course relevant to learners’ specific needs
- accessing and using non-confidential data and documents from learners’ workplaces
- including sponsoring employers in the delivery of the programme and, where appropriate, in the assessment
- linking with company-based/workplace training programmes
- making full use of the variety of experience of work and life that learners bring to the programme.”

The physical resources used to support delivery of the programme should normally be of industry standard.

The college participating in the case study adopted an approach to delivery which makes use of a real-life working environment through delivery in a live music venue. The employer, a council run venue, provides a classroom in-situ at local music rooms which is rented by the college. The classroom can be opened out into the venue providing learners with direct access to, and experience of, a working venue and its equipment; the arrangement is formalised through a rental agreement.

Work experience is also offered on an ad-hoc basis by the employer; learners volunteer at local outdoor events such as Music Festivals, Summer Park Festivals and, at individual shows across the city. Staff have been further involved in delivery by giving talks to learners in support of specific units, one such example being ‘Marketing and Promotion in the Music Industry’ where the local music company Managing Director spoke to learners on marketing techniques.

Day to day, learners are involved in various practical activities which can include setting up amplifiers and microphones for performers. The Slade Rooms’ staff take an active interest in learner development so that the youngsters are fully employable on

completion of the course. This is seen as a critical addition to the technical skills developed, providing learners with additional, transferable skills in demand by employers.

There are a number of critical components that must be worked at for employer involvement to be a success:

- Commitment from both parties
- Trusted and knowledgeable staff
- Willingness for centre staff to work outside of 'office' hours
- Commitment needs to come 'from the top'
- Time for centre staff to keep in constant contact with the employer
- The training must match what the employer needs and uses on a day to day basis (e.g. software)
- Flexibility (from both the centre and employer perspective)

The skills gained on work experience add value to the learners' performance although the placement is not formally assessed. The college reports that the employer's comments, feedback and evaluation frequently contribute to the achievement of excellent grades for learners taking this qualification.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

As a result of employer involvement the learner gains a set of vocationally relevant skills, develops confidence to use them in a work environment, together with an understanding of the reality of work.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The employer benefits from a young person's viewpoint, in this case on current market trends – this is invaluable for the creative industry. The employer welcomes the additional, fresh perspective and injection of energy into the business and is reassured that the learners are being equipped with the necessary skills, valued by employers.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The involvement of the employer ensures that courses are vocationally relevant to what the college is trying to deliver, whether the intention is that the learner will progress to Higher Education or to employment. Crucially, employer involvement makes courses more engaging and enjoyable and relevant to work.

## NCTL Level 3 Diploma in Journalism (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>National College for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ)</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>501/1103/6</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

### The qualification

The NCTJ “Level 3 Diploma in Journalism” is designed to equip learners with the skills required for professional journalism employment<sup>15</sup>. The diploma is appropriate for learners of college-age and above who already work in journalism or who want to work in journalism. The qualification is designed to equip learners with the skills needed for multi-platform journalism whether in newspapers, magazines, online, television or radio.

One of the mandatory modules, ‘multimedia portfolio for journalists’, requires learners to produce 10 articles/broadcast packages – preferably published/broadcast. The NCTJ recommends a minimum of 10 days’ work experience at a learner’s chosen media organisation in order to practise their skills in the workplace and gather stories for their portfolio.

Achievement of the qualification can lead to employment within the industry and provide access for entry to the National Qualification in Journalism (NQJ). The NQJ is the industry’s professional qualification and is open to entrants who have worked in the industry for a minimum of 18 months. Entrants must have achieved at least a Grade C in each of the units of the Level 3 Diploma in Journalism, be able to demonstrate 100wpm shorthand and have completed the module on media law court

### The nature of employer involvement

Employer involvement is mandatory in the delivery of the Diploma, and involves:

- assessment of written and practical coursework by qualified journalist trainers and practitioners
- industry practitioners are heavily involved in setting and marking NCTJ

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<sup>15</sup> Qualification specification for the NCTJ “Level 3 Diploma in Journalism”.

<http://www.nctj.com/downloadlibrary/Diploma%20in%20Journalism%20qualification%20specification.pdf>

examinations, which are designed to meet industry standards and ensure learners can apply their skills to 'real-world' scenarios

The Diploma syllabus is set by a Journalism Board consisting of working journalists under guidance from NCTJ. Of the five mandatory units, each centre marks the examinations for three of them and the other two are returned to the NCTJ. NCTJ has a 'bank' of markers who are qualified journalists and examinations for the remaining two mandatory units as well as a selection of the optional units are sent to these markers.

Whilst working towards the Diploma, the NCTJ strongly recommend that learners undertake work experience, with all NCTJ-accredited providers incorporating a period of at least two weeks work experience in a newsroom on their courses.

"The Diploma in Journalism will incorporate programmes of study that will be taught for a minimum of 650 guided learning hours. Written and practical coursework will be set and marked by approved centres and assessed to industry standards by qualified journalist trainers and practitioners. The coursework will incorporate practical tasks based in the classroom and/or in the real world covering the areas outlined in this syllabus."

AO

Work experience can take place at a learner's chosen media organisation in order to practise their skills in the workplace and gather stories for their portfolio. This varies from centre to centre. At one of the colleges interviewed for this case study, learners are expected to find their own work experience – supported with help from tutors. A list of newspapers, magazines, websites and broadcasters on friendly terms with the college is supplied to applicants who attend a pre-test to get on the course. During their induction, editors from local news outlets address the learners and request future stories from them – as well as offering work experience opportunities.

All learners are tracked to make sure they carry out work experience and this is the main way employers are involved in the Diploma. One of the national news-broadcasters occasionally offer a prize of two week work experience for the first sports reporter to gain their 100wpm shorthand exam. Another delivers CV and interview preparation and the editor of a tabloid paper based in London prepares learners on ways of how to best pitch their stories to editors.

People with practical knowledge are immediately useful to employers. And in a fast paced and constantly evolving working environment this is particularly the case. The

NCTJ are totally against 'bums on seats'. Journalism is a tough and fast paced career and one which is often misunderstood and/or misrepresented. Course providers are keen that learners are stringently vetted at the application stage by both interview and through evidence of any previous work for school or university publications for example. The NCTJ insists that applicants to the diploma are interviewed.

Employers frequently want centres to train their new intake but it can be difficult to get employers involved. From the perspective of the training provider, a small investment by the employer can mean a big payback later on down the line.

## **Benefits of employer engagement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The learner is able to apply his/her skills in a workplace environment and gain an in depth knowledge of how the newsroom operates on a daily and cyclical basis. Learners gain valuable work based training and the opportunity to have their work published. A portfolio of cuttings is considered essential for graduates to have when they leave the course and start applying for jobs.

### **2. Benefits to the employer/provider**

The classroom training element is essential for teaching skills that cannot be taught on the job – in particular shorthand, transcription, media law and public affairs. For the fast-track and year-long candidates employers are able to identify future employees who are doing work experience and they are also being provided with valuable content.

## **Predominantly work-based qualifications**

These are generally undertaken by work based employees but nevertheless provide useful insight into employer involvement with qualifications.

## HABC Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Horticulture (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC)</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>HABC Level 2 Diploma In Work-based Horticulture (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>601/2331/X</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

### The qualification

The employer is a large facilities management company with around 35,000 employees, working with 2,000 clients. The main activities consist of reception and food services, security and maintenance and grounds maintenance for schools, hospitals, prisons and military bases.

The relationship with the training provider came about due to the company taking on a new member of staff who had previously worked for the provider. At the time, the employer was looking for a training course that went beyond the existing Apprenticeship – badged within the company as the ‘Bronze Award’ – and the training provider was suggested as a suitable starting point to put together the training package.

The provider worked directly with Highfield in the delivery of other qualifications and, in one of their regular meetings with the centre the AO asked if they would be interested in delivering any of their other qualifications, in addition to the Health and Safety qualifications that they offered. The training provider enquired about the possibility of delivering the Diploma in Work-Based Horticulture to its clients, and offering dual-badging on learner certificates. Highfield facilitated the request, and the provider became the training partner to deliver the ‘learning’ elements.

Units covering spraying and chainsaw skills were included, along with a First Aid certificate. The key was to include less emphasis on basic fundamental skills assessment, and more on practical skills to better match the learning profile of learners who may have difficulties such as dyslexia and are therefore attracted to a vocational route, rather than following an academic pathway.

### The nature of employer involvement

The employer role is to provide work experience and placements, and to coach and mentor the learners. The qualification is delivered in partnership between the employer

and the provider, with all assessment carried out by the latter.

All of the classroom training is delivered in the depot classroom, with an assessor on-site to assess the tasks; this provides a good balance between direct delivery and workplace assessment to minimise the cost of classroom delivery.

Classroom learning and delivery is much easier to conduct in the winter months as opposed to at the peak working periods during the summer.

The main challenges were the logistics of putting together the scheme, as well as navigating government funding streams. However, the main result of working with the training provider and the AO to develop the qualification is that the employer is now assured of a consistent standard of training across the country. It gives employees status as they are recognised by their association with the employer, and in the grounds and maintenance industry they are seen as the best at what they do.

The training provider works closely with employers as a matter of course, to deliver pre-employment training at level 1 for people not employed in the sector, but who are seeking a career. This helps to prepare the learners for employment and for entry onto a level 2 qualification. Employer relationships are fostered by the training provider's dedicated business development team, understanding what employers want and then tailoring the Diploma to suit their needs.

Because of the nature of the sector – the seasonality of competitive tendering – it can sometimes be difficult for learners to be released to attend the classroom elements of the training.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

For the learner, they benefit from the status in the industry of the employer – one that is synonymous with hard work in challenging conditions. Completion of this qualification can also be used as a pathway into a level 2 qualification. Extensive involvement with the employer exposes the learner to the industry and ensures that they practically apply their theoretical knowledge.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

'Reinvigorated every single day'. Many contracts require that staff are qualified to a certain level. Involvement in the qualification – in terms of ensuring it is tailored to the specific needs of clients – helps to meet this requirement. It helps reduce any negative perceptions about the industry.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The provider benefits from a close working relationship with the employer which enhances the employability of their learners, by ensuring key industry skills are included in the delivery of the qualification.

# CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for England (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	CACHE
<b>Qualification name:</b>	CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for England (QCF)
<b>Number:</b>	501/1258/2
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	Recommended

## The qualification

The CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Adults) for England is designed to develop and assess skills relating to health and social care with adults. The Diploma is appropriate for people working in, or who wish to work in, a senior role in health and social care for adults.

In order to study the Diploma, learners will need to be working, volunteering or on a practical placement<sup>16</sup>. The work-based practice of learners will be assessed as part of the Diploma using the following methods<sup>17</sup>:

- Direct observation of practice
- Witness evidence
- Learner's log of practice in real work situations
- Planned activities

Employer involvement in delivery and assessment is recommended by the AO, in order for learners to develop competences considered only possible to develop in a real working environment, rather than mandatory.

However, while learners 'need' to be working, volunteering or on a practical placement during completion of the qualification - employer involvement in this qualification remains as 'recommended'. Making it mandatory is not formally agreed because of situations that may occur; for example, a learner may be in a part-time job relevant to,

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<sup>16</sup> There is no specified minimum amount of work placement however, the learner will need a sufficient amount of time in the workplace to be able to achieve all the assessment criteria. This may depend on the circumstances of the provider and learner.

<sup>17</sup> Qualification specification available at [http://www.cache.org.uk/Qualifications/HSC/HSCL3/Documents/L3%20D%20HSC%20\(Adults\)%20Eng%20Qual%20Spec%20v6%200.pdf](http://www.cache.org.uk/Qualifications/HSC/HSCL3/Documents/L3%20D%20HSC%20(Adults)%20Eng%20Qual%20Spec%20v6%200.pdf)

but independent from, the qualification.

### **The nature of employer involvement**

At the training provider interviewed for this case study, learners spend two days a week on work placement where they are required to complete a minimum of 6 hours per day and are expected to build a portfolio of evidence. College assessors visit the workplace to set work criteria required by the AO, including assessment principles set out by Skills for Care and Development (the sector skills council), and to assess achievement. Assessment is competency-based and work in class and the placement is signed off by industry-experienced tutors.

Work placements are sought and secured by the college, through a network of existing employers with whom – in many cases – long-standing relationships are held. The network was established through the delivery of a predecessor qualification and the college staff have worked to maintain these links.

A number of teachers are from industry, or are still actively employed, providing the college with a large number of contacts to draw upon.

Relationships are not formalised in any way between the employer and the centre, these being built on trust and nurtured over time; no formal contract or written agreement exists. In some cases however, learners do go on to attain paid employment with an employer perhaps in night or weekend shifts. The arrangement is described as typical in the care sector.

As well as offering a work placement (although usually the learner is employed directly), the employer will help to select qualification units relevant to their needs. For example, those involved in care of the elderly or in mental health are able to select units specific to these contexts. Employers will also become involved in supervising, training and buddying learners. Although this can be time intensive for the employer, the benefit of gaining an extra pair of hands will usually outweigh the time commitment.

Contact between the college and the employer is managed through regular telephone and e-mail contact, supplemented by four visits per year. From the perspective of the employer, this will usually entail no more than a few hours a month to keep in touch with the college. Other commitments involved initial training from the college in what to expect from learners and what it would be most valuable for learners to learn whilst undertaking their work placement.

Relationships between the college and local employers are reported as being good and, because these relationships have been in place for some time, no specific problems or issues are encountered. There are however two ongoing challenges:

1. Limitations on time mean it is not always possible to secure the involvement of additional employers; and,
2. Learner expectations need to be balanced with what is practical in the workplace and this means ensuring that learners do not feel exploited when undertaking their work placements.

Ensuring learners attend the work placement on time to complete the criteria they are being assessed against can also be a challenge, but this reinforces the importance of communication between college and employer.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The learner knows that, from the experience they have gained, they stand a good chance of gaining paid employment.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The employer is assured that learners are gaining real hands-on experience under the supervision of qualified professionals. The employer may also use the opportunity to recruit staff, with many learners employed straight from college.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The network of contacts gained by the college provides a rich and valuable source of staff CPD.

# Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Children's Play, Learning and Development

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	Pearson
<b>Qualification name:</b>	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Children's Play, Learning and Development
<b>Number:</b>	600/5538/8
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	Mandatory

## The qualification

The Certificate is designed for post-16 learners, and aims to develop their knowledge and understanding of Early Years teaching. It combines college based learning and the opportunity to apply this in a work related context.

The qualification requires learners to undertake 800 hours of placement experience with the stated age ranges, which is organised by a team of College Placement Co-ordinators. The learners are supported during their placements by a work-place mentor and a College Placement Co-ordinator, who visits regularly to observe the learner in practice and liaises with the work-place mentor.

Learners are required to complete a 'Skills for Practice' Log during their placement which documents their progress in a variety of relevant areas. The training is organised with an initial block of study in the college environment followed by a fortnightly pattern of alternate college and placement time.

## The nature of employer involvement

The BTEC qualification, which has been provided by the college for over 25 years (the current qualification was redeveloped for 2012), requires learners to participate in mandatory work placements. During their placement, learners are invited to shadow staff and are assigned a work-place mentor. This staff member conducts an initial induction and a daily discussion with the learner about work opportunities within the daily routine. This mentor also acts as a witness for the learners' Skills for Practice Log, and completes a final report upon the placement completion.

Learners receive support from a variety of different members of staff during their placement:

1. Health and safety inductions and admin requirements

2. Placement management, such as inductions and monitoring
3. Day to day mentoring
4. Completion of witness statements and signing off demonstrations of competency

The college provides employers with the opportunity to visit the college to observe the formal teaching process, and the college's visiting tutors offer ongoing support for the learners and the employer if required.

Employers provide feedback to the college allowing learners' training to be updated to incorporate any changes to the industry standards. This ensures quality of the training provided by the college and continuous improvement.

Written assignments are expected to include case studies and examples from placement settings. For some units, such as Unit 9 Observations, Assessment and Planning for Play and Development, these assignments are expected to include witness testimonies, feedback from others, personal reflection, further observations of the child and comments from the child or parent.

In order to obtain a 'distinction', written assignments are expected to include evidence from case studies or observations and further reading to reach conclusions.

For all assessments, learners must provide evidence from at least three different early years' settings across the age ranges, within the assessment of these units. This can be achieved through visits, visiting speakers, case studies, observations and placements.

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

Learners have the opportunity to observe positive working relationships and experience a supportive team ethos, and they are able to practically apply their theoretical knowledge in a supportive environment. The employer's support enables learners to develop their skills and reflect on good working practice and assist them in their preparation for employment. It helps them improve their employability and enhances their CV/UCAS application. The Skills for Practice log is tangible evidence they can show to prospective employers/HEIs.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The employer is actively involved in developing the future workforce by passing on their knowledge and understanding. Providing training ensures that the employer regularly reflects on the quality of their own practice, and helps to maintain high standards. Employer involvement with learners' training also exposes practitioners to new

information and ideas.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

For the college, the mutually beneficial relationship between themselves and the employer ensures the successful development of the future workforce. Collaborating with an industry-based placement provider ensures that the college's learners are able to develop reflective practice skills, and a raised profile within the community.

## City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>City &amp; Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>600/6052/9</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

### The qualification

The level 3 diploma in veterinary nursing is a qualification that prepares veterinary nurses for professional registration with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. There are currently three optional pathways; small animal, equine or mixed practice veterinary nursing.<sup>18</sup>

Trainee veterinary nurses are required to achieve a minimum overall period of training of 94 weeks (3290 hours) of which 60 weeks (2100 hours) are practical training within an approved veterinary nursing training practice.

The qualification offers a balance of theoretical and practical training to gain the required knowledge and clinical skills necessary for an effective and rewarding professional career as a veterinary nurse.

### The nature of employer involvement

The employer is involved in the delivery and assessment of this qualification in a number of ways including:

- Expert witness/testimony
- Coaching/mentoring
- Work experience/placements
- As assessors/on assessment teams (e.g. marking/moderating)

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<sup>18</sup> Information in this section is taken from the City & Guilds Qualification Handbook for the Level 3 Diploma in Veterinary Nursing, October 2012, Version 1.9, updated September 2013. It can be accessed on the City and Guilds website through the relevant 'Course and Qualifications' pathway <http://www.cityandguilds.com/courses-and-qualifications/land-based-services/animal-management/7457-veterinary-nursing/level-3>

Learners work at the practice in a full time capacity and college one day per week. When at work, the learners work with clinical coaches to complete the online 'Nursing Progress Log'<sup>19</sup> of practical nursing skills. The skills are taught and assessed to complement the theory and assessments delivered by the college.

Employers play a critical role in the training and assessment of learner veterinary nurses. All training practices are required to demonstrate that they have the necessary facilities, caseload and personnel to support learner veterinary nurse training. Each learner veterinary nurse is allocated a trained and qualified Clinical Coach who acts as a supervisor in a clinical capacity, coaching and assessing the learners' clinical veterinary nursing skills. Clinical Coaches are experienced and either Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) registered veterinary nurses or surgeons. Other members of the practice offer support to the training of learner veterinary nurses as well for example receptionists, laboratory technicians, practice managers etc. During the period of practical training learners are required to demonstrate competence in all of the veterinary nursing skills required of their pathway.

The veterinary practice has trained learners for over 30 years and its principal motivation is to provide its practice with qualified nurses.

The practice offers work experience placements to local schools (week long placements), A level learners and provides Extra-Mural Studies (EMS)<sup>20</sup> for Veterinary Learners attending university. It also uses other centres to provide training to its nurses on a day release basis.

The relationship between the college and its training practices has changed over the years and veterinary nursing training practice employers are now predominately responsible for the practical training and assessment of the qualification. The college acts to quality assure the work of the training practice and it employs experienced and industry qualified veterinary nursing staff to support the relationship with its associated training practices.

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19 The RCVS Veterinary Nursing Progress Log (NPL) is an electronic log which allows learners to record their clinical experiences against skills criteria during their practical time in clinical practice.

20 Learners must complete a minimum of 38 weeks EMS during their course, which should normally consist of 12 weeks pre-clinical and 26 weeks of clinical placements. EMS is made up of the 'pre-clinical' or animal husbandry phase, and the clinical EMS phase, which comprises 'preparatory EMS' (6 weeks in which learners should undertake at least three different types of placements to experience a range of veterinary work) and 'practical EMS' (the remaining 20 weeks, to be undertaken during the later clinical years). Source: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/education/extra-mural-studies-ems/>

## Benefits of employer involvement

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

The main benefit to the learner is the opportunity to become an RCVS registered veterinary nurse on successful completion of the qualification. The learner also benefits from a supportive learning environment and the balance of theory and practical work in a progressive, busy veterinary surgery.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

The main benefit to the employer is the recruitment of qualified RCVS registered veterinary nurses at the end of the period of training who are bonded to the practice.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The main benefit to the centre is the opportunity to work closely with employers to provide an industry relevant and professional qualification. It also benefits from the provision of a regular intake of learners and clinical coaches for training.

# Foundation Degree in Dairy Technology

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>Reaseheath College (validated by Harper Adams University)</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>Foundation Degree in Dairy Technology</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

## The qualification

The Foundation Degree aims to provide “comprehensive dairy training” involving “studying dairy theory, science and practical skills” in addition to “working with some of the country’s leading companies”, to “produce world-class staff for tomorrow’s dairy industry”. It caters for dairy processing and manufacturing personnel from a range of ages (18-47) and at different stages of their careers.

The learners’ learning is divided into formal study at the College and “hands on” training in the industry where their theoretical skills can be put into practice. The course covers a wide range of topics:

- Dairy theory, science and practical skills
- Production engineering
- Logistics
- Supply chain

For the duration of the qualification, membership of the dairy industry’s professional association, the Society of Dairy Technology, is provided for all learners.

## The nature of employer involvement

The Foundation Degree, launched six years ago with support of the awarding organisation Harper Adams University, involves substantial employer communication and collaboration. Key industry employers regularly deliver teaching sessions and guest speaker presentations. Learners also benefit from employer-site field trips.

The Level 4 Foundation Degree in Dairy Technology is an example of a qualification type in which employer involvement is a fundamental requirement. Dairy businesses contribute to its design and assist in its delivery and assessment.

Learners follow a structured work and training programme during their “hands on” training with their employer. Regular contact between the College and the employer ensures that the learners’ theoretical knowledge is used during their work period.

Employers also provide learners with a mentor.

At the end of each teaching block, the employer is involved in three main activities:

1. Curriculum meeting where the employer discusses the learner's development and suggests any support they may require;
2. Operations meeting where workplace mentors discuss the learner's progress;
3. Procedure meeting where the learner and employer discuss the learner future career development.

All aspects of the qualification are reviewed in a deep industry analysis, or 'deep-dive', conducted approximately every three years, to ensure that it remains relevant to the dairy industry.

" We do not find that there is any resistance to (employer involvement) - employers are very willing to participate in curriculum design and also in lesson delivery. The emergence of the course was and still is a collaborative partnership between employer and college".

Awarding organisation

## **Benefits of employer involvement**

### **1. Benefits to the learner**

Learners are aware of the huge backing from their employers and, as a result, work hard and are less inclined to miss lessons. Therefore, less classroom management is required.

A level 5-6 programme is currently under development, owing to the pressure on dairy manufactures to use skilled staff and modern technologies.

### **2. Benefits to the employer**

Employers report that their staff that have completed the qualification have saved them money. The College receives regular updates from the employer so that learners can develop their career and learning can be tailored to suit the employer's needs.

### **3. Benefits to the provider**

The establishment of strong professional relationships between the College and employers in the dairy sector and regular employer updates ensures the large dairy

centre at the College is kept up-to-date on new/emerging technologies and practices.

# City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Aviation Operations on the Ground (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	City & Guilds
<b>Qualification name:</b>	City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Aviation Operations on the Ground (QCF)
<b>Number:</b>	501/0865/7
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	Mandatory

## The qualification

The Diploma is an appropriate qualification for anyone working in an airport (partly due to the lack of other qualifications in that environment). The job roles this qualification is aimed at include those responsible for maintaining aircraft cleanliness, check-in staff and baggage handlers, passenger services staff and load planning officers.

To gain this qualification, learners must achieve 8 credits from mandatory units and 29 credits from optional units. The mandatory units comprise airside risk and hazard identification and assessment, and maintenance of aviation health, safety and security. Optional units offer a range of generic and aviation specialist courses<sup>21</sup>.

A major employer in the industry collaborated with City & Guilds and the Sector Skills Council to develop the qualification because it felt existing provision had historically fallen out of currency and was no longer fit for purpose. It is one of two industry organisations directly involved in delivering and assessing this qualification to their own employees, and offers support to other colleges and providers approved by the awarding organisation to deliver it.

The employer delivers the qualification to employees on the ground, using a college to draw down funding. It delivers and assesses the qualification itself.

## The nature of employer involvement

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<sup>21</sup> Further information is available on the City & Guilds website under the 'Courses and Qualifications' section, under 'Travel, Tourism and Aviation'. See <http://www.cityandguilds.com/courses-and-qualifications/travel-tourism-and-aviation/airport-and-airline-services/4877-aviation-operations-on-the-ground/level-2>

The qualification is not compulsory for the employer's staff but the company tends to recruit people who want to participate in training opportunities. Due to funding circumstances, a certain ratio is established where the majority of employees are certified in this qualification and the rest are trained to the same level but not registered for certification.

The qualification is delivered only to learners aged 18 and above and is offered by a number of colleges. The employer offers to assist these colleges with delivery and ensure learners are up to speed with industry requirements. It also provides CPD and training opportunities for college staff, including training forums for tutors, to ensure the occupational competence of individuals responsible for teaching new learners.

The employer arranges airport visits for colleges. These visits last seven hours and start at 4am because that is a particularly busy time for airports and is a good time to conduct an observation. By introducing a workplace visit at a time where potential employees would be expected to be at work, it helps build awareness of the role and the demands on employees wanting to work in the sector. Observation is an important part of assessment – learners are assessed at check-in of all types of airline – legacy, low cost, high cost, etc. They are able to experience the process of getting to the airport from beginning to end, through baggage handling and security.

Where a college relationship is mature, the employer can provide teaching and learning materials but cannot always provide work experience to college learners because of issues relating to airport security. However, if a learner gains an achievement rate greater than 90%, the employer will automatically give them a job interview.

The employer delivers training to college learners in their own classrooms and aims to ensure that learners have employer contact and experience employer-led lifelong learning. Learners are also trained in skills which are much better taught in a work environment, such as fire training, and which can be added to a learner's evidence portfolio.

The employer's trainers are trained in a Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) qualification as a minimum and all assessors and trainers also receive Training, Assessment, Quality Assurance (TAQA) training to deliver Diplomas since some occupational roles in the company have the opportunity to study Diplomas. The employer provides staff involved with training with workshops and supports them with both delivery and assessment of qualifications.

The employer reports that it is a challenge to build effective links with colleges/training providers since the onus is apparently on the latter to approach the company. This is despite the fact that the employer operates in over 25 airports across the UK.

## Benefits of employer involvement

### 1. Benefits to the learner

Learners have a choice of pathway into employment, firstly they can complete a qualification at a college where there is a strong employer partnership or secondly learners can enter the industry with no qualifications and work up the ladder, via training opportunities such as this Diploma. Learners are provided with development opportunities to ensure the maximisation of their potential. Learners are given an insight into the industry and even where they choose not to enter it, they are equipped with basic employability skills that improve their prospects of finding employment elsewhere.

### 2. Benefits to the employer

For the employer, the main benefit of this Diploma is the generation of competent and qualified staff motivated to deliver high standards. The aviation sector makes a significant contribution to the national economy and employees that become qualified in this sector will possess a range of transferable skills and progression opportunities.

### 3. Benefits to the provider

The provider will fulfil its obligations for employer involvement and are likely to benefit in terms of their relationship with Ofsted. The relationship with the employer adds value to the provider by boosting their appeal to learners and ensuring learning outcomes are attuned to the requirements and standards of the industry.

## NOCN Level 2 Diploma in Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>NOCN</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>NOCN Level 2 Diploma in Steelfixing Occupations (Construction) (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>601/2022/8</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

### The qualification

The qualification aims to respond to the recognised industry-wide lack of fit-for-purpose training for Steelfixing occupations. The Diploma, designed for inclusion in apprenticeship frameworks and developed in conjunction with the awarding organisation, one employer and three colleges, will be delivered in a minimum of 846 guided learning hours and will cover 11 mandatory units:

1. Operating Safe Working Practices when Fixing Insitu and Prefabricated Reinforcing Steel
2. Moving, Lifting, Handling and Storing Reinforcement Steel and Associated Materials, Equipment and Resources
3. Interpretation of Construction Drawings, Specifications and other Relevant Information Required when Fixing Steel Insitu
4. Fixing Insitu Reinforcing Steel
5. Interpretation of Construction Drawings, Specifications and other Relevant Information Required for Prefabricating Reinforcement Steel Sections
6. Manufacture and Installation of Prefabrication Reinforcement Steel Sections
7. Interpretation of Construction Drawings, Specifications and other Relevant Information Required for Cutting and Bending Reinforcing Steel to Shape
8. Cutting and Bending, Reinforcing Steel to Shape
9. Appreciation of ICT and 3D Building Information Modelling for Civil Engineering Operatives
10. Team Working in Construction
11. Self Management in Construction

To ensure standardisation, the Diploma's training specifications are very tightly written in order to prevent flexibility, and the specifications are fixed with limited flexibility.

A portion of the qualification delivery will be at the employer's own supplier's factory in

South Wales; utilising the knowledge of the business' technical experts who are considered to be the best at delivering the practical content of the qualification. The college will deliver the standard Health and Safety content; however it is mandatory that learners will complete 70% of practical learning in a workplace environment.

### **The nature of employer involvement**

All of the technical exercises involved in the Diploma have been created and developed by the employer and college tutors with input from a representative of other major civil engineering employers. The qualification was finalised recently and will be delivered from February 2014 onwards. A formal Civil Engineering Advisory Group has now been set up of employers with NOCN. This group will have oversight of the delivery of the qualifications in order to ensure quality to match employers' requirements.

Following a trainee introduction course in the college, learners who are successful and appointed by the employer will receive their company induction in the first week of employment. Apprentices will then spend 15 weeks in the college on practical and knowledge learning exercises. From here they will then go to site and start work as apprentices under supervision. During the work based learning period of around 12 months they will go back to college for 2 weeks periods in order to consolidate their knowledge skills before finally sitting a synoptic end test. If they pass this they will then become fully qualified steelfixers.

### **Benefits of employer involvement**

#### **1. Benefits to the learner**

Learners will benefit from a qualification that has been designed by members of the industry and so is considered fit-for-purpose. Upon the completion of the Diploma, they will also understand the expectations of the construction industry, and will immediately be of use on a construction site.

#### **2. Benefits to the employer**

For the employer, they will be involved in training a workforce that is ready and able to contribute immediately upon the completion of the Diploma. Employers will have certainty that individuals who have completed the qualification will all be of an equal standard.

#### **3. Benefits to the provider**

Through employer involvement, the college can emulate real-life situations. They will also benefit from employer support in sourcing appropriately skilled and qualified tutors, as it can be challenging for colleges to find an individual currently working in the industry who is willing to become a trained instructor. This challenge is particularly pertinent in

steelfixing occupations, which can be very well-paid and therefore difficult to recruit from into training roles.

# 1st4sport Level 2 NVQ Certificate in Activity Leadership (QCF)

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>1st4sport</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>1st4sport Level 2 NVQ Certificate in Activity Leadership (QCF)</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>600/1201/8</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

## The qualification

The qualification was developed by SkillsActive (SSC) in conjunction with industry experts including practitioners, employers, training providers and awarding organisations. The qualification has been available as a stand-alone qualification and as a component part of a level 2/Intermediate Apprenticeship since 1998. The employer has delivered this qualification since 1999 as part of their ongoing learning programme for employees.

The employer is in a unique position delivering this qualification as both an employer and the training provider for their employees. They do not offer training for external learners. The employer has over 20 activity centres across the UK and Europe. Roles are varied and include guest-facing hospitality, operational support roles, catering and reception, and activity leadership.

The qualification is one of a number of NVQ's SkillsActive developed to cover a range of job roles in Sport and Active Leisure sector.

The employer has between 100-130 learners on this qualification per year, with all learners being residential staff living onsite. Learners generally complete the qualification within 8-10 months, however since they are working seasonally, some learners will achieve the qualification in the following season.

The qualification is suited best to outdoor activity instructor roles for the employer. Mandatory units include preparing, leading and reviewing activity sessions, supporting the work of the learner's team and organisation, promoting health, safety and welfare in active leisure and recreation and supporting diversity and equality.

## The nature of employer involvement

The AO explained that while employer involvement is not an explicit requirement in the specification, it is mandatory in reality since learners must be employed and evidence

such as risk assessments, products of work, witness testimony must be authenticated by the employer. In addition, employers provide ongoing training to learners on an informal basis.

The employer's learning programme is predominately on the job, work-based learning with mentoring support and ongoing assessment to confirm occupational competence. This includes aspects of classroom delivery in small groups at each centre.

Methods of assessment include:

- Regular workplace observations
- Products of work
- Written and verbal questions
- Witness testimony
- Workbooks

The real value of the qualification is in the regular formal workplace observations supported by products of work. These assessments are undertaken by the learner's line manager who assesses learners against the required criteria, and provides both written and verbal feedback on improving performance.

Every learner has a Personal Development Plan, reviewed every 3-4 weeks depending on operational priorities. A formal review is then undertaken every 10 weeks, with action points agreed from observations and based on progress with the workbook. Every learner has the same target: to achieve the qualification in 8-10 months, with a Training Plan detailing key learning milestones.

Three main challenges have been encountered in delivering and assessing the qualification in-house:

1. Line managers know the learners and the job, and are therefore in the best position to undertake assessments. However, the challenge lies in ensuring Line managers are trained, competent and confident to undertake the assessments. This requires them to hold work-based assessor qualifications.
2. Allocating line managers' suitable time off-rota to carry out assessments can be challenging.
3. Due to the nature of the industry and business, seasonality can affect completion rates by learners.

## Benefits of employer involvement

### 1. Benefits to the learner

Because the qualification is practically-based, learners can demonstrate all or most aspects required to achieve the qualification in the workplace. The knowledge learned is directly relevant to the job role and can be demonstrated; this suits learners typically attracted to outdoor activity roles who may not have previously fully engaged in traditional 'classroom-based' learning and assessment.

This qualification confirms the learners' competence within this role, and is also a credible stepping stone to other leisure-related qualifications as well as enhancing CVs for employment in the sport and active leisure industry.

### 2. Benefits to the employer/provider

- High quality trained and developed staff which are competent within their job role.
- Re-enforcing the organisations operating procedures and industry operating standards.
- Investing in staff, to identify progression routes and career pathways within the industry

## CYQ Level 4 Certificate in Weight Management for Individuals with Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus and/or Metabolic Syndrome

<b>Awarding organisation:</b>	<b>Central YMCA Qualifications (CYQ)</b>
<b>Qualification name:</b>	<b>CYQ Level 4 Certificate in Weight Management for Individuals with Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus and/or Metabolic Syndrome</b>
<b>Number:</b>	<b>600/6752/4</b>
<b>Employer involvement:</b>	<b>Mandatory</b>

### The qualification

The CYQ “Level 4 Certificate in Weight Management for Individuals with Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus and/or Metabolic Syndrome” provides understanding of Obesity, Diabetes Mellitus and Metabolic Syndrome and prepares learners to plan and deliver safe and effective weight management courses<sup>22</sup>.

The course is designed for people who have achieved a Level 3 Certificate in Exercise Referral for Specific Controlled Conditions or a Level 3 Diploma in Exercise Referral (or equivalent). The qualification is suitable for level 3 advanced instructors and personal trainers and those wishing to become a specialist instructor at level 4 and facilitates entry at this level onto the Register of Exercise Professionals (REPS).

On completion of the qualification, learners will have developed skills in planning and delivering physical activity components as part of weight management programmes and, designed, reviewed and adapted weight management programmes. Assessment of the qualification is conducted through a number of elements which include coursework, portfolio of evidence, practical demonstration/assignment and written examination.

The qualification is part of a suite accessed by fitness professionals, and responds to demand from the market – either self-employed individuals, or those working in the fitness industry – for these professionals to be qualified in the important behavioural

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<sup>22</sup> Details of this qualification: <http://www.cyq.org.uk/qualifications/level-4-qcf/certificate-in-weight-management#>.

aspects of weight management.

Industry interaction is a mandatory requirement of the Certificate. Tutoring teams must include a practising or former NHS clinical or healthcare specialist from a relevant specialism (such as a physiotherapist or nurse specialist) who is involved in the delivery of contact time. This can consist of blended learning (including e-learning) but, where this occurs, this must be interactive and in real time.

The tutor team must also include a REPS registered exercise instructor with a minimum of 6 months' relevant experience, qualified to at least Level 3 in exercise referral and who holds or is working towards a Level 4 qualification in the specialist area. This individual must be present throughout the direct delivery of contact time.

A final requirement is that the tutor team include an appropriately qualified assessor and internal verifier with recent experience/understanding and ideally a qualification in the specialist area.

### **The nature of employer involvement**

The qualification is delivered by a small number of training providers, including the provider interviewed which specialises in delivering qualifications for the UK exercise and fitness industry. For the delivery of the Certificate, this provider fulfils the role of both centre and employer, through the operation of a specialist clinic.

Many of the learners are either in employment or they are looking for employment with the local health authority; most will complete the course in a year but it is possible to achieve the qualification in 12 weeks. The course is delivered via blended learning, through case study work and block work placements each of 5 days' duration.

Employer involvement is substantial, with learners required to include real clients in their learning, bringing them along to sessions and involving them in practical learning. Clients are also involved in the delivery of assessed seminars, with learners providing information to groups of patients through verbal presentation.

The Certificate was originally developed in response to demand from employers, as the Level 3 qualification in nutrition was considered to “stop short” of employer requirements in this particular specialist area. In addition to coverage of nutrition, the Certificate crucially includes a focus on the underlying behavioural aspects considered key to overeating, and diseases such as diabetes mellitus type 2.

### **Benefits of employer engagement**

#### **1. Benefits to the learner**

Employer involvement allows those working in the industry to identify a clear career

progression route from the qualification. Level 4 is considered a high level qualification in line with a knowledge base at undergraduate level but in a vocational programme. Through employer interaction and use of real-life case studies it visibly leads to job opportunities in health, exercise and fitness in both the public and the primary care sector. Learners are given the opportunity to develop the crucial, softer client-facing skills required in specialist roles.

## **2. Benefits to the employer**

As learners will draw on real-life cases, involving clients – including those from the primary care sector<sup>23</sup> – employers can be assured that learners have developed real practical skills and knowledge. This acts to build trusting relationships with the primary care sector, and helps to achieve government health targets and tackle a growing national health problem.

## **3. Benefits to the provider**

Employer involvement offers tangible benefits to the centre; through employer feedback the centres are able to ensure that learners achieve vocational training that meets the needs of the employer and benefit themselves from enhanced opportunities and widened job prospects. This is facilitated by maintaining channels of communication with employers. The centre is also assured that learners are gaining the necessary occupational competence, work experience, knowledge and employability skills through hands-on contact with potential clients.

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<sup>23</sup> This may include primary care trusts, GP consortiums and diabetic clinics, among others.



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