



ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE

*GUIDANCE FOR PROVIDERS
ON THE INSPECTION OF WORK-BASED LEARNING*

*Interpreting the
Common Inspection Framework*

INSPECTION OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

Introduction

These guidelines explain how the *Common Inspection Framework* should be applied to the inspection of work-based learning. The guidance does not replace the *Common Inspection Framework*, which remains paramount in defining the standards against which inspection judgements are made. The *Common Inspection Framework*, the guidance notes and the suggested sources of evidence do not constitute a checklist. Inspectors should substantiate their judgements with appropriate evidence drawn from a wide range of sources.

Work-based learning takes place mainly in the workplace. Its prime aim is to enable the learner to become competent and effective in his or her occupational area. Work-based learning is achieved through planned and structured training. The learners, or trainees, are given on-the-job training by their supervisors in the workplace. It is rarely possible for trainees to acquire all the knowledge and skills they need in the workplace, so on-the-job training is usually complemented by appropriate off-the-job training.

Inspectors grade each occupational area. They give contributory grades for each programme, such as work-based learning for young people and New Deal, and these are taken into consideration when determining the grade for an occupational area.

There are approximately 1,500 providers of work-based training in England. Most work-based trainees are employed and follow the requirements of a modern apprenticeship framework in a specific occupational area. Foundation modern apprentices train towards a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and advanced modern apprentices train towards an NVQ at level 3. All modern apprenticeship frameworks include training in key skills. They normally also include training to achieve additional qualifications or units of qualifications. Some training programmes are not modern apprenticeships and are aimed at the achievement of solely an NVQ, but these are declining. The main learning objective of some training programmes is to help trainees to achieve employment or to progress into further training rather than a qualification.

When a training provider offers New Deal for clients, as well as work-based learning for trainees, this is inspected. Such inspection of New Deal is distinct from inspection of New Deal units of delivery. These guidelines relate only to the inspection of New Deal offered by training providers. There are separate guidelines for the inspection of New Deal units of delivery.

Language of work-based learning

The table below sets out the terms of reference for work-based learning and compares them with those used in the *Common Inspection Framework*.

Term used in the <i>Common Inspection Framework</i>	Equivalent term used in the context of work-based learning	
Provider	Training provider	Any organisation providing training which is mainly work-based
Learner	Trainee	A learner on a work-based learning programme
Teacher/ Trainer	Trainer	Person qualified to train in the workplace or off the job
	Assessor	Person qualified to assess trainees
	Workplace supervisor	An occupationally competent person with responsibility for training a trainee in the workplace but not necessarily qualified as a trainer or assessor
	Manager or co-ordinator	A member of the training provider's staff who has responsibility for the training but is not necessarily a trainer or an assessor
	Mentor	A person providing additional support, guidance and advice to a trainee.
Learning goals	Learning objectives	Attainment of these objectives usually improves trainees' employment and career prospects. For example, the objectives can relate to modern apprentices' completion of their framework; trainees' achievement of NVQs; the development of key skills by trainees through all aspects of their work
Personal and learning skills	Key skills and employment skills	These include all of the normal key skills and those skills that enhance trainees' employment prospects

Other terms used in the context of work-based learning include:

Workplace	Where a trainee works and is given on-the-job training. It
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	may be the premises of the trainee's employer or a placement.
On-the-job training	The part of the training that takes place at work and is given by an occupationally competent workplace supervisor. The workplace supervisors should understand the occupational standards but they may not necessarily be qualified trainers
Off-the-job training	Training that takes place away from the workplace at a training centre, college or on another part of the workplace premises. During off-the-job training trainees learn knowledge or skills which they use in the workplace or which helps them to gain employment
Individual training plan	An individual learning plan specific to each trainee which sets out his or her learning objectives and how they are to be achieved. The plan covers on- and off-the-job training and is reviewed and updated regularly
Trainee progress review	A meeting between the trainee and those responsible for his or her training. Its purpose is to review individual trainees' progress towards achieving their learning objectives and to set the trainees' targets for the next stage of the training.
Subcontractors	Training providers or assessment centres to whom training, assessment or verification are subcontracted by the organisation with prime responsibility for training, learning and achievement
Initial assessment	Identification of a trainee's existing occupational and key skills, competence and knowledge at the start of the training programme. The findings from initial assessment should be taken into account when drawing up an individual training plan for the trainee, setting the trainee targets, determining what additional support he or she needs and in measuring the added value of the training
Under-represented groups	These are made up of persons from identifiable groups in the community, such as those from minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities and, in some instances, men or women, who make up a significantly low proportion of trainees in a particular occupational area. The degree of under-representation is ascertained by comparing the proportion of trainees from such groups on a training programme, with the proportion of persons from these groups in the local population

The *Common Inspection Framework* is set out below. Guidance is provided in the shaded boxes on interpreting the framework in the context of work-based learning.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

1 How well do learners achieve?

Achievement is judged in two ways. The first is the rate of achievement: the proportion of trainees who complete the programme and the proportion achieving their learning objectives. The second is the standard of competence and skills that the trainees achieve and how that compares with the level of competence and skills with which they start the programme.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- **success in achieving challenging targets, including qualifications and learning goals**
- **the standards of learners' work in relation to their learning goals**
- **learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential**
- **the development of personal and learning skills.**

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- *results and retention rates compare well with local and national averages*

Local or national averages should be used where they exist, but they may not be available in all areas of work-based learning.

- *trends in performance over time show continuous improvement or the maintenance of very high standards*
- *analysis of added value indicates that learners make at least the progress expected of them*

This analysis explores the extent of trainees' progress on a programme by comparing the level of trainees' attainments during, and at the end of their programme, with the level of trainees' prior attainments at the beginning of the programme. The analysis yields information about the 'distance travelled' by the trainee compared to that which was anticipated at the start of the programme. This represents the 'value' that is added by the training programme.

- *standards are consistently high across the provider's work*

- *challenging learning goals and targets are achieved.*

and learners:

- *make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and their potential*
- *are prepared for effective participation in the workplace and in the community*
- *progress to relevant further or higher education or employment*

This means that trainees, on completion of their training, obtain relevant employment and, where possible, undertake further relevant training or education. Providers' records should show trainees' destinations.

- *reach appropriate levels in key skills consistent with their main programme of study or training*

This means that trainees must achieve levels of attainment in key skills required of them on their training programme, and they should be encouraged to exceed these levels if they have the potential to do so.

- *develop the skills of critical evaluation, research and analysis*
- *develop the attitudes and skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning, including the capacity to work independently and collaboratively*
- *attend regularly and are punctual.*

Sources of evidence could include:

- data specified in the guidance and forms issued by the Adult Learning Inspectorate
- numbers of trainees starting and completing their programmes
- comparisons between local and national data
- data trends over several years
- destinations of all trainees who leave before or at the end of their programme
- observations of trainees at work
- trainees' written and practical work including portfolios of evidence
- interviews with trainees
- interviews with employers
- trainees' initial assessment records and training plans
- records of trainees' progress reviews
- records of trainees' attendance

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2 How effective are teaching, training and learning?

This question is about the effectiveness of the work-based training process in enabling trainees to acquire the competence, skills and knowledge that form their learning objectives. Much of the training takes place at work and is learnt from workplace supervisors. This is supplemented by off-the-job training that gives the trainees the background knowledge and the skills that they apply in the workplace.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- **how well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course or programme requirements**
- **how well learners learn and make progress.**

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which teachers and trainers:

- *show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise, at a level consistent with effective teaching, training and assessment of the course or programme*

This applies to all those who are responsible for training either on or off the job.

- *plan effectively with clear objectives that all learners understand*

This means that on-the-job and off-the-job training are planned carefully and co-ordinated well to ensure that trainees are able to develop all the skills they have to demonstrate in order to gain their qualification. The training plans should include objectives which are clear and understood by trainees, trainers and workplace supervisors.

- *use methods and styles of teaching and training consistent with the aims of their programmes and learners' personal objectives*
- *challenge and inspire learners*
- *set, use and mark assignments in a way that helps learners to progress*

This means trainers and workplace supervisors set trainees relevant tasks and projects. They give constructive feedback to the trainees to help them improve their performance.

- *with learners, develop individual learning plans, informed by initial assessment, that are reviewed and updated regularly*

This means that trainees help to draw up their own training plans. The plans take into account their initial assessment results. The plans are reviewed regularly, and they are amended to reflect trainees' progress and achievements and changes in the trainees' needs.



- *promote good working relationships that foster learning*
- *use materials and teaching methods that promote equality of opportunity.*

This means that learning materials and teaching methods contain no allusions to gender, race, religion or disabilities, which may cause offence to trainees from particular groups or reinforce stereotypes. The materials and trainers avoid general reference to 'he' when trainees may be of either gender. In the workplace, there are no pictures which may cause offence.

and the extent to which all learners:

- *acquire new knowledge and skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding*
- *understand and are confident in what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve*

This means that reviews of trainees' progress are carried out at regular intervals. The person who carries out the training, the workplace supervisor, and the trainees are all involved in the reviews. They identify action the trainee is required to have carried out by the time of the next review. At the next review, a check is made on whether the trainee has carried out this action. A record of the review is made and given to all relevant parties. Following decisions taken at a progress review, amendments may be made to the trainees' individual training plan.

- *apply effort to succeed with their work, work productively and make effective use of their time*
- *are stimulated and show interest in their work*

Sources of evidence could include:

- observations of training
- visits to the workplace
- observations and records of progress review meetings
- interviews with trainees
- interviews with trainers
- interviews with workplace supervisors and employers
- individual training plans
- on-the-job and off-the-job training plans and session plans
- training materials
- induction materials
- records of communication between all those involved in training

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3 How are achievement and learning affected by resources?

This question addresses the quality of staff and other resources and how effectively they are applied to the training. Staff resources include off-the-job trainers, workplace supervisors, staff who manage and co-ordinate the training and those in subcontracted organisations. The question also requires an evaluation of the accommodation, equipment, materials and learning resources both in the workplace and where off-the-job training takes place.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- **the adequacy and suitability of staff**
- **the adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation.**

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- *there are enough qualified and experienced teaching, training and support staff matching the demands of programmes and the range of learners*

This means that there are enough appropriately qualified and suitably experienced staff who, between them, can carry out training, assessment, internal verification and, where necessary, counselling. Workplace supervisors have relevant occupational experience and are able to devote sufficient time to on-the-job training. Some will have occupational qualifications and will have been trained as assessors or internal verifiers.

- *the professional development of staff contributes to their effectiveness*

This means that staff develop further their skills as trainers and managers of training. They gain relevant qualifications. As occupational specialists, they keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date.

- *specialist equipment and materials are used, including facilities which are relevant to the workplace and which meet current industrial standards*
- *accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching, training and learning and support for learners*
- *learners have access to learning resources that are appropriate for effective independent study*

This means that trainees have access to good learning materials, equipment and facilities when they need them. They are able to use these on their own to make progress towards fulfilling their learning objectives.

- *learners work in a safe and healthy environment*

This means that, before a trainee starts work and throughout the period of training,

the provider checks and records that the workplace meets health and safety requirements. Accommodation for off-the-job training also meets health and safety requirements. Trainees and staff are aware of their responsibilities for their own health and safety and that of others.

- *resources are used to best effect in promoting learning*
- *learning resources and accommodation allow all learners to participate fully.*

This means that accommodation is accessible to people with physical disabilities and that, where necessary, resources have been adapted to ensure trainees can achieve their learning goals.

Sources of evidence could include:

- records of trainees' achievements and retention
- observation of on-the-job and off-the-job training
- visits to trainees' places of work
- interviews with workplace supervisors
- interviews with trainees
- interviews with trainers, assessors, internal verifiers
- staff qualifications
- staff training and development records
- references to resources in the provider's business plan
- learning materials and equipment for both on-the-job and off-the-job training
- visits to subcontracted training facilities
- health and safety monitoring records and training materials

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4 How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?

This question addresses how effectively trainees are assessed on entry and throughout their training programme. The initial assessment is to identify their starting point so that an appropriate training plan can be produced. Subsequent assessments are used to monitor trainees' progress towards their learning objectives and to judge their competence and skills against national standards.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- **the suitability and rigour of assessment**
- **the uses of assessment in planning learning and monitoring progress.**

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- *forms of assessment and recording are suitable for the courses and programmes being followed*

This means that suitable methods of assessment are used and detailed records of assessment are maintained. Evidence of trainees' competencies includes: records of observation of trainees' performance, trainees' responses to written and oral questioning, the trainees' work itself, authorised witness testimonies and records of discussion about the trainees' performance between persons responsible for training.

- *assessment is fair, accurate and carried out regularly*

Assessment is carried out in an actual workplace rather than a simulated one and involves real work, unless specifically authorised by the awarding body.

- *initial assessment provides an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work*

This means that trainees receive an assessment of their basic and key skills and, where appropriate, occupational aptitude, when they join their programme. Their results in this initial assessment are taken into account when their individual training plan is devised. The results also indicate whether or not the trainees need additional learning support.

- *assessment is used to monitor progress and inform individual learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further*
- *achievements towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded and accredited*

This means that trainers maintain detailed records of trainees' achievement of learning goals and qualifications. Trainees receive certification for component parts of full qualifications, so that they have something to show for the learning they have achieved if they leave early and if they wish to work towards the qualification

elsewhere.

- *assessment information, including the analysis of the performance of different groups of learners, is used to guide course and programme development*
- *assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow regulatory body requirements*
- *those with a legitimate interest, such as employers or parents, are clearly and regularly informed about learners' progress.*

Sources of evidence could include:

- observations of assessment
- interviews with trainees
- interviews with assessors
- interviews with internal verifiers
- examination of assessment records and evidence of assessment
- initial assessment records
- training plans
- assessment plans
- trainers' records of trainees' progress and achievement
- training programme reviews
- internal verifiers' records
- external verifiers' reports
- reports on trainees' progress sent to employers
- records of the award of certificates to trainees, including those for individual NVQ units and key skills

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5 How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?

This question addresses how effective the training is in meeting the expectations of trainees on work-based learning programmes to obtain sustained employment and to start or to progress with their career.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- the extent to which courses or programmes match learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience
- how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements, and are responsive to local circumstances.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- *learners have the opportunity to study an appropriate range of courses or programmes, and, where appropriate, achieve suitable qualifications*
- *the curriculum or an individual programme of work is planned and managed effectively to provide coherence and progression*

This means that trainees have a well planned and coherent training programme and carry out tasks which become progressively more complex and demanding.

- *the curriculum or programmes of work are socially inclusive, ensuring equality of access and opportunities for learners*

This means that all people, whatever their personal circumstances and background, can take part in training programmes. Specific action is taken to recruit trainees from groups in the community under-represented on training programmes.

- *learners have the opportunity to broaden their experience through a suitable variety of enrichment activities*

This means that trainees have the opportunity to gain additional qualifications in order to improve their employment or career prospects.

- *programmes of work take account of community and employer needs*
- *legal requirements in relation to religious education and collective worship are fulfilled where they apply*

This is not applicable to work-based learning.

- *multi-site provision and resources are effectively integrated to give a coherent programme of learning.*

This means that on-the-job and off-the-job training are both relevant and are co-ordinated. Off-the-job training complements on-the-job training and is relevant to the jobs the trainees carry out in their workplace. In the workplace, trainees are able

to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired through off-the-job training.

Sources of evidence could include:

- interviews with trainees
- interviews with employers and workplace supervisors
- interviews with the staff of the training provider
- individual training plans
- local labour market information
- promotional literature and advice given to prospective trainees
- action plans for encouraging participation of people from particular groups
- records of communications between trainers and employers about the co-ordination of on-the-job and off-the-job training
- records of the award of certificates to trainees for any additional training

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6 How well are learners guided and supported?

This question addresses the arrangements that a training provider uses to support and guide its trainees. It covers the quality and accuracy of guidance given to prospective trainees to steer them towards the most appropriate programme and level of study. The purpose of the support systems is to maximise the likelihood that trainees achieve their learning objectives and to minimise the risk of them leaving their programme before it is completed.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- **the quality of information, advice and guidance to learners in relation to the courses and programmes they are following and their career progression**
- **the diagnosis of, and provision for, individual learning needs**
- **the access learners have to relevant, effective support on personal issues.**

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- *support arrangements are planned and managed coherently*
- *impartial guidance enables learners to choose the course or programme which is right for them*
- *careers education and guidance are effective in guiding learners towards opportunities available to them when they have completed their studies or training*

This may include job search training where appropriate.

- *procedures are in place for recognising poor punctuality, non-attendance and poor performance early and for taking appropriate action*

This means that trainees' punctuality, attendance and performance, both at work and at off-the-job training, are monitored and recorded systematically. There are clear and effective procedures for dealing promptly with any trainee whose lack of punctuality, irregular attendance and poor performance gives cause for concern. The provider's staff meet with the trainee in question, discuss problems about his or her performance with the employer concerned, and do all they can to help the trainee resolve these.

- *induction programmes enable learners to settle into their programmes quickly, to understand their rights and responsibilities and the demands of the course or programme*
- *individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and learners receive effective additional support throughout their studies or training*

- *learners have effective personal support to help them to complete their course or programme, including access to specialist support services*
- *guidance and support are sensitive to equality of opportunity*
- *partnerships with other providers and relevant agencies involved in advice and guidance are effective.*

Sources of evidence could include:

- observations and records of support activities
- observations of the diagnosis of trainees' learning needs
- observation, materials and records of induction programmes
- observation, materials and records of job search training
- observations and records of additional learning support activities
- interviews with trainees
- interviews with staff and managers
- plans and procedures for providing trainee support
- procedures for monitoring trainees' attendance, punctuality and performance
- promotional literature
- careers advice and guidance materials
- observations and records of the induction programmes
- individual training plans

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

7 How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

This question embraces the management of the training, quality assurance arrangements and the promotion of equality of opportunity. The implementation and impact of policies or strategies in each of these areas is evaluated.

To answer this key question, evaluate:

- how well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high quality education and training
- how effectively, through quality assurance and self assessment, performance is monitored and evaluated and steps taken to secure improvement
- how well equality of opportunity is promoted so that all learners achieve their potential
- where relevant, the extent to which governors or other supervisory boards meet their responsibilities
- how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

In making judgements, consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- *clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by staff, including subcontractors and work placement providers*

This means that the provider has a clear sense of purpose that is shared by staff, subcontractors and employers. The purpose is defined by strategic objectives in, for example, a business plan. There is good communication between staff, with subcontractors, with employers and other external agencies.

- *demanding targets for retention, achievement, progression and employment are set and met*

This means that the provider sets its own targets and does not rely on those of an external body. The targets take into account reasonable expectations for the client group. The targets are communicated to staff. Performance, compared with the targets, is monitored.

- *the quality assurance arrangements are systematic and informed by the views of all interested parties*

This means that the provider has comprehensive and effective quality assurance

arrangements which cover all aspects of the training. The arrangements ensure that the training is never less than satisfactory and that it is continuously improved. For example, the views of trainees, staff and employers are systematically gathered and analysed and they are acted upon in order to improve the quality of training.

- *rigorous self-assessment leads to identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement*

This means that the provider carries out rigorous self-assessment, recognises strengths and weaknesses in training, and takes appropriate action to rectify identified weaknesses. The self-assessment process involves use of accurate data on trainees' achievement and retention rates. Development plans are drawn up to improve the training.

- *priorities are supported through responsible financial management*
- *staff understand and are fully involved in the organisation's quality assurance arrangements*
- *the information needs of managers and other staff are met and management information is used effectively to the benefit of learners*

This means that managers and staff can obtain accurate data on the trainees' performance and are able to use these effectively to plan ways of improving the training process and the trainees' learning experience.

- *performance management, staff appraisal and review are effective in improving the quality of provision*

This means that the staff appraisal process is effective as a means of helping staff identify their training needs and improve their performance.

- *there are explicit aims and values promoting equality for all that are reflected in the provider's work*

This means that providers and employers understand and meet their statutory obligations. The provider has taken specific action to promote training to people from groups in the community under-represented on training programmes. The proportion of trainees from specific groups, such as minority ethnic communities, is compared with the proportion of persons from these groups in the local population.

- *there are effective measures to eliminate oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment*

This means that trainees are protected from harassment and discrimination at all times, including at work. Trainees are aware of what constitutes harassment and they know what to do if they are subjected to it. The provider has a system for dealing with harassment and records show that this is effective.

- *there are effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints*

This means that the training provider and subcontractors address complaints and grievances promptly and effectively, using procedures understood by all staff and trainees.

- *governors or other supervisory boards effectively oversee the provider's strategic direction, and regularly monitor the quality of provision and their own performance*

This is not usually applicable.

- *the 'best value' principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition are applied in securing resources and services*

This is not usually applicable.

- *efficient and effective use is made of resources*

Sources of evidence could include:

- interviews with staff and managers
- policy and operating statements
- visits to subcontractors
- agreements with subcontractors
- business plans
- targets for staff and monitoring of progress towards reaching them
- staff development plans and activities, including in equal opportunities
- quality assurance procedures and arrangements
- self-assessment report
- development and action plans
- management information
- arrangements for monitoring and recording trainees' progress
- agenda and minutes of meetings
- procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment
- equal opportunities statistics
- complaints and appeals procedures and associated records
- interviews with trainees
- analysis of the cost of training