

# National Skills Academies

## Prospectus: Second Round

An innovative approach to meeting  
employers' needs for training

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Sector Skills Development Agency

department for  
**education and skills**  
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence



Leading learning and skills

## Foreword



**Last year the Government challenged employers and Sector Skills Councils to develop proposals to reshape the way skills training is delivered in this country. The response to that challenge was impressive and last October I was able to announce that four sectors, Construction, Financial Services, Food and Drink and Manufacturing, were commencing their business planning with the aim of opening the first National Skills Academies in the autumn of this year.**

National Skills Academies are an ambitious undertaking. They require employers to be driving and building learning. The ethos is that they are sharply focused on the priorities of the sector and add something very different to what is already in place. These Academies will operate at the leading edge of skills development and provide a unique opportunity for employers to create and skill their workforce.

Our response to Sir Andrew Foster's report on the role of further education colleges sets out our plans to place National Skills Academies at the apex of vocational specialist networks with strong links to employers.

Our vision is that by putting employers at the helm of their own centres of learning we will bring about the step change in quality we need to improve skill levels and productivity. This vision needs significant financial sponsorship by employers. Investment in a National Skills Academy can bring real returns to employers – real returns to the bottom line. Employers will have direct influence on the corporate governance and strategic management of their Academy; to set standards and to bring about real improvements in

business performance by addressing the specific skills needs of the sector.

All Academies must deliver training through tailor made, innovative curricula – enriched by real insights into the work of the sector. Only with such focused delivery will we improve skills development and achieve the competent, confident and ambitious workforce necessary.

This prospectus invites you to consider what role a National Skills Academy could play for your business. You have the opportunity to bring about real and lasting change. I want you to grasp this opportunity to use these new ways of working to engage, influence and invest in the system, to secure what you need and to achieve even greater productivity and economic success.

I look forward to working with you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Ruth Kelly'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'R' and 'K'.

Ruth Kelly  
Secretary of State for Education and Skills

**1.1** National Skills Academies will be employer driven, world class centres of excellence delivering the skills required by each major sector of the economy. They will vary in scope and structure according to the needs of employers. We published the first Prospectus in July 2005 inviting employers to work with the Government to establish the first of the employer-led National Skills Academies. This Prospectus now invites expressions of interest to develop more National Skills Academies some of which we expect to open in 2007 and some during 2008.

**1.2** Our long term aim is to establish employer-led National Skills Academies for all the major sectors of the economy which will:

- deliver high quality training;
- provide first class teaching in a modern learning environment;
- be centres of innovation and creativity, developing and re-shaping training programmes to meet the sectors' needs;
- be flexible, sustaining the closest possible relationships with employers of all sizes;
- build networks with a range of other learning providers, so that new thinking, new methods and higher standards are not limited to single organisations, but work to the benefit of learners and employers across the training and skills sector.

**1.3** National Skills Academies will be positioned at the apex of a network of high quality specialist learning providers, helping to drive up and set new standards and accelerate the pace of reform across the vocational education and training system. The network will also link with schools, influencing and benefiting the development of vocational education from the age of 14.

**1.4** Employers, working with their Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), will shape all aspects of the design of National Skills Academies and the delivery of the training they will provide. National Skills Academies will operate in partnership with the best providers, contributing to the public service of education and training. But we will not be prescriptive about what form the National Skills Academy or that partnership will take. It is what is right for the sector and what employers in that sector want that will determine its shape and focus.

**1.5** Employers have a key role as sponsors of National Skills Academies, providing a clear vision, strong strategic leadership to deliver that vision and funds for development and sustainability.

## Core principles

**2.1** National Skills Academies will help deliver the skills needed for raising productivity and competitiveness and improving public services, sector by sector. They will create powerful new employer-led centres of excellence to set new standards of how to design and deliver skills training. They will work with key stakeholders to:

- attract significant employer investment in skills, as part of the partnership between the state, employers and learners;
- provide up to date, flexible, accessible, responsive, high quality and cost-effective solutions to skills needs;
- design and deliver excellent skills programmes, qualifications and curricula that meet current and future sector needs;
- be centres of innovation and creativity – designing and delivering programmes which best develop the skills that employers are looking for in each sector;
- create and integrate learning technologies in the design of learning programmes;
- lead national, regional and local specialist networks of colleges, Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) and other training providers in raising standards within their sector;
- build on and share good practice to reshape curricula, teaching, learning and assessment methods and trainer, teacher and assessor capacity;
- promote equality and diversity, broadening the base of recruitment by tackling the obstacles and barriers faced by some groups in gaining access to training and jobs in different sectors.

**2.2** National Skills Academies will conduct an analysis of the training and skills needs of the sector and prioritise those skills that are most important to employers. For example, they may choose initially to focus on a target learner group or a specific skills level such as National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 (equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A\* to C) or technician/advanced craft skills at NVQ level 3 (equivalent to two A levels). But we would expect them in time, to address the full range of skills needs in the sector, including functional employability and enterprise skills, intermediate skills, higher skills and, where necessary, leadership and management skills. There will need to be clear progression routes to foundation and first degree level. Where appropriate there will be strong links with providers of higher education. Where there is demand within the sector and suitable partnership arrangements can be developed, a National Skills Academy might wish to deliver appropriate higher education programmes.

### Progress so far

**2.3** We are clear about what is wanted from these centres of excellence. But we also recognise that we must be flexible. In October 2005, after a competitive process involving a business-led assessment panel, we announced the four sectors that were invited to move forward to business planning: Construction, Financial Services, Food and Drink and Manufacturing. These sectors are working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to develop detailed business plans. We expect these plans to be agreed with the LSC this summer and for the first of the National Skills Academies to open in the autumn.

**2.4** Each of the business plans describe a clear vision for their National Skills Academy.

- **Construction** – The National Skills Academy will be established as a Centre of Excellence for Work-Based Learning. A network of on-site training centres will be established on major construction projects across the country. The approach is designed to overcome a key challenge facing the sector of training a mobile workforce which comprises large numbers of small firms and sole traders.
- **Financial Services** – The National Skills Academy is being established by leading players in the sector with the vision of transforming the provision of education and training for the industry. The Academy will achieve a step change in the relevance and volume of skills delivery, both of publicly and privately financed programmes. It will develop high quality, innovative programmes for new entrants to the sector and the existing workforce.
- **Food and Drink** – The National Skills Academy will develop high quality learning and skills provision for the sector. Employers expect the Academy to strengthen the sector's national status and retain its global status as a world leader in productivity in food and drink manufacturing. They are keen to support new and better ways to identify skills needs and to deliver skills training which directly increases productivity and sector competitiveness.

- **Manufacturing** – The National Skills Academy will create a curriculum of globally competitive training and education in best practice manufacturing techniques, which will progressively be made available to all companies involved in manufacturing in the UK. A key focus will be building UK capability to achieve global competitiveness and raising productivity.

**2.5** National Skills Academies will evolve as their operations grow. The starting point will be decided by the sponsors and their partners. They may choose to concentrate on parts of a sector with particular skills shortages or to embrace the entire sector. They may start with a single centre for delivering learning and steadily build up a network of linked centres. It is for the sponsors and their partners to determine their priorities but they should not lose sight of the long term vision.

**2.6** The Fashion Retail Academy, covering part of the retail sector covered by Skillsmart SSC, in a partnership between the Arcadia Group and the University of the Arts, opened to students in September 2005. The Academy is co-sponsored by Marks and Spencer, NEXT and Great Universal Stores demonstrating the importance that these retailers attach to directly influencing the delivery of skills for their sector. It is changing the way the fashion retail sector trains its future managers and is showing young people that the industry offers a wide range of fulfilling careers. The Academy opened in September 2005 and in early summer 2006 will move into purpose built, state of the art training and learning facilities in architect designed accommodation off Oxford Street. Students of the Academy are experiencing a new type of learning programme including master classes led by major retailers. They will be visiting manufacturers and distribution centres so they are able see at first hand how the industry works and will be able to practise what they've learnt in structured work placements.

**2.7** National Skills Academies are central to our reform of further education as set out in Further Education: Raising Skills, Improving Life Chances. As well as delivering high quality training in their sector, they will be at the apex of specialist vocational networks of sector based providers driving up quality and standards.



**2.8** It is important that, in return for the public investment in National Skills Academies, we see benefits flowing back into the wider vocational education and training system. National Skills Academies will not operate in isolation, benefiting only their own directly-enrolled students. They will bring together and lead networks of providers (including colleges, CoVEs, private training providers and HE institutions) to deliver the priorities for the sector. Over time we will look to National Skills Academies to:

- strengthen the links between CoVEs, colleges, private training providers, providers of higher education and schools to develop networks of vocational specialism;
- develop a national profile founded on the commitment of sponsors and a reputation for excellence;
- support SSCs and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in developing, piloting and delivering the new Diplomas for 14-19 year olds;
- act as testbeds for delivering new credit-based qualifications using the sectors' National Strategies and the new, employer-led vocational and educational training programmes being developed by SSCs and the QCA;
- advise on and act as a resource for the development and delivery of Apprenticeships through innovative, high quality and employer-focused provision, including sharing best practice with other providers;
- play a leading part in developing careers guidance materials for use throughout their sector's network on the skills and qualifications needed for successful employment in that sector.

**2.9** CoVEs have made significant progress in promoting vocational specialisation and excellence. We expect increasingly that CoVEs will come under the umbrella of the appropriate sector based National Skills Academy and will be key partners in the specialist networks. The LSC will develop a new standard to accredit the next generation of CoVEs, raising the bar of quality. The new standard will combine excellence in both delivery of vocational learning and working with employers.

**2.10** National Skills Academies will have a lead role in sharing the latest industry best practice in training design and delivery across the specialist vocational networks. That includes developing cost effective skills programmes to help small and medium sized employers in the sector to drive innovation and changes in performance. There will be support for National Skills Academies' quality improvement and workforce development strategies, for example from the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA), including teaching, training and learning resources and support programmes (delivery of these is being taken over by the QIA from the Standards Unit from April 2006).

**3.1** It is important that each sector comes forward with its own ideas for the form and structure of the National Skills Academy that best meet its needs. We do not want to be prescriptive about the model or approach to be adopted. National Skills Academies will vary in scope and structure between the sectors. But there must be a common set of accountability and financial principles underpinning their operations, in order to meet normal expectations of value for money in the use of public funds.

**3.2** National Skills Academies must be:

- led and supported by employers with the formal support of their Sector Skills Council. We are looking for proposals which demonstrate strong and wide-ranging support and investment from employers in their sector;
- deliverers of learning and training. That is, they cannot just be administrative centres, influencers or designers of training programmes. That training must be available to the full range of students able to benefit, using standard student recruitment procedures, and

must not be restricted to particular employers;

- able to demonstrate strategic fit with wider sector priorities backed by clear evidence of skills needs within the sector; including Sector Skills Council/Sector Skills Agreement and Regional Economic Strategies/Regional Skills Partnership data where available. We will give priority to those sectors that can draw evidence from their Sector Skills Agreement and explore how we align the development of National Skills Academies and CoVEs with Sector Skills Agreement outcomes, to deliver training of employees in the sector through the specialist vocational networks;
- subject to the usual inspection, accountability and audit arrangements that apply to organisations receiving public funds to provide a public service in education, training and skills;

- able to comply with legislative requirements (e.g. health and safety and child protection where provision is offered for 14-19 year olds and equality and diversity legislation).

**3.3** The models for National Skills Academies which sponsors and SSCs propose will vary between sectors.

There is no one size fits all solution, and we welcome new and innovative ideas. A National Skills Academy could for example be:

- based on existing excellent provision in a CoVE, college, independent training provider or higher education institution (or networks of these);
- a new private, joint venture company;
- a partnership between public and private sector providers.

**3.4** A range of models are emerging in the business planning process of the first National Skills Academies:

**Construction** – Plan to create a network of site-based training centres linked to major construction projects co-ordinated by a central hub. By the launch date of September 2006 there will be two regional hubs in place which bring together clients, contractors and local training centres to identify the training and development needs for construction projects. In addition two mobile training units will be in place. A number of construction companies, including Kier Group, Bovis Lend Lease and Carillion are already involved. A strong focus will be on developing the first centres and mobile training units to support the construction of the Olympic facilities and the wider Thames Gateway.

**Financial Services** – The National Skills Academy for Financial Services will be run by a not-for-profit company made up primarily of employer-sponsors. The company will put employers in the driving seat in the design of training as well as allowing them to shape the strategy of the Academy.

The Academy will initially be based in four centres in East London, Leeds, Manchester and Norwich. Each Centre will be both a delivery point and co-ordinate with other providers to offer high quality courses meeting employer need. The programmes will include 14-19 Diplomas, courses for unemployed adults, work-based learning, Foundation Degrees, Train to Gain and full cost courses for employers.

The Academy will be expanding the number of delivery centres each year and will add new regions in 2007 and 2008. It aims to cater for at least 5,000 learners per year by 2008/2009. Delivery Centres will include schools, colleges and independent providers. To gain approval to be a delivery centre, a provider will have to meet stringent quality standards in terms of inspection, results and be accredited by the Financial Services Skills Council.

**Food and Drink** – The Academy will comprise a UK-wide network of Centres of Excellence in training for all people in the food and drink manufacturing industry. From September 2006 the National Skills Academy will initially consist of six Centres of Excellence driven by partnerships of accredited employers, colleges, universities and private training providers. These will be:

- five physical Centres of Excellence based in existing colleges, training centres or employers, focusing on either a specific sector (e.g. Dairy, Bakery etc) or industry wide needs.
- one web-based Centre of Excellence providing both a hub for the Academy and online training in industry wide needs such as Advanced Manufacturing and Leadership. Additional Centres of Excellence and training programmes will be added following the initial launch in September 2006.

**Manufacturing** – The National Manufacturing Skills Academy will be the single point of contact and focus for the brokerage, design and delivery of high quality flexible training provision in the key areas of technical workforce development and management and leadership. Administration and technical content will be controlled at a national hub, with delivery at or near to the place of work, in spokes located in each region. Initially it will focus on four sub-sectors (aerospace, automotive, electronics and marine) but over time will grow to cover the full sector.

**3.5** As well as the corporate status varying between National Skills Academies, the actual structure of the organisation and partnerships will vary. It is likely, however, that meeting the requirements of delivering training with national reach will mean some sort of national co-ordinating centre (a hub) with a range of training delivery points (spokes) at which employers and learners can access training. The hub would not necessarily have to deliver training itself, but must drive a network of high quality, innovative training deliverers. These spokes could be existing CoVEs, other high quality colleges and providers, higher education institutions or private sector providers.

**3.6** Our initial aim is to create a network of National Skills Academies covering major sectors of the economy. For the first 12 National Skills Academies we would like to achieve as broad a representation of the economy as possible. We recognise, however, that some employers may want to provide funds and support a National Skills Academy that focuses on the needs of a particular sub sector. Where this is the case we will consider more than one expression of interest from a sector. However we would expect to see evidence that proposals complement rather than overlap each other. We will continue to expect all proposals to be supported by the SSC.

**3.7** We are aware of some interest in 'virtual models' with either the functions of the hub distributed across a network or held by a SSC or a national hub with national reach achieved by e-learning. There is scope to go down this route. However, a wholly virtual delivery system would be unlikely to be adequate for learners unless supplemented with face to face support at a national or regional centre. We expect to see models which guarantee excellence across all aspects of the skills supply chain.

**3.8** Governance will vary, depending upon the model and corporate structures developed. If a private sector model is envisaged, a 'not for profit' company limited by guarantee or charitable trust with an employer-led board could be a suitable vehicle to take a National Skills Academy forward. Another possible option might be a joint venture with a leading further or higher educational provider. If the National Skills Academy is located in a college, it might be appropriate to establish an employer-led group to oversee the National Skills Academy with the Chair co-opted onto the governing body of the FE institution. Whatever approach is decided upon, employers must have a leading role and it will be necessary to ensure that the corporate governance reflects the range of stakeholders involved and is accountable for the use of public funds.

The governance structure must secure sufficient stability to ensure that training programmes for students do not risk being disrupted at short notice. The LSC will need to be satisfied that a new organisation meets its criteria for being a properly established body both to deliver vocational education and training and to receive public funds.

**3.9** The Government's commitment to develop National Skills Academies applies directly only to England, but SSCs have a UK wide remit and employers may well wish to see National Skills Academies reach across the UK. The Sector Skills Development Agency will be taking forward discussions with the Devolved Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland about how National Skills Academies can link with developments in each country.

## Who are potential sponsors?

**4.1** Sponsors will be either an individual employer or groups of employers. The sponsors will need to work closely with their SSC and Regional Skills Partnerships. They will bring a record of success in business to share with experienced learning providers.

**4.2** What unites sponsors is a commitment to high quality vocational education and training, a recognition of the contribution it can make to increasing productivity and performance in the sector, and a desire to drive through change.

## What is the role of sponsors?

**4.3** Sponsors bring:

- a vision which inspires and motivates everyone involved;
- financial resources to create and support the National Skills Academy;
- an understanding of businesses operating in the sector;

- first hand knowledge of the needs of employers for vocational education and training, and how that supports performance and productivity;
- a commitment to high quality vocational education and training and continuous improvement;
- fresh ideas, an enthusiasm for innovation, and a challenge to traditional ways of thinking.

**4.4** For each of the first National Skills Academies sponsors have committed themselves to:

- secure significant funding to develop and sustain the Academy;
- improve skills by working with a network of high quality providers focused on their sector;
- contribute to driving innovation, setting standards and improving performance throughout the education and training system by building on the best of existing practice;
- take an active role in the corporate governance and strategic management of the National Skills Academy.

**5.1** The business plan for each National Skills Academy will need to demonstrate how the necessary step change in investment, performance and reach will be secured to deliver the objectives of the National Skills Academies programme. In no case will it be sufficient merely to achieve marginal, incremental improvement in existing operations.

**5.2** Sponsorship funding is a crucial part of ensuring the success of developing and sustaining National Skills Academies. Whilst sponsorship in the form of contributions in kind is welcome it is not sufficient to bring about the transformational impact we expect Academies to make. Nor is the promise of employer investment later down the line acceptable. We expect much more from a National Skills Academy.

**5.3** The up front investment will be drawn from a range of contributors. For capital, this will usually be around 35% from Government through the LSC, around 50% from employers sponsoring the Academy and the remaining 15% from a range of other sources and partners, such as education and training providers, Regional Development Agencies, Local Authorities etc which the sponsors would need to agree. The capital investment required will vary depending on the scale of the proposal. In some cases, most of the necessary capital infrastructure may already be in place, especially where a National Skills Academy builds on an existing CoVE. In all cases, there will be a lien in the public interest over the capital assets secured with public funds.

**5.4** Experience from development of facilities within the FE sector suggests that, if new facilities are required, the total up front capital investment in establishing a new facility could be around £10m. Sponsors would therefore need to be willing to invest around £5m to establish their National Skills Academy.

**5.5** The day to day revenue income of National Skills Academies will be earned by delivering skills training and will come from a variety of sources including the LSC and from employers purchasing training and other business services. The LSC will take a view at national level on how much training provision it wishes to fund from the National Skills Academy in order to meet identified needs and will purchase this using its programme funds as part of each year's planning and funding cycle. Substantial financial investment will also be necessary from employers to ensure the long term sustainability of the National Skills Academy. Like other learning providers, National Skills Academies will also raise revenue income through fees from some learners and employers.

**5.6** There will be a period of development from acceptance of the expression of interest to the organisations being fully established and in a viable and sustainable financial position. There will be public funds available to help meet project costs such as project management, business planning and research and development. The amount will depend on the size and nature of the proposal.

**5.7** Any new organisation is also likely to need some start up revenue support as learner numbers build up in the first year or two. Any such funding will be negotiated directly with the LSC.



**6.1** The business plans from Construction, Financial Services, Food and Drink and Manufacturing will be completed in the summer. Once these plans are agreed we expect the first National Skills Academies to open in autumn 2006. This is a challenging timetable and there is much to be achieved in this short period.

**6.2** We would now welcome expressions of interest from sponsors – either individual employers or groups of employers – supported by their SSC, to develop further National Skills Academies. For planning purposes, and subject to the quality of the proposals, we could support a further eight being developed over the next two years. Pursuing the National Skills Academy programme in this managed way will allow us all to learn from the experiences of the first projects.

**6.3** A proforma for setting out your expression of interest is attached at Annex A. To assist you with your thinking the LSC, with the SSDA, will be running workshops during March and April to provide guidance on issues such as governance, quality and best practice and branding and marketing.

**6.4** A panel of senior employers and officials from the Department for Education and Skills, Department of Trade and Industry, Learning and Skills Council, the Sector Skills Development Agency and the Small Business Service will consider the expressions of interest during July. As part of their considerations, the panel will hold discussions with employers and SSCs and potential sponsors to discuss their proposals in more detail. These meetings will take place during weeks commencing 11 and 18 September 2006. Following consideration of the recommendations of the panel, Ministers will announce their decisions on the next eight National Skills Academies by October. A full outline of the timetable is set out at Annex B.

**7.1** Expressions of interest for the next National Skills Academies should be lodged by **19 June 2006** using the structure set out at Annex A. At this stage we are looking for expressions of interest no longer than six pages. They should be sent preferably by email to:

**skills.academies@dfes.gsi.gov.uk**

National Skills Academies Team  
Department for Education and Skills  
Room E4d  
Moorfoot  
Sheffield S1 4PQ

**7.2** Our long term ambition is that all sectors will have a National Skills Academy leading high quality networks of provision and we will update on the programme later in the year.

**7.3** A briefing note of frequently asked questions will be available at **www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/nsaprospectus**. This will be updated as discussions with partners take place.

### Who to talk to

**7.4** You should initially discuss your ideas, questions and any issues with your SSC. A list of SSCs can be found at **www.ssda.org.uk**. If you are still unsure who to contact please telephone the Sector Skills Development Agency on 01709 765444. If, after discussions with your Sector Skills Council, there are outstanding queries then please contact the National Skills Academies Team on 0114 259 1669 or email

**skills.academies@dfes.gsi.gov.uk**

# Annex A: Expression of interest Form

## Expression of interest in a National Skills Academy (NSA) to open during 2007 and 2008.

Please respond to the following 4 areas referring to other sources if appropriate such as Sector Skills Agreements, and email your response to **skills.academies@dfes.gsi.gov.uk** by 19 June 2006.

If you have any questions about National Skills Academies policy, the Prospectus, or the process for submitting expressions of interest you can contact the National Skills Academies team on 0114 259 1669, or e-mail to the above address.

Reference number (for internal use only): .....

Name of organisation: .....

Authorised contact name: .....

Position: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: ..... Mobile: .....

Fax: ..... Email address: .....

**Declaration:** I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this form is correct. I confirm that all partner organisations mentioned have been consulted and have agreed roles, responsibilities and financial implications for running an NSA.

Signature: .....

Name (please print): .....

Date: .....

## 1. The vision

Please describe your vision for a National Skills Academy (NSA). How will the organisation improve skills development throughout the sector? How will it make a difference to learners? How will employers lead the NSA? What will be the transformational impact of your NSA?

## 2. Responsiveness to Skill Needs

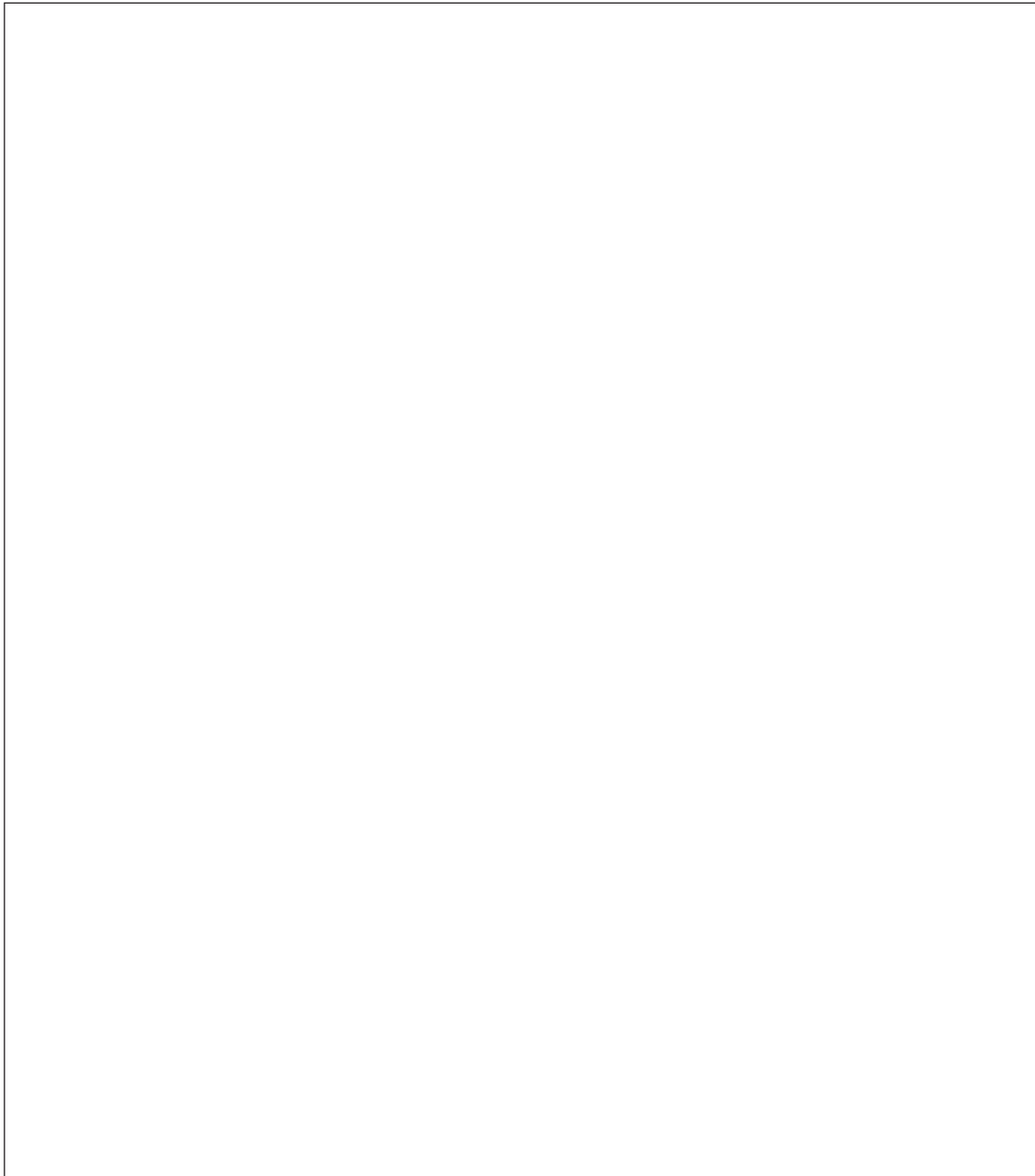
Please outline:

- The extent to which employers are in the lead, including the range of employers that have been consulted and engaged – especially small employers.
- The evidence to support your vision for an NSA including:
  - what training provision is already available for the sector;
  - how the NSA will improve those arrangements;
  - the priorities for the sector in terms of target groups of learners, target sub-sectors or target skill levels?

### 3. High Quality National Delivery Structures

Please outline:

- how the NSA will deliver quality learning – to whom and where? How will this increase participation from under-represented groups?
- the key partners for the National Skills Academy and in particular which existing providers and networks (e.g. CoVEs) would be involved?;
- how it will develop national and sectoral reach.
- how it will promote equality and diversity.
- plans to develop new curricula and sector specific qualifications;
- innovative learning methods including the development and use of learning technologies.



## 4. Sustainable Model

Please outline:

- The level of funding required by the NSA, making clear the amount of capital and revenue funding required from public sources for initial development and on-going activity.
- The level and type of financial support from employers for initial development and on-going activity. How much of that support has already been secured and how much of it is expected to be secured?
- How much of that employer financial support is additional?
- The scale of operations (estimates of learner volumes and size of workforce).
- The timescale for build up of operations.
- Assumptions underpinning the estimates.
- How good practice will be shared.

**Thank you for your expression of interest in National Skills Academies. We will acknowledge receipt of this form.**

## Annex B: Timetable

### Timetable for the second round of the National Skills Academies programme

|  |   |
|--|---|
| National Skills Academies Prospectus re-published seeking further expressions of interest                | March 2006                                |
| Deadline for submitting expressions of interest  | 19 June 2006                              |
| Meeting of Employer-led Panel to consider expressions of interest  | Week commencing 10 July 2006              |
| Confirmation of short-listed expressions of interest   | By 31 July 2006                           |
| Discussions/meetings with Potential Sponsors   | Weeks commencing 11 and 18 September 2006 |
| First National Skills Academies open   | Autumn 2006                               |
| Meeting of Employer-led Panel to recommend those expressions that will move forward to business planning | Week commencing 2 October 2006            |
| Ministers to announce those expressions that will move forward to business planning                      | By 31 October 2006                        |
| Second round of National Skills Academies open   | During 2007 and 2008                      |

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