

Employability Evaluation Framework (July 08)

Introduction

The three Command Papers jointly produced by the Departments for Work & Pensions and Innovation, Universities and Skills make clear the Government's policy intentions for **employability** and for **integrated employment and skills (IES)**. These are:

- **Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work (Nov 07)**
- **Ready to Work, Skilled for Work (Jan 08)**
- **Work Skills (June 08)**

Between them, these policy statements make clear the Government's vision of an integrated employment and skills system. Each has significant implications for the way in which agencies and providers work.

The Government's policy drivers are contained within the LSC's Grant Letter, in particular the need for joint working between the Department for Work and Pensions, Jobcentre Plus and the LSC to achieve a **more integrated employment and skills system**.

In February, the Government published its new **Department of Work and Pensions Commissioning Strategy** which established important roles for its "prime contractors" in developing and strengthening the whole welfare to work supply chain. Key points from this strategy include: -

- Core (or 'prime') contractors responsible for effectiveness of whole supply chain.
- Expectation of excellent sub-contracting relationships.
- Important role for smaller and specialist providers.
- Performance review will include prime contractors' effectiveness in managing sub-contractors.
- Jobcentre Plus will assess the quality of the customer experience.

The new commissioning strategy will apply to the current contracting round for the Flexible New Deal which is replacing a number of the existing New Deals.

A framework for evaluating progress

Developing and delivering provision that responds to the IES imperative involves the creation of employability pathways and services that are more responsive to the needs of individuals and employers.

This evaluation framework is intended to help providers to evaluate the impact of provision and services that are designed to improve employability, assist people into sustainable jobs and continue to support their skills development and progression once they are in work. It also aims to encourage the development of exemplary practice in implementing the significant policy drive. The framework is intended to support provider internal review and development processes but also is a tool that can be used with partner organisations, to strengthen employability pathways and the integration of employment and skills services.

The impact of public funding investment needs to be evaluated. In order to do this, we need to be clear about what success looks like. There will be different success measures for individuals, employers, providers and public agencies, including:

For individuals: individuals having sufficient skills (basic, vocational and 'employability') to get a sustainable job and to continue to progress in the labour market.

For employers: employees (new recruits and existing workforce) who have good, relevant skills that enable businesses to thrive.

For communities: individuals having the fundamental employability skills and attributes that help to build cohesive communities and positive places for living and working

For providers: services that meet the skills and employment needs of customers (individual **and** employer), and achieve the targets and objectives of their funding agencies.

For public agencies: proof - for Government Departments and Ministers - that provision leads to progression, employability, qualifications and jobs, and that the provider infrastructure is changing so that all provision has a clear focus on employability. Proof that joint commissioning and planning can bring greater coherence and impact.

For 'UK plc': a provision system that can respond to continuing change to support the nation's economic and social success, and that is reflected in the developing requirements of regional and local areas.

The headline questions

These are not intended to be exhaustive, but they are challenging measures. To assess how successful provision is in relation to these measures, the headline questions that providers and public agencies need to be able to answer include:

- Has this been the most effective way of helping people to improve their employability and move into sustainable jobs?
- What has the money purchased in terms of outputs, outcomes and 'unit costs'?
- How has it helped to increase the capacity and improve the quality of work focused provision?
- How has it contributed to the development of effective integrated employment and skills pathways?
- What difference has this made for individuals and employers?
- Which types of interventions have been most effective and why?
- How should this inform the way in which providers and public agencies plan future employability strategies and initiatives?

Monitoring and evaluation are different

It is important to be clear about the distinction between monitoring and evaluation. This may feel like stating the obvious, but it is vital to have a shared understanding of the distinction so that accurate guidance can be provided.

- **Monitoring** involves gathering quantitative and qualitative data about a programme and comparing this against milestones and targets. It is essential and a contractual requirement, but only tells us part of the story about the effectiveness of a programme. It provides the sources on which evaluation draws.
- **Evaluation** is the process of standing back from the programme and making judgements about its appropriateness, effectiveness and impact. It involves analysing monitoring information, as well as asking other questions in order to make an assessment.

A programme can be immensely successful in delivering targets and perform very well from a 'contract management' perspective. However, it may not be having the impact that was intended or hoped for. This would be identified through an effective evaluation.

What this guidance and the framework are intended to do

This evaluation guidance is intended to provide a framework that each provider can use to evaluate the impact of provision and services. As you will see, it identifies the data and evidence that you will need to carry out an effective evaluation. It is designed to enable you and the agencies to address the headline questions noted above and answer key questions about impact that include:

- Who is being supported through the provision and from which particular priority groups do they come?
- How are they being attracted/engaged into provision?
- What are their needs and what employment opportunities are available for them?
- What are the business needs of employers?
- What kind of support does the provision give?
- How effective is the support in helping people and employers to achieve their employment **and** skills goals?
- Are some interventions more effective than others? Why?
- What progression is being made by individuals and how is this measured?
- What achievements (qualifications, jobs and others) have been gained and how has this impacted on individuals and employers?
- How are employers being involved in the development and delivery of provision and what business benefits are they experiencing?
- Who is delivering the support and what training or professional development have they needed in order to do so?

Evaluating organisational change

Organisations that are developing and delivering employability programmes often have a range of core business activities. Some have track records in delivering programmes for Jobcentre Plus customers that have traditionally been job rather than skills focused, and others have a history of delivering learning and skills courses with qualifications as the key target. Organisations often deliver a range of different programmes, some funded by the same agency. For all providers, there is a need to integrate activities and re-focus delivery so that it meets the dual aims of sustainable work and skills development.

Establishing these types of integrated employment and skills pathways may require organisational change. This can be anything from major restructure and refocus to put employability at the heart of core business, to more effective internal and external referral routes. It may also mean change in staff skills and ways of working as well as curricula and materials.

For evaluation to be effective, it should not only assess the impact of direct delivery, but also identify the organisational development and changes that has taken place in order to improve impact.

Gathering information on the changes in the way in which a provider is planning and delivering provision and creating integrated employment and skills pathways is not covered by usual programme monitoring mechanisms. It involves identifying changes in organisational structure, processes, working cultures and partnership working. These are also identified in the framework and cover key questions such as:

- What organisational changes have been made in order to deliver provision that is focused on skills **and** employment/employability? Does this have the buy in and support at the most senior level of the organisation?

- How are integrated employability and skills pathways being developed within the organisation and with external partners?
- What blockages and issues prevent the effective development of this and what are the critical changes identified (internally and with partners) to address them? How are blockages being overcome?
- What impact is this having on provision by the organisation and as a whole?
- How is the provision making best use of resources?

What information do we need to make an effective evaluation?

The table on pages 6-9 takes all these questions and identifies the information that would be needed to answer them and where this should be located. Established systems such as the LSC's Individual Learning Records (ILR) and similar systems used by DWP/JCP can be drawn on to provide key data.

The employability evaluation framework is intended to complement quality standards such as the Framework for Excellence (FFE) and the Training Quality Standard (TQS). We are keen to make sure that if you are already using these standards, you can draw on the evidence and processes that you use for these in order to complete and evaluation. Conversely the framework is designed so that if you want to work towards the FFE and TQS, the data collection, analysis and evaluation that you do can be used in this wider work. To this end, we have indicated on the framework how it cross references with these standards. Further information about these standards can be found at www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk and <http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk>.

The role of the Individual Skills and Employment Plan (ISEP) is also highlighted in terms of data collection. This term is used to encompass all individual plans that help people to identify how they will achieve skills and employment goals. We know that there are various terms in use – Individual Employability Plan, Individual Action Plan etc., the term ISEP is intended to be generic and to include all these types of plans. The use of plans that simply reflect learning without a broader goal of movement towards and into sustainable work are no longer regarded as good practice.

The evaluation framework also refers to the Licence to Skill approach and Template. If the minimum requirements set out in the Template are followed, it means that the way in which individual information is gathered and used will provide what you need to make a good evaluation of your provision.

For example, if the requirement is met to identify a work/employability goal for an individual, which may include a qualification as part of that goal, this information should be held in the individual's plan. It can then be accessed, along with those of the other learners in the cohort, for evaluation purposes.

Similarly, if the plan identifies key progression points towards an employment goal (as required for the Licence to Skill approach), this can be assessed across a group of individuals to see how successful the provision is in enabling progression.

In addition, use of the Licence to Skill starter kit matrix will enable you to identify relevant partners and funding streams which will enhance your evaluation of external partnerships and internal organisational change.

The Licence to Skill starter kit (which is very succinct!) and the full toolkit are available at [www.jhconsulting.org.uk/licence to skill.asp](http://www.jhconsulting.org.uk/licence-to-skill.asp)

What should the evaluation 'output' be?

The evaluation process should culminate in a succinct report that answers the headline questions set out above (and subsidiary key questions in the framework). We have produced a 'format for reporting' that is streamlined and draws on the evaluation framework which you may find helpful. This is available on the website in word format for easy completion.

Keeping to a common set of questions and format will enable the results of individual evaluations to be analysed and presented more accurately and effectively and help support partnership approaches.

The Employability Evaluation Framework

Before looking at the specific questions, success measures and data requirements in the table that follows, it's worth just reminding ourselves of the headline questions that we want to be able to answer through the evaluation process:

- Has this been the most effective way of helping people to improve their employability and move into sustainable jobs?
- What has the money purchased in terms of outputs, outcomes and 'unit costs'?
- How has it helped to increase the capacity and improve the quality of work focused provision?
- How has it contributed to the development of effective integrated employment and skills pathways?
- What difference has this made for individuals and employers?
- Which types of interventions have been most effective and why?
- How should this inform the way in which providers and public agencies develop the integrated employment and skills system?

The framework that follows is designed to help you collect and analyse the information (qualitative and quantitative) that you will need in order to answer these questions. It is **important to put systems in place up-front rather than leaving this until late in the day for your provision.**

Most of the information you will need is probably already being collected through one of the sources identified in the last column. However, there may be some pieces of information that will require an additional method of collection (or using a data collection method that you might normally use for another kind of programme). This is likely to be the case, for example, for information about employers.

In addition, in order to be able to complete the evaluation effectively, it is vital that you complete any required information for your funding body/bodies as fully as possible – even where some information is not mandatory and rely on self-declaration. This information makes the difference between simply 'tick box monitoring' and providing the data for really meaningful assessment of success, impact and issues. It may be helpful for providers to identify who will be responsible for making sure that information is gathered as thoroughly as possible. This could form a specific part of any new programme in particular, identifying how it can be rolled out across provision to support even more effective review and development processes.

Last but not least, the framework is designed to support consistent and effective evaluation, but not to stifle creativity. Questions, success measures and data sources can and should be added to as required.

Cross referencing to the Framework for Excellence (FFE), Training Quality Standard (TQS) and other key developments including the DWP's Commissioning Strategy and Local Authority evidencing (place shaping evidence bases) and planning – Local and Multi Area Agreements (LAA/MAA) are shown where appropriate. These are not exhaustive but are intended to flag up how this evaluation process can contribute to other key work and vice versa.

Key question	Success measure	Information required	Data collection source	Cross reference with wider quality standards and other key developments
<p>Who is being supported through the provision and from which particular priority groups do they come from?</p> <p>How are they being attracted/engaged in provision?</p> <p>What employment opportunities are there for individuals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The provision is targeted on individuals that fall in priority groups for employability interventions. → The provision is attracting people from these priority groups. → The provision is targeted on identified recruitment needs, skills shortage and vacancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline figures for the number of individuals to be supported. • Information on employment opportunities and skills requirements • For those with basic skills needs, number of learners entering programmes at each level (pre-entry, E1, E2, E3, L1 and L2) • Breakdown by employment status (employed, employed with tax credit, benefit recipient (IB/ESA, JSA, IS, partner of benefit recipient) • Breakdown by age, gender, ethnicity, residence (borough, postcode) • Breakdown by 'disadvantage' – learning difficulties, lone parent, refugee, BME etc. • For employed learners, details of the employer – size, location, sector etc • Number and type of organisations involved in helping to recruit individuals into provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local LMI and skills needs • Information on groups with employability needs • Individual Skills & Employment Plan (ISEP) • Programme planning and targets eg: projected number of people supported (and any breakdowns). • Other provider records on recruitment • Referral sources • Planning and monitoring information from external organisations involved in outreach and recruitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can contribute to Local Authority 'place shaping' evidence bases, development of LAA/MAA delivery planning. • FFE Responsiveness Dimension (responsiveness to learners, responsiveness to employers)
<p>What are the needs, barriers and goals of individuals?</p> <p>How does the Individual Skills & Employability Plan identify needs, barriers and steps to achieve goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The needs, barriers, existing skills levels and goals (employment, learning and others) of individuals are clearly understood. → They are clearly expressed on an individual plan that identifies needs and barriers and shows how skills and employment goals will be achieved. → The needs and goals of employers are clearly understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particular barriers faced eg: refugees, lone parents, people with disabilities etc. • Goal – job as well as skills aim (and other goals as appropriate – see Licence to Skill) • Educational background • Other barriers – health, housing etc. • Business needs of employer(s), including recruitment, skills etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening and assessment record (should include health, housing etc.) • ISEP - which should be a 'pathway to employability' plan that includes an employment/employability goal and the steps to get there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can contribute to Local Authority 'place shaping' evidence bases, development of LAA/MAA delivery planning. • FFE Responsiveness Dimension • TQS Responding to the needs of employers as individual customers.

Key question	Success measure	Information required	Data collection source	Cross reference with wider quality standards and other key developments
<p>What kind of support is being provided?</p> <p>How are individuals being supported to stay on their pathway?</p> <p>How effective is it in helping people to achieve their employment & skills goals?</p> <p>Are some interventions more effective than others? Why?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provision delivers an integrated range of support that enables individuals to get the SfL, vocational and other work-related skills, experience and support that they need to be employable. → Employment support is helping people move into sustainable jobs. → Individuals are being supported to move from one stage of their plan to the next, including through effective referrals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range and level of skills development offered – including employability skills. • Range and volume (number of people) of specific employment support offered. • Range of other support offered (pastoral etc.) • How it is delivered – method, style, timing, location. • Number and type of partners involved in delivery. • Information on the routeway broker role and referral systems and results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISEP for individual level data • Licence to Skill Template will give an overview for a group and should identify delivery partners and their roles. Baseline numbers for interventions can be included here eg: how many people will receive employment support. • Internal programme review documentation (including case studies and good practice). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Effectiveness Dimension (quality of provision, quality of outcomes)
<p>What progression is being made by individuals and how is this measured?</p> <p>Is it continuing after job entry?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Individuals are progressing towards an employability goal at a pace that is appropriate for them, and in line with their individual plan. → Individuals are continuing to develop skills after they move into work. → Particular cohorts (characteristic groups) are being helped more effectively eg: lone parents, people with learning disabilities etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of progression against the goals and milestones on ISEP • Number of individuals continuing training after job entry. • Number of individuals moving into Train to Gain. • Number of employers paying for training (full or part cost). • Information about successful approaches for particular groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISEP • Learner Achievement Tracker (LAT) FFE • Internal provider/college management information. • Licence to Skill template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Effectiveness Dimension • TQS Responding to the needs of employers as individual customers.
<p>What achievements (qualifications, jobs and others) have been gained and how has this impacted on individuals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Individuals are gaining qualifications and jobs appropriate to their goals and plans. → Individuals are moving into sustainable jobs at the minimum % rate expected by contract/target. → Individuals are moving into further training that is part of their pathway to employability at a minimum % rate expected by contract/target. → Individuals are achieving qualifications at a minimum % rate expected by contract/target. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destinations of all individuals • Number of sustainable jobs, by level and sector. • Number of qualifications achieved, broken by type and level. • Number of part qualifications achieved, by type and level. • Qualitative feedback from individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISEP information • Destination surveys (FFE and other) • Other management information systems as appropriate • Customer surveys (including Learner Views Survey for FFE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Effectiveness Dimension • FFE Finance Dimension (Financial management and control)

Key question	Success measure	Information required	Data collection source	Cross reference with wider quality standards and other key developments
How are employers being involved in, and benefiting from the development and delivery of provision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Employers are involved in the design and delivery of work focused provision → Employers identify clear business benefits arising from the provision, including recruitment and staff development → Employers are 'coming back for more' and are willing to pay for appropriate training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employers providing work placements, intermediate labour market jobs etc. • Number and evidence of employer involvement in the design of the provision. • Number of employers using provision as a recruitment opportunity • Number of employees being trained. • Amount of repeat business and sale of full cost recovery courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal meeting minutes, discussions with employers. • Licence to Skill Templates • Curricula that show examples of employer involvement in design and delivery. • Business Plans/strategies • Customer (employer) satisfaction surveys (FFE) • Financial information on income generation from full cost recovery training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Responsiveness Dimension (employers) • FFE Use of Resources • TQS Responding to the needs of employers as individual customers. • TQS Developing and deploying products to address particular sector needs.
<p>How are integrated employability and skills pathways being developed <u>within</u> your organisation and with external partners?</p> <p>What blockages and issues prevent the effective development of this and what are the critical changes identified (internally and with partners) to address them?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The organisation is delivering services that meet the needs of individuals and employers. → Business planning and review (programme planning, quality assurance, etc.) is driven by the dual aims of skills and sustainable jobs. → There is clarity amongst providers and partners about which organisations are involved in employability pathways and who performs the routeway broker roles. → There is an understanding of blockages that hinder the development of integrated employability and skills pathways and a strategy in place to overcome them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a focus on employability within the lead organisation. • Evidence of how work is being done with external partners. • Evidence of understanding across providers of the importance of pathways and integrated approaches. • Evidence of blockages in developing pathways and how they have been/are being dealt with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence to Skill starter kit matrix and templates • Partnership agreements • Feedback from partners and joint development documents. • Internal review and development documents/Business Plans. • Work towards FFE, TQS or other quality marks. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Responsiveness and Effectiveness Dimensions • Identifying potential sub-contracting chains for Flexible New Deal and other DWP programmes • TQS Responding to the needs of employers as individual customers. •
What impact is this having on the delivery of provision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Individuals and employers are able to access provision that meets their employability needs. → Train to Gain delivery for people with a range of skills needs has increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer and other feedback from individuals and employers. • Data from across all provision for comparisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summaries of satisfaction surveys and other qualitative evaluation (internal or external). • Internal management information • Business Plan review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Responsiveness and Effectiveness Dimensions • Identifying potential sub-contracting chains for Flexible New Deal and other DWP programmes.

Key question	Success measure	Information required	Data collection source	Cross reference with wider quality standards and other key developments
How has the provision made best use of resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The provision demonstrates good use of appropriate public investment from a variety of sources. → Where there is additional public investment, added value for individuals and employers is clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of pathway development that includes activity funded through all appropriate sources – LSC, DWP, RDA, Local Authority etc. • Individual and employer feedback that identifies benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence to Skill starter kit matrix • Summaries of satisfaction surveys and other qualitative evaluation (internal or external). • Internal management information • Business Plan review and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Finance Dimension • Identifying how combinations of resources are being used in local areas – contribution to LAA and MAA delivery.
Who is delivering the provision and what training or professional development have they needed in order to do so?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The provision is being delivered by a team of staff that has the appropriate skills sets for employability. → A range of appropriate partners are being worked with collaboratively in order to deliver effective pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number/range of staff across departments or teams within the organisation that are involved in delivery • Number/range of staff in external partners involved in delivery • Number and type of staff trained/assessors trained (accredited and non-accredited), where relevant. • Type of training (and any qualifications) undertaken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licence to Skill starter kit matrix and templates • Internal review documents. • Professional development plans (individual and departmental). • Staff qualifications gained • Business Plans • Feedback from partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FFE Effectiveness Dimension • TQS Developing and deploying products to address particular sector needs (seeing providers as part of a skills and employment sector)