

Autumn 2011 Conference Workshop discussions – feedback comments

<p>Summit Skills FT Programmes</p> <p>Members, supported by EAL and C&G, still perceive several problems with Summit Skills. Examples of specific issues were quoted during the sessions.</p> <p>It was suggested that NFEC should work with the Awarding Bodies to seek resolution.</p> <p>EAL and C&G are producing guidance documents to assist centres in the Recognition of Previous Learning (RPL) process.</p> <p>19+ learners receiving benefits may receive funding for individual units</p> <p>Changes to specifications will be issued as addendums to avoid the need for full re-accreditation</p>	<p>Funding of Apprenticeships</p> <p>What will be the long-term effect of 'Simplifying' funding structures?</p> <p>Initial thoughts were that it would lead to erosion of the offer as the funding of an advanced apprenticeship falls from £15k to £12k and providers look for the easiest, quickest most cost-effective provision..</p> <p>Employers may be expected to pay a larger proportion. Itemised billing which clearly indicates the value added may ease the situation, but this may result in a post-code lottery, depending upon the nature of the engineering companies in a location, with larger companies more capable of meeting costs.</p> <p>NFEC can support members by lobbying on the importance of supporting apprenticeships which support sustainable economic growth.</p>
<p>Opportunities in the Oil Industry</p> <p>Nic Burton (Aibel) led a stimulating discussion on career opportunities. Interestingly the skills sought match those in a typical PEO! His company has employed 1000 people in the last year, indicating the number of career opportunities available.</p> <p>Although the session centred on the oil industry members could see the extension to wider careers' information which should be available to our learners.</p> <p>What role should NFEC have in promoting engineering careers?</p>	<p>A reduction in unit financing may only be balanced by increasing apprenticeship numbers, which requires an increase in SME's offering apprenticeships. Financial mechanisms will be needed to support the costs of taking on an apprentice</p> <p>Rethinking Apprenticeships (http://www.ippr.org/publications/55/8028/rethinking-apprenticeships) contains many points to ponder in its 137 pages.</p> <p>Several concerns were raised concerning Higher Apprenticeships. The NVQ content is funded at approximately £5.5k, but there is still no clarity about the Technical Certificate component. This has put several potential candidates 'on hold'. Centres are reporting the loss of potential learners to HNC courses. (There may be catch back for these if the HNC is accepted as a Technical Certificate.)</p>
<p>Extended Diploma in Engineering (NVQ Level 3)</p> <p>Geoff Laycock (EAL) fielded issues raised by members. The Extended Diploma (not to be confused with other qualifications by the same name!) is a new qualification designed to retain PEO content as required by many in industry.</p> <p>Confusion in the nature of the Extended Diploma was raised. Documentation has indicated that there is a mix of L2 and L3 units. Geoff stated that this was not the case. This is a L3 qualification, and all documentation should be amended to reflect this. (It's the same issue previously expressed that the PEO mandatory units are identical at L2 and L3, the difference is in the context and application). EAL need to update the published information.</p> <p>Recognition of Previous Learning (RPL) needs to take place to ensure that the learner has QCF certification of the PEO elements. The Awarding Bodies have a standard charge of £20 to provide like-for-like certification.. Members were not convinced at the need to register learners for a component which they have already gained. EAL will provide guidance on the RPL process</p> <p>The question of when to register learners was discussed. The consensus was as soon as possible, since the difference between start date and registration will not be funded</p>	