



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills



Leading learning and skills

LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL

ESF 2007-2010

Tender – South East/Employer Responsiveness

Project Specifications

17th December 2007

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Introduction to tender

1.1.1 Background

In comparison with the rest of the UK, the South East as a whole has a relatively qualified workforce. Nevertheless this masks substantial variations within the region, with coastal parts of the region in particular lagging seriously behind both regional and in some case national averages.

Despite relatively high skills profiles at the regional level, many employers in the region encounter persistent difficulties in finding workers with relevant basic, technical and specialist skills. Skills gaps identified by employers in the South East equal UK average levels, with over a fifth of South East employers reporting skills gaps in their workforces in 2003 (RES October 2006)

The attainment of first full level 2 qualifications represents the critical threshold of employability and progression for many individuals. Therefore increasing the proportion of individuals in employment with a full level 2 qualification is an important step in transforming the skills base of the workforce and increasing productivity. There is therefore a commitment within the Regional Economic Strategy to increase the percentage of the working age population with qualifications at level 2 or higher from 66% in 2003 to at least 80% by 2016.

According to the Sector Skills Development Agency's Working Future 2 forecasts, total demand for employees with level 3 qualifications in the South East is set to rise from 823,000 in 2004 to over 1 million by 2014. This represents a growth of 22% over the course of decade and is the strongest growth of any region in the UK. In addition there is an urgent need to address the sector skills deficiencies for adults at the technical professional and skills trade/craft level to ensure the region maintains and develops its current economic advantage.

The South East LSC has identified priority sectors in its regional commissioning plan where skills needs at levels 2 and 3 that need to be addressed to support the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy and ensure that people at all skill levels are continually equipped to progress in the labour market.

The LSC is a key stakeholder in the South East England Skills and Employment for London 2012 Group (SESEL 2012) and is supporting the development of provision to maximise education, employment and engagement opportunities to deliver a lasting legacy for the region, for employers, young people and communities. ESF activity funded in ESF priority 2 will contribute to the aims of the SESEL Action Plan by developing the workforce in key sectors.

1.1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this ESF funded provision is to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce by increasing the number of workers with relevant, up to date skills including basic skill leading to qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

The LSC is seeking tenders that will add value to its current mainstream provision by targeting employees who are not eligible for support through mainstream provision that includes:

- Train to Gain Level 2
- Train to Gain Level 3 07/08 Trials
- Train to Gain National Employer offer 08/09

- Apprenticeships 19+
- Learner Accounts – areas where accounts are not available

1.1.3 Added Value

ESF funded provision will support the re-skilling and up-skilling of individuals to improve labour market mobility and reduce labour and skill constraints experienced by the region's priority sectors. Provision will extend the opportunities of mainstream employment programmes offered through Train to Gain, Apprenticeships and Learner Accounts by offering enhanced packages of support to SME employees of priority sectors who do not have a current or relevant full level 2 qualification or would benefit from additional training opportunities at level 3. Provision will also address entry level Basic Skills issues in the workforce and will complement and extend existing offers through FE colleges, private training providers and others delivering mainstream programmes including Skills for Life entitlement, SEEDA Basic Skills in the Workplace programme and Train to Gain.

1.1.4 Targeting

- ***Employees of Small and Medium Sized Organisations (SMEs)***

There will be a particular focus on groups of workers in SME's who do not have the relevant, up to date qualifications needed to give them economically valuable skills for their current occupation and those in sectors experiencing skills shortages and demographic and technological change or where people are at risk of redundancy. SMEs supported must be trading in the south east region.

- ***Priority Groups***

Recruitment strategies should prioritise the participation the following individuals:

- People with disabilities or health conditions
- Older workers aged 50 and over
- People from ethnic minorities
- Females
- Men and women who are employed in non traditional sectors – such as men in early years and childcare and women in engineering

- ***Priority Sectors***

The priority sectors that will be supported with ESF funding include:

- Health and Social Care
- Built Environment
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Wholesale and Retail
- IT User skills
- Children's Services and Childcare
- Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism
- Sport and Active Leisure
- Land Based Industries

There is also provision for the development of skills in all sectors related to leadership and management, information technology, assessor and verifier awards and basic skills for work.

1.1.5 Geographic areas

Participation can be by employees of SMEs and other eligible organisations living or working in the LSC areas of the South East which include:

- Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes)
- Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Kent and Medway

1.1.6 Generic Features

Provision must include all of the following features:

1. Deliver full and part award NVQ qualifications and other sector qualifications including Basic Skills as set out in each specification, contributing towards the LSC's national targets and are those identified by the particular Sector Skills Councils and Sector Skills Qualifications Strategy.
2. Develop targeted promotion and recruitment strategies and events to ensure the participation of employees within the priority groups as set out in 1.1.4 working with Train to Gain Brokers, Sector Skills Councils, regional and local sector offices and leads. There should also be particular emphasis on the recruitment of men and women who are under-represented in non-traditional areas.
3. Assess occupational skill needs including Skills for Life using appropriate tools and diagnostic assessment as recommended by Sector Skills Councils and sector-recommended practices and protocols such as Competency Frameworks and Skills Passports where these are developed and utilised.
4. Provide Information, Advice and Guidance to all learners through a Matrix-accredited provider prior to the commencement of their training, as well as continued access as appropriate.
5. Provide a personal learning plan based upon an initial assessment of the employee and the employer's skills requirements.
6. Offer an innovative programme including 'bite-sized' modules and flexible work-based methods of training delivery such as 1:1 coaching, mentoring or e-learning, to maximise participation, retention and achievement.
7. Ensure that all delivery and learner support is sector-specific, built on existing good practice and relevant to the needs of employers. The programme must lead to qualifications, part awards and other awards as recommended by the relevant Sector Skills Councils.
8. Promote employers' sign-up to the 'Skills Pledge' and support employers' holistic workforce development planning, working alongside Train to Gain and brokerage in the South East.
9. Record the number and details of employers signed up to the 'Skills Pledge'.
10. Produce quarterly equality and diversity participation reports
11. Produce bi-annual qualitative report of learner/employer satisfaction.
12. End-programme report on achievements, good practice and recommendations for sustained participation by individuals and their employers.

1.1.7 Outputs and Results Targets

Individual specifications state the minimum participation volumes (outputs) and achievements (results) targets based on the available funding and average unit costs

Participation targets do not include participants who leave their learning programme early without completing or achieving their stated learning aim.

Results targets are specified as **one** or more of the following:

- Full level 2 qualification
- A unit/ part award of an NVQ qualification at level 2 or level 3
- Other vocational sector specific qualifications at level 3
- Upskilling/CPD including units/part awards at level 3

1.1.8 Evaluation

This provision is subject to inspection by OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills). Providers will be required to complete for LSC monitoring purposes:

- A quarterly equality and diversity report related to the recruitment, participation, completion, achievement and progression of participants of the priority groups
- A bi-annual qualitative report of learner/employer satisfaction
- An end of programme report to identify what went well/did not go well, methods of best practice and recommendations to sustain employer engagement.

1.1.9 Employer Contributions and State Aid

ESF will provide a significant financial contribution to the cost of employee training. However, to comply with European Regulations on State Aid, employers will be required to make a contribution to the cost of skills and workforce development in line with Train to Gain and FE funding. The current employer contribution rate is 37.5% of the costs in the form of cash contributions.

Employer contribution rates are subject to further guidance to be issued in 2008 by the European Social Fund Division

The LSC will require providers to collect and submit details of companies whose employees participate in ESF funded provision, using the "State Aid Company Data Collection Record"

1.1.10 Learner Data

Providers will be required to collect and submit learner data using the Individual Learner Record (ILR). Summary data from the ILR will be collated to provide participation and completion reports to the European Social Fund Division.

1.1.11 Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP)

The LSC will adopt the principles of the Business Support Simplification Programme recommended in the South East Regional ESF Framework. The European Social Fund

Division will be producing guidance on this issue. In the meantime, the LSC will ensure through the contract management process that ESF providers are linked into wider business support activity and that details of their provision is passed to Skills South East and the region's Business Links for inclusion in their databases.

1.1.12 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is focused on providing a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come. This is achieved through considering and balancing the long-term effects of social, economic and environmental issues and impacts. (Securing the Future - UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005)

The European Commission wishes there to be a focus on the environmental aspects of sustainability for 2007-13. The LSC will develop strategies to spread good practice from previous ESF programmes and will examine appropriate methods to disseminate environmental practice with providers.

Providers will be required to integrate sustainable development issues as far as possible across all aspects of programme design and delivery and seek to minimise travel and maximise access to provision through innovative delivery methods and the use of ICT.

Skills Development at Levels 2 and 3

Reference: SE/E/S01

Aim

To deliver sector-specific training and development opportunities at levels 2 and 3 for employees not eligible for support through Train to Gain or do not have access to Learner Accounts or Apprenticeships 19+. There should be a focus on priority sectors with a particular emphasis on the participation of priority groups and those employed in small and medium sized organisations (SMEs).

Provision must include offers at Level 2 and Level 3:

Level 2 - Full level 2 NVQ qualifications
- Unit/part awards at level 2

Level 3 - Sector specific vocational qualifications at level 3
- Units/part awards at level 3 (a minimum of two units must be completed)
- Other occupational skills specific training at level 3 as identified by the employer and employee as contributing to upskilling or Continuing Professional Development and not available through mainstream provision

Service requirement**1. Generic Requirements**

Provision must include all of the generic requirements as set out 1.1.6 of the Introduction to the Tender

2. Sector Requirements and Alignment – Table 1

- Sector-specific provision must include the full range of offers at level 2 and level 3 unless otherwise stated in Table 1
- Providers will be expected to encourage employers to identify basic skills needs of all staff participating and refer them to an appropriate provider through Train to Gain and/or brokerage South East

Table 1	Sector specific requirements
Early Years & Childcare	<p>ESF Provision to support the Government's ten year strategy for childcare 'Choice for parents, the best start for children (2004)'</p> <p>Special targeted recruitment and participation of men who are under-represented in this occupational sector.</p> <p>Development of specific progression pathways for continued learning and development, ensuring that at least 15% of learners achieving level 2, progress to level 3 through Train to Gain</p> <p>Provision of a mentoring service for each participant available at each stage of their learning programme</p>
Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism	A focus on Professional Cookery at intermediary and advanced levels 2 and 3 with a recruitment emphasis on the area of the Dorney corridor which is a venue for the London 2012 Olympic

	<p>and Paralympic Games. Provision of a mentoring service for each participant available at each stage of their learning programme.</p>
Built Environment	<p>Relates to the cluster of related sectors represented by the Sector Skills Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Skills (traditional building trades and technical functions) • Summit Skills (building services engineering, e.g. plumbing and electrical) • Asset Skills (housing, property and facilities management/cleaning) • ECITB (on-site crafts and office-based technical functions) <p>Provide full second Level 2 NVQs and other Level 3 specialist training or CPD modules to upskill craft workers and first line management.</p> <p>Develop with the relevant Sector Skills Councils, collaborative training and assessment networks to promote access and delivery.</p> <p>SMEs must make up a minimum of 65% of all organisations engaged. Where larger organisations are involved, SME sub-contractors in their direct supply chain should be included.</p>
Land Based Industries	<p>Providers must liaise and work with the Sector Skills Council (LANTRA), to develop collaborative promotion, training and delivery methods to meet the low volume specialist skills needs of this sector, such as preparation for study and on programme mentoring support.</p> <p>Recruitment strategies to target local land-based/'green skills' SMEs (at least 70%) or larger public sector employers (e.g. amenity & production horticulture, landscaping and other associated green space businesses such as sports turf) prevalent in the SE to identify experienced workers lacking recognised qualifications.</p>
Retail Sector	<p>'Bite-sized' Level 2 NQF or 3 QCF approved units of retail-specific training for employees based on an initial assessment of their competence in their job role including Skills for Life.</p> <p>Targeted promotion and recruitment strategies to engage independent retailers, local retail areas under development, town centre sites, sales and customer services workers working with Train to Gain and brokerage in the South East and Town Centre Managers to promote the engagement of SMEs in training and increase referrals to appropriate provision.</p> <p>Recruitment of a project Co-ordinator with a proven track record in engaging 'hard to reach' retailers to manage the promotion</p>

	and delivery of this programme.
Health and Social Care	<p>Working with the LSC Regional Sector Skills Manager, identify an appropriately balanced targeting of eligible participants from health and social care workforce including support functions.</p> <p>Ensure that where eligible groups from the public sector are engaged, their provision is part of a wider workforce development strategy which shows joint investment between the employer and the LSC and supports the employer's engagement in the 'Skills Pledge'. Participation by the public sector is restricted to employees who are employed in traditionally low skilled work and who need career development in their current post and to Level 2 provision only.</p>
Engineering and Manufacturing	<p>Support the greater take-up of the National Skills Academy Manufacturing Business Improvements Techniques NVQ (BIT) building on relevant Manufacturing Sector Skills Agreement – SEMTA; Proskills; Cogent; Improve & Skillfast.</p> <p>Develop and implement workforce development skills in line with the National Skills Academy – Manufacturing BIT programme.</p> <p>Mentor participants to ensure that the skills they develop are applied in the workplace and that skills are embedded through continuous professional development.</p> <p>Ensure the engagement of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A minimum of 25% of participants are female as they are under-represented in this sector. 2. SMEs in rural areas.
Sports and Active Leisure	<p><u>Active Leisure</u> Deliver Common-Core CPD NVQ's at Level 2. The core subjects to be covered are Customer Service and Relationships, Teamwork, Planning and Preparation, Evaluation, Security, Self Management and Self-Development, Environment and Resources, Information, Service Delivery and Development, Leading and Developing Others.</p> <p><u>Out-Door Education and Adventure</u> The following VRQ's, which are industry recognised National Governing Body Awards: Mountain Leader, Canoeing, Caving, Hill Walking, Climbing, or Sailing/Rescue Boat. Provide mentoring to each learner.</p> <p><u>Sport Employees (Coaches and Instructors)</u> Deliver the UK Coaching Certificate at levels 2 and 3. Provide mentoring for each learner.</p>

Leadership and Management	Following an expansion of the national Leadership and Management Offer within Train to Gain in 2008, the LSC has decided to withdraw the ESF funded support for Leadership and Management as set out in the service requirement Table 1.
Upskilling through ITQ	<p>Target individuals using technology, not necessarily computers with a particular emphasis on the engagement of older workers aged 50 and over.</p> <p>Assess the needs of the individual based on their IT needs in their workplace using an appropriate assessment tool such as e-passport.</p> <p>Ensure employers' bespoke systems and technology are taken into account and where necessary develop and use bespoke training to meet those needs.</p> <p>A minimum of 50% of participants must be aged 50 year and over.</p>
Assessor and Verifier Awards	<p>Provision relates to A1/A2/V1/V2 unit awards for all sectors but with special emphasis on those where there is a current shortage: Health and Social Care, Retail, Logistics, Hospitality/Leisure/Tourism, Sport.</p> <p>Work with employers to develop and test flexible and innovative models of delivery to provide workplace learning for employees, particularly in environments for which this is currently difficult. examples might include the innovative use of technology and expert witness training.</p> <p>Work with relevant provider networks to bring together employers either by sector or sub region to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure best practice is shared, • allow employer solutions to be delivered collaboratively by bringing in individual provider expertise in specialist provision, • rationalise the resources required to deliver providers' own workforce development solutions.

Target groups & priority

Refer to 1.1.4 of the Introduction

Unless specified in the particular sector requirements, recruitment strategies should prioritise the participation of employees from the following groups and in at **least the minimum engagement rates:**

- People with disabilities or health conditions – 15%
- Older workers aged 50 and over – 20%
- People from ethnic minorities – 9%
- Females – 50%
- Men and women who are employed in non traditional sectors – such as men in early years and childcare and women in engineering

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC wishes provision to be available to SMEs in each of the areas of:

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Kent and Medway

Surrey

Sussex

Thames Valley

Outputs

Participation targets represent the minimum expectations based on the average unit cost for level 2 and 3.

Tender applications **must deliver to the full range of offers at level 2 and 3** across the sector to which the provision is related.

Tenders applications must clearly state:

- The sector(s) of delivery
- The participation volumes and results offered
- The geographic area(s) of delivery

Sector	Minimum participation volumes at Level 2	Minimum participation volumes at Level 3
Early Years and Childcare	300	100
Hospitality, Leisure & Tourism	350	150
Built Environment	500	485
Land Based Industries	145	375
Retail	300	50
Health and Social Care	1,200	200
Engineering & Manufacturing	500	320
Sports & Active Leisure	1,450	150
Leadership and Management	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
ITQ	600	300
Assessor and verifier Award	0	550
TOTALS	5,345	2,680

Results

Tender applications must clearly state the results volumes for each sector to which the provision is related. Table 2 sets out the minimum targets based on the average unit costs.

Sector	LEVEL 2		LEVEL 3	
	Full Level 2 Qualifications	Units/Part Awards	Other Sector Qualifications	Upskilling/CPD/Units & Part Awards
Early Years and Childcare	300		100	
Hospitality, Leisure & Tourism	350		150	
Built Environment	500		50	435
Land Based Industries	100	45	50	325
Retail	30	270		50
Health and Social Care	1,200	deleted	200	
Engineering & Manufacturing	500			320
Sports & Active Leisure	250 NVQ Level 2 20 Outdoor vocationally relevant qualifications at Level 2 1180 Coaching certificates at Level 2 20 Outdoor vocationally relevant qualifications at Level 3 130 Coaching certificates at Level 3			
Leadership and Management	Withdrawn	Withdrawn	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
ITQ	600			300
Assessor and Verifier Awards				550
TOTALS	3,830	1,515	570	2,110

Other outcomes

- Initial occupational assessments
- Individual Learning Plans
- Information and Advice Sessions
- Number and details of employers signed up to the 'Skills Pledge'
- Quarterly equality and diversity participation reports
- Bi-annual qualitative report of learner/employer satisfaction
- End programme report on achievements, good practice and recommendations for sustained participation by individuals and their employers

Funding available

Total funding available for Level 2 provision is £9,238,000

Total funding available for Level 3 provision is £3,960,750

Level and Sector	Average Unit Cost
Level 2 Full NVQ Qualifications All sectors except Engineering and Manufacturing	£1,550
Level 2 Full NVQ Qualifications Engineering and Manufacturing	£2,000
Level 2 Outdoor Education and Adventure vocational relevant qualification (VRQ)	£1,550
Level 2 Units/Part Awards	£500
Level 2 Coaching Certificates	£300
Level 3 Other Sector Specific Qualifications including vocational relevant qualification (VRQ)	£2,050
Level 3 Upskilling/CPD including Unit/ Part Awards including coaching certificates	£700

Start and end dates

Start date from : 1st May 2008

End date: 31st December 2010

Contracting details

The LSC wishes to issue multiple contracts to ensure sector provision is available across the South East.

Basic Skills for Work	Reference SE/E/S02
Aim	
<p>The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) identified in 2001 that 600,000 adults in the South East did not have the basic literacy and numeracy expected of an 11 year old. In 2003 SEEDA noted that 1 in 5 adults in the region still had significant basic skills needs and whilst progress has been made to date there remains a substantial need to be addressed. In addition, with the expansion of the European Union, the South East is experiencing a greater demand for ESOL for Work. With the relatively low unemployment rate in the South East region far more people with basic skills needs are placed within employment and require workplace solutions.</p> <p>The aim of this project is to develop and support a skilled and adaptable workforce through a holistic approach to Skills for Life and ESOL for Work in the workplace. It will do this by combining opportunities for employees to access these skills in the workplace and by encouraging capacity building in the workplace to support employed workers, not eligible for the Train to Gain offer that require Skills for Life and ESOL for Work. This ESF provision will be met by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging learners that require SfL/ESOL for Work and by delivering the learning in the workplace; 2. Delivering refresher courses for existing practitioners and introductory courses for potential Tutors, Mentors, Learning Assistants and Coaches. The LSC particularly wishes to encourage the participation of volunteers, staff and Union Learner Representatives. 	
Service Requirement	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a strategy, ideally in a collaborative partnership, that will engage employed workers requiring SfL/ESOL for Work to deliver learning programmes in the workplace. 2. Develop and implement an active recruitment strategy to encourage target groups to participate. 3. Engage, where relevant, with employed learners such as Union Learning Reps and other staff, offering refresher and introductory courses that will enable them to support learners in their own workplace. 4. Deliver innovative and flexible work-based learning and support focused in workplace environments. 5. Complete initial assessments for all participants. 7. Provide on-programme guidance, reviews and exit interviews with identified progression routes. 8. Provide an Individual Learning Plan based on initial assessment and the employer's skills requirements. 9. Develop and implement a research strategy to measure the impact of interventions, capacity build and subsequent Skills Pledge commitment. 10. Work in partnership to deliver this holistic approach to SfL/ESOL delivery in the workplace. 11. Provide a forum for participants to share good practice. 12. Provide awarding body certification. 	

Target groups & priority

Individuals aged sixteen years and over who are employed in small and medium sized organisations in any sector and who are not eligible for Train to Gain or Apprenticeships or have access to Learner Accounts. Within this target group, participation of the following groups should be prioritised:

- People with disabilities or health conditions
- People aged 50 years and over
- People from ethnic minorities
- Women

There should be a particular emphasis on the engagement of low skilled workers who have not received training in the last twelve months

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC wishes provision to be available to SMEs in each of the following areas:

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Kent and Medway

Surrey

Sussex

Thames Valley

Outputs

6,155 recruited and engaged of which at least:

- 923 (15%) are participants with disabilities or health conditions
- 1,231 (20%) are participants aged 50 and over
- 553 (9%) are participants from ethnic minorities
- 3,077 (50%) are female

Results

4,591 learners to complete Skills for Life/ESOL for Work at either pre-Entry, Entry or Level 1

1,564 learners to complete either Refresher or Introductory courses in Mentoring, Tutoring, Coaching or Learning Assistant

Other outcomes

6,155 Initial occupational assessments

6,155 Individual Learning Plans

6,155 Information, advice and guidance sessions

Targeted recruitment strategy(ies)

Quarterly equality and diversity evaluation reports

Bi-annual qualitative report of learner/employer satisfaction

End programme evaluation report

Funding available

Level	Volume	Average cost per learner	Available Funding
Pre-Entry, Entry, Level 1 & Level 2	6,155	£1,500	£9,232,500

Start and end dates

Start date from 1st May 2008
End date 31st December 2010

Contracting details

The LSC expects to issue multiple contracts to ensure provision across the south east and to the priority sectors.