

# Code of Practice

## Employer Partnerships

This Code of Practice sets the expectations for skills standard setting Employer Partnerships. Their primary purpose is to galvanise and maintain the commitment of employers to develop skills standards which reflect the current and future needs of an industry or sector in each of the four nations which make up the United Kingdom. Commitment to the Code of Practice indicates to Governments and other stakeholders that they can contract with the Employer Partnerships with confidence.

The code is underpinned by the following principles, the partnership must:

- **Understanding** – Work with employers to gain understanding and insight into the skills standards required by employers.
- **Trusted** – Be trusted by employers to be impartial and articulate their views and make the case for high quality skills standards with Employers.
- **Capable** – Be recognised experts in the development and implementation of skills standards and have industry knowledge to assist employers in this.
- **Impartial** – Ensure its wider activities don't prejudice its role in developing, managing and maintaining industry based skills standards.
- **Sustainable** – Ensure that its actions contribute to the long term productivity of the sector.

# Management of the Code of Practice

## Development

This Code of Practice was first developed between February and August 2015 in consultation with the Federation Board and a working group. As the work of Employer Partnerships is evolving in response to employer need and Government policy, it was agreed that the Code of Practice would initially be rolled out with the primary aim of better understanding how each Employer Partnership operated, and to highlight best practice.

Once all of the Federation Members and Associate Members have been initially assessed, the evidence requirements and standard of practice expected will be defined more precisely.

## Assessment

The first time you are assessed you will receive a copy of the Code of Practice. The Federation will seek to identify from your website and other publically available documents, information which demonstrates that each of the values is being upheld. Where evidence is not available or clarification is required then this will be sought directly from you. Additionally you will be asked to consider how your organisation reflects the values contained within the code of practice and any further evidence you may hold to demonstrate this.

An interview will be conducted between the Federation and the Employer Partnership with the aim of explaining the code of practice, and to help identify evidence you hold which demonstrates compliance with the code. This is developed into a narrative which explains how you meet the code and intend to maintain its values through your future actions.

The Federation will evaluate the narrative and where required will test the robustness of the evidence. Written feedback is provided on the strengths and weaknesses of the narrative, and a sample of the evidence will be checked to ensure it is robust.

## Continuous Improvement

In the first 12 months of operation, any weaknesses identified will be clearly articulated along with ideas for improvement. Over time the strengths of each body will be identified and shared among the network of Employer Partnerships.

Once all of the bodies have been assessed, an overarching report will be written which will inform future development of the code of practice. Over time the frequency of the assessment process will reflect the risk, and a lighter touch process will be used to maintain standards.

## Evidence

The activities and evidence sources indicated on the following pages are **not** a prescriptive list. Each organisation will have its own objectives and ways of working. The following pages indicate the types of information that the Federation might seek to demonstrate how you meet the Code of Practice. Where you already possess an accreditation/commitment to a standard that covers some or all of these elements we will not review the individual elements.

## Code of Practice Scoring

Each Code of Practice criterion is assessed based on the evidence presented and scored:

| Code requirement         | Definition  | Criterion Score | Overall      |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|--------------|
| <b>Exceeding</b>         | The organisation is meeting and exceeding the requirements of the Code of Practice. An area of strength or best practice has been identified. | <b>4</b>        | <b>43-52</b> |
| <b>Meeting</b>           | The organisation is adequately meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice.  | <b>3</b>        | <b>39-42</b> |
| <b>Partially meeting</b> | Some aspects are falling below the standard expected in the Code of Practice.   | <b>2</b>        | <b>24-38</b> |
| <b>Not Meeting</b>       | There is a fundamental problem and action is required.  | <b>1</b>        | <b>13-23</b> |

- In total there are 13 criteria in the Code of Practice.
- Each one is scored individually and added up to give an overall total score.
- An overall score of 39 or more is required for the organisation to be deemed to be meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice.
- Any criterion with a score of 1 will require action and re-assessment before the organisation can be considered to be meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice.

|                      | Minimum Score | Partially Meeting | Meeting score | Maximum score |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Understanding</b> | 3             | 6                 | 9             | 12            |
| <b>Trusted</b>       | 3             | 6                 | 9             | 12            |
| <b>Capable</b>       | 2             | 4                 | 6             | 8             |
| <b>Impartial</b>     | 3             | 6                 | 9             | 12            |
| <b>Sustainable</b>   | 2             | 4                 | 6             | 8             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>13</b>     | <b>24</b>         | <b>39</b>     | <b>52</b>     |

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## Employer Partnership Bodies

| <p><b>Understanding</b> – Work with employers to gain understanding and insight into the skills standards required by employers.</p> |   |
|--|---|
| Requirement:   | Evidence might include:   |
| <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the sector so that you can articulate its needs and aspirations.</p>                              | <p>Reports on the skills needs and aspirations of Employers in the sector</p> <p>Reports of meetings with Employers in which skills needs and aspirations are identified.</p> <p>Government policy responses.</p> <p>Work with training providers to identify what current provision is available and to identify gaps for future development.</p> <p>Research or intelligence held by you or your partners about the industrial make-up, skills needs and aspirations of Employers.</p>  |
| <p>Mechanisms to engage and/or consult with Employers in the sector.</p>   | <p>Evidence of previous consultation exercises supported by Employers.</p> <p>Examples of previous standards related consultation (<i>Part B submissions</i>)</p> <p>Proactive engagement could be demonstrated by the organisation of, or attendance at seminars and conferences.</p> <p>Website, email, social media, news articles etc. which demonstrates Employer support.</p> <p>Evidence of work in partnership with Government, professional bodies and memorandums of understanding with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Published research and/or surveys by you or your partners.</p> <p>Letters of support from employers, this might include individual employers or employer representative/professional bodies.</p> |
| <p>Definition of the sector / industry.</p>  | <p>A clear definition of the industry / sector or subsector/s where you work to develop skills standards.</p> <p>Published research into the industry / sector make-up.</p> <p>Links with and through professional bodies and other organisations which have an interest in skill standards in the industry / sector.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Trusted</b> – Be trusted by employers to be impartial and articulate their views and make the case for high quality skills standards with Employers.</p>              |   |
|---|---|
| Requirement:  | Evidence might include  |
| <p>Demonstrate active support from Employers, their representative groups, partners and/or providers.</p>   | <p>Evidence from employer steering groups, Trade Bodies or partners and providers that you use their intelligence to articulate Employer needs about current and future skills demand.</p> <p>Champion work strategically (directly or indirectly) with employer groups to build understanding of their needs and to lead the development of solutions.</p> <p>Evidence of trust from employer surveys and consultations.</p> <p>Published material, mission statement, vision statement, website about us etc.</p> <p>Customer and stakeholder surveys on your performance.</p> <p>Reference and support letters from employers, professional bodies and key stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>Take a collaborative approach when planning and creating vocational training paths. Develop and maintain occupational standards by facilitating employer leadership.</p> | <p>Evidence of previous work where you have facilitated the development and maintenance of standards in collaboration with employers and stakeholders.</p> <p>Development of new or changes to existing qualifications.</p> <p>Review of Training Provision.</p>  |
| <p>Articulate the needs and demands of Employers for the whole industry and/or sub-sectors.</p>   | <p>Supportive quotes from individual businesses or groups of businesses about the positions taken on their behalf.</p> <p>Evidence from partners that they act on your evidence.</p> <p>Press or PR coverage relating to your skills standards work.</p>  |

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**Capable** – Be recognised experts in the development and implementation of skills standards and have industry knowledge to assist employers in this.

| Requirement:                            | Evidence might include  |
|---|---|
| Staff with the appropriate expertise.   | <p>Investors in People (IiP) or similar.</p> <p>HR policies and procedures that set out how your staff maintain their competence.</p> <p>Website pages which set out organisational and/or individual staff competences.</p> <p>Staff biographies and or CVs.</p> |
| Evidence of competence and performance. | <p>Previously completed skills standards.</p> <p>Website pages outlining services and marketing materials.</p> <p>Annual customer satisfaction surveys.</p> <p>Testimonials or case studies from customers, partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Annual report.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Impartial</b> – Ensure its wider activities don't prejudice its role in developing, managing and maintaining industry based skills standards.</p> |  |
|---|--|
| Requirement:  | Evidence might include   |
| <p>You should be able to show that you are working impartially for the benefit of the industry, in accordance with your legal status.</p>               | <p>Memorandum of Articles for your business.</p> <p>Legal status.</p> <p>You should always operate with transparency, honesty, integrity, and impartiality. You must comply with applicable laws and regulations and aim to promote a positive public image of Employer Partnership Skills Bodies and the Federation at all times.</p> <p>Organisation chart showing separation between standards roles and potentially conflicting commercial activities.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Policy and or procedures.</p> |
| <p>Promotion of services projects, advice should clearly identify any conflicts of interest.</p>  | <p>Portfolio of products and services with transparent description of products and services and where relevant a clear pricing structure.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Statement with details of any mitigating arrangements.</p>   |
| <p>You must maintain confidentiality at all times for clients and third parties.</p>  | <p>Data Protection Registration.</p> <p>Data and privacy procedures.</p>   |

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| <p><b>Sustainable</b> – Ensure that its actions contribute to the long term productivity of the sector.</p> |   |
|---|---|
| Requirement:  | Evidence might include  |
| Statement of Intent.  | <p>A statement which sets out your approach to skills standards work and aspirations for the sector.</p> <p>Statements from your website which defines your work and ethos with respect to skills standards work.</p> |
| Impact of Previous Standards Work.  | <p>Take-up of previous standards, qualifications or skills initiatives that you have worked on.</p> <p>The success / impact of skills related initiatives that you have worked on.</p>                                |