

BRIEFING: UP-SKILLING THE WORKFORCE IN 2009

Everything you wanted to know about the Skills Agenda, qualification frameworks, getting funding and making a Skills Pledge.



What's behind the government's skills strategy?

Ultimately the aim is to make the UK better skilled and more competitive. In 2004 Lord Leitch was asked to prepare a report on the UK's ability to compete in globalised markets. The Leitch Report, published in December 2006, recommended that the UK should aim to be a world leader on skills by 2020, and suggested how that aim should be achieved through the Skills Agenda.

The Learning Skills Council established the Train to Gain programme – an independent advisory service to help employers source and fund training, and funding was also channelled through Regional Skills Partnerships and Sector Skills Councils. Organisations are encouraged to commit to the Skills Agenda by signing up to the Skills Pledge.

What is the Skills Pledge?

Organisations publicly pledge to commit to training, to show that they're serious about skills. The commitment is made by signing a certificate, but organisations are then free to fulfil it in their own time and in their own way.

As a minimum, organisations that sign the Pledge will be expected to ensure all employees attain a Level 2 qualification – equivalent to five good GCSEs.

How do they go about achieving this?

- Organisations signed up to the Pledge (and those that are not) can contact a Skills Advisor who provides free help in auditing the current skills of employees and making an action plan to develop these skills in line with business needs.
- The process takes place through telephone meetings, or the Advisor will come to you.
- Alternatively an organisation can go it alone; define their skills needs, find a course and contact a training provider directly to arrange it.
- The Skills Pledge has proved popular by companies keen to support the development of all members of staff, create a culture of continual learning and demonstrate their credentials as an 'employer of choice'. This in turn helps motivate employees, promotes career advancement and encourages people to add value and new ideas in their role.
- Whether or not they have been involved in sourcing the training, a Skills Advisor can then help the organisation arrange funding for their training.

What funding is up for grabs?

- At the most basic level, anyone without a Level 2 qualification can expect funding for training to help them achieve it.
- Funding is also available for some Level 3 qualifications, SMEs, small businesses and other regional or job-specific groups.

What do the levels mean?

- The levels have been set on a new matrix – the Qualifications and Credit Framework, which has been designed to make the whole system simpler to understand and make vocational qualifications comparable with other academic and professional awards.
- Credits are taken on a difficulty level from one (basic skills) to eight (doctorate).

Within each level there are three sizes of qualifications depending on the number of learning hours completed, and therefore credits awarded:

- 1 Awards (1 to 12 credits)
- 2 Certificates (13 to 36 credits)
- 3 Diplomas (37 credits or more)

How should the levels be used?

For many organisations the levels offer a way to understand and monitor the existing skills within the organisation and establish where training needs exists. Plus they're useful for employees to monitor their progress both in their current job and throughout their career.

Duration

Qualifications can take anything from one day to 12 months

Cost

Find all programme costs on our website

Location

Courses delivered in London

Reed Learning offers programmes from Level 2 to Level 7

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