National Standard for Education Business Partnership Organisations

department for
children, schools and families

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National Standard for Education Business Partnership Organisations

Foreword by Jim Knight, Minister for Schools and Learners

Work-related learning has a clear positive impact on young people's journey to a successful adulthood and their future economic wellbeing. It helps them connect their learning with the world of work and so prepares them to make a positive contribution to society and the economy and to have lives full of opportunity, free from the effects of poverty. The contribution of employers is vital to making work-related learning happen - more so with our ambitious programme of reforms including the new Diplomas. It is therefore essential that we make it as easy as possible for employers to play their part. This new standard is intended to ensure that work-related learning is supported by a high quality network of Education Business Partnership Organisations each working to standard that employers, schools and colleges have every right to expect and demand.

Jim Knight

Minister for Schools and Learners

Foreword by Anne Tipple, National Skills Development Executive, British Chambers of Commerce

The British Chambers of Commerce fully support the network of Education Business Partnerships Organisations (EBPOs) that help make it easier for businesses to work in partnership with schools and colleges. The British Chambers of Commerce recognise just how vital it is to individual businesses and to the economy as a whole that young people come out of education with the skills they need to succeed. Business is hugely supportive of education and has a very strong track record of working in partnership with schools and colleges, in return they, and schools and colleges, need to have confidence in the service they receive from the EBPOs they work with - just as any customer would expect from business. We therefore welcome the opportunity to lend our support for this new standard and to continuing to work with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and its other partners to make them a success.

Anne Tipple

National Skills Development Executive,
British Chambers of Commerce

Introduction and Rationale

We define Education Business Partnership Organisations (EBPOs) as any organisation that exists, wholly or in part, to enable employers to work in partnership with education as a contribution to young people's education and their journey to a successful adulthood.

The activities EBPOs help enable fall within the definition of work-related learning:

Planned activity that uses the context of work to develop knowledge, skills and understanding useful in work, including learning through the experience of work, learning about work and working practices, and learning skills for work.

Work-related learning has been a statutory part of the curriculum since 2004, and is an essential component of Diplomas. It features in all areas of the curriculum and, in the education of all groups of learners from age 5 to 19. It encompasses a wide range of activities that are set out in the framework published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority titled 'Economic Wellbeing: Career, Work-related Learning and Enterprise'

There is strong evidence that work-related learning improves results for young people. It has been shown to improve attitudes, behaviour, participation and results. It includes work experience and helps young people connect their learning with the world of work including helping them develop employability skills. It includes enterprise education to help young people to be creative and innovative, to take and manage risks, and to do so with determination and drive; and it encompasses careers education to help learners make informed choices about their future careers and aspirations.

The impact that work-related learning has on outcomes for young people means that it is essential to have a strong supply of committed and active employers working in partnership with schools and colleges. It is those employers that provide the supply of work experience placements, projects, and other resources and inputs needed to deliver Diplomas and other qualifications. They support enterprise activities and work with schools and colleges to deliver careers education.

The supply of employers, the depth of their relationship with schools and colleges, and the quality of their experience is dependent to a significant extent on the EBPOs that support employers, schools and colleges. The quality of EBPOs is therefore vitally important and is the rationale for the production of the national standard for EBPOs.

Content of the Standard

The standard is intended to be stretching but at the same time realistic so that all types of EBPO can apply it, including new entrants to the market. It is divided into two sections. A 'Core' containing elements that apply to all EBPOs whatever the shape or purpose of their organisation; and a set of modules to be applied on the basis of the type and range of the organisation's activities.

Application of the Standards

We expect all EBPOs that draw on public funding to meet the standard or, for those new to the market, to be working toward it. That means that each element that is in the core and the relevant element or elements in the modules should be met.

We have not been prescriptive about how EBPOs should go about evidencing the extent to which they meet the standard. Evidence can be gathered and presented in any way which users find helpful.

Self assessment

We expect EBPOs to carry out regular self assessment against the standard. Self assessment has been shown to be highly effective in many areas, for example in schools, in terms of its impact on quality and performance. It is low cost, flexible and only as bureaucratic as the organisation itself chooses to make it. It enables evidence to be gathered for external assessments and to demonstrate the organisation's capabilities more generally. Any deficiencies can be identified and addressed at an early stage.

External validation

We also expect external validation to take place at least every three years by suitably experienced and competent individuals. DCSF has put in place arrangements for this process to happen through the National Education Business Partnership Network.

Procurement and Contract Management

We expect organisations to have due regard to the standard when using public money to procure and manage the services of the EBPOs they use to meet the needs of employers and learners in their area. In other words organisations will use the standard as one of the criteria against which they will judge the quality of bids during open and competitive tenders. We would expect them to refer to the standard over time during service delivery including where they deliver those services in-house.

Reaching the Standard

To reach the standard EBPOs should be able to demonstrate good evidence, or better, against all the elements with the core and against the elements in the modules that are relevant to them. Common sense together with sound business sense should be applied to defining what constitutes 'good'. There will be merit in users comparing themselves against other organisations in this respect and/or to other types of quality mark, award or process.

Reviewing the Standard

DCSF will review the standard over time and welcomes any feedback or suggestions for their improvement or revision.

Feedback should be sent to
work-relatedlearning.feedback@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk

Quality Standard

Quality Standard	Description Of Required Evidence
These standards apply to organisations operating between education and the world of work and constituted as or within legal entities. An organisation must comply with the Core standards 1-10. Additionally, an organisation may seek recognition of its specific activities. In this case it may choose to comply with the standards for: - the **Brokerage, Strategy and Partnership** Module (A1-4); and/or - the **Delivery** of Specialisms Module (B) for any specialism/s it selects (from B1 to B5).	**Most evidence is likely to come from:** • the organisation's documentation; • interviews with staff and, where applicable, board members; • feedback from clients and partners, especially from employers, schools and colleges.

Core

Quality Standard	Description Of Required Evidence
1. The organisation's activities contribute to the improvement of young people's: • Achievement. • Personal development, aspiration and motivation. • Knowledge of the world of work.	• Description of activities delivered. • Feedback from schools, young people, delivery staff and businesses where applicable. • Records of evaluation and of plans revised in response to changing needs.
2. The organisation enables employers to become involved in education and ensures that its activities reflect the realities of work.	• Records showing employer engagement and its impact on activities.
3. The organisation's purpose is clear and explicit; its intended outcomes are specified and relate to the preparation of young people for adult and working life.	• Values or vision or mission statement or other explicit statement of purpose. • Portfolio of activities showing intended learning outcomes. • Records of reviews showing outcomes.
4. The organisation's activities support national work-related learning strategies.	• Statements on the means by which compliance with identified strategies is achieved.
5. The organisation is aware of, and its work supports, specific national, regional and local skills policies and links to employer needs.	• Statements demonstrating knowledge of skills policies and employers' needs and the application of this knowledge to activity planning.
6. The organisation has Governance arrangements that reflect its community and stakeholders, and clear accountabilities.	• Written description of governance arrangements • Governance arrangements include employer representation. • Records of meetings demonstrating active participation of employer representative.

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Core (continued)

Quality Standard	Description Of Required Evidence
7. The organisation has a clear management structure and current business plan with explicit time-bound objectives.	• Management organisation chart. • Minutes of management meetings including action points. • Latest business plan including objectives.
8. The organisation has sound financial management including planning, monitoring and compliance with contracts.	• Current audit report or financial statement. • Description of financial planning process with sample reports and action plans.
9. The organisation has policies relating to its statutory responsibilities; these policies are implemented and achieve compliance with current law.	• Policies, including but not limited to child protection, insurance & public liability. • Reports and meeting minutes showing actions.
10. The organisation uses an evaluation process to monitor the achievement of its objectives and intended outcomes, which prompts action in response where required.	• Description of internal and external evaluation process. • Examples of findings and action taken. • Minutes of management meetings showing feedback on impact.
11. The organisation provides a programme of continuing professional development for its staff which enables them to meet the organisation's objectives.	• CPD plan. • Staff participation records and feedback.

Modules

A: Brokerage, strategy and partnership	
A1 The organisation supports learning providers in the development of work-related learning. * In this standard, the term "learning providers" applies to the whole range of providers, any of which the organisation may support, including: primary, secondary and special schools and academies; colleges; higher education institutes; training providers, voluntary organisations; and specialist units.	• Records showing knowledge of providers' WRL activities and the organisation's role in WRL delivery. • Quantitative evidence of activity. • Qualitative and quantitative evidence of results.
A2 The organisation is engaged in partnership with schools and colleges.	• Records of current partnerships/cluster working. • Interviews or feedback from partners.
A3 The organisation is actively involved in wider or more strategic partnership activities with organisations that support schools and colleges.	• Records of active engagement with wider or more strategic partnership activities. • Records of the individuals who may be members of wider or more strategic partnership bodies. • Evidence showing the contribution made.
A4 The organisation works with employers to address the needs of local and sub-regional economic development.	• Records showing past and current employer engagement activity. • Quantitative and qualitative evidence of positive results. • Plans to increase employer engagement. • Feedback from employers showing joint action to address local needs.
A5 The organisation promotes to employers the business benefits to be gained by working with education.	• Records showing employer engagement. • Feedback from employers indicating the benefits of working with education to their business.

Modules

B: Delivery of specialisms

Experience of Work

B1	The organisation delivers quality-assured work placements which provide explicit links to the curriculum and help to prepare young people for working life.	• Records of placements provided showing use of quality assurance process • Positive feedback from stakeholders and employers • Records of preparation and debriefing processes • Evaluation informing year on year planning and delivery • Evidence of positive impact on learning outcomes

Enterprise and Employability

B2	The organisation delivers programmes which: - develop enterprise skills, and - improve skills for employability.	• Records of programmes delivered • Feedback and evaluation • Evidence of positive results

Economic awareness

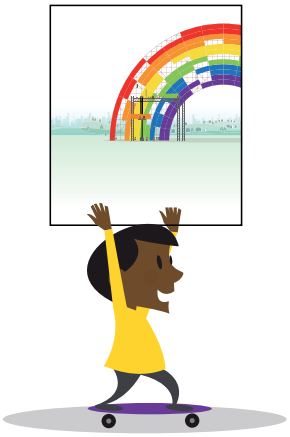
B3	The organisation delivers programmes which develop economic wellbeing and financial capability in young people.	• Records of programmes delivered • Feedback and evaluation • Evidence of positive results

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

B4	The organisation supports and delivers programmes which enhance young people's understanding of the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the economy, employment and everyday life. It encourages the use of positive, dynamic role models to inform young people about careers from as well as in STEM.	• Records of programmes delivered • Feedback and evaluation • Evidence of positive results

Professional Development

B5	The organisation provides a professional development programme for education staff which gives them first-hand experience of current employment practice.	• Records of programmes delivered • Feedback and evaluation • Evidence of positive results



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