

Information for H2 Learning	
Section of the Guidelines	Teachers / VET Providers
Relevant sub-sections	Planning and Collaborating with Employers; Sourcing and Managing WBL Placements
Any additional information	

Title	Considerations for VET Providers and Teachers when Engaging with Employers
Description	These are some considerations for VET providers that may facilitate meaningful engagement and help with building constructive relationships between providers and employers
User	Colleges/VET Providers and Teachers
Goal	To provide the college (the VET provider) and the teacher with some ideas and approaches to assist with meaningful engagement with employers
Objective	To facilitate VET providers and teachers to explore and consider some issues, approaches and factors related to employer engagement
Method	This can be available online, electronically or in hard-copy
Recommended Use	VET providers and teachers could use this when planning a strategy for meaningful and constructive employer engagement
When	When planning models of collaboration/engagement with employers
Language	English
Further links	

Contact with Business / Employers

Designated contact person responsible for relationships with business and business organisations whose duties may include:

- Identifying a contact point / person with the employer and business organisation to facilitate engagement
- Understanding employer activities and their key business objectives
- Informing employers about what is happening in colleges and centres to help them understand and appreciate the aims of programmes and training courses. This could be achieved through invitations to employers and employer organisations to attend recruitment interviews, open days / evenings and host business meetings
- Providing contacts between the employer / business and lecturer / instructor to facilitate updating each other on areas such as facilities, equipment and curriculum change etc.
- Developing a strategy for reviewing and expanding databases and allowing for the inclusion of new businesses.

Meeting Employer Needs / Expectations in Relation to Programmes

Approaches that help to meet employer's needs and expectations in relation to programmes include:

- Where employers or business organisations have been directly involved in the design of a programme their commitment to supporting that programme and learners is usually greater
- Involvement with employers and business organisations facilitates colleges and centres to identify skills gaps which can be integrated into a learners programme
- Consideration is given to including additional training identified / required by employees e.g. a unit of learning that would be additional to the requirement of a programme / curriculum
- Through contact with business, education providers gain a better understanding of the standard that employers require learners to achieve

- In the changing jobs market where new skills and knowledge are required it is important that teaching staff have the necessary understanding of what is required of learners to gain employment in specific vocational areas. Interacting with employers and employer groups provides opportunities for teachers, tutors and trainers to update their own knowledge
- Making programmes more relevant can be supported by including:
 - current market statistics
 - linking training to employability
 - involving employers with the delivery of work related aspects of programmes and course activities
 - demonstrating the positive impact that courses can have upon business.

Supporting Employer Engagement

Key approaches and factors to consider regarding employer engagement include:

- Establishing links with employers and businesses by identifying a single point of contact to co-ordinate engagement between bodies
- Identifying the areas where business organisations and employers can participate / cooperate
- Linking training standards to employer expectations
- Creating a mechanism for feedback from employers.

Factors to consider

- Funding: it takes more time and more staffing than anyone would like to pay for
- Employer coordinators report that they need more time and staff to do the range of different tasks related to employer engagement
- It can be difficult to engage smaller businesses to participate
- Convincing prospective partners of the benefits of a partnership can be challenging
- Developing trust between the education and training provider and employers takes time and effort

- There can be challenging practicalities involved in introducing modules / units required by employers into courses due to lack of time, facilities, equipment and staff skills (resource limitations)
- The over involvement of some employer and business organisations (bodies insisting that their requirements are priority) and excluding the needs of other smaller bodies
- Education and training providers need to create meaningful opportunities for partnership bodies so that they can provide inputs into programme development and programme delivery
- Education and training providers need to create opportunities for staff to maintain current industry and business knowledge, skills and experience
- Strategies need to be put in place to meet learner's basic skills shortfalls
- Education and training providers need to demonstrate the advantages and value of their institution to employers
- Engagement with employers and business can only occur through a common interest and benefit to all bodies therefore a contact point must be established between employers and business contacts must be encouraged and maintained.