

INTRODUCTION

Introducing the new style SVQ Update

Welcome to the newly formatted September 2004 edition of the SVQ Update. The Update has now been divided into two distinct sections. Firstly, we have the SVQ News Update, which contains articles providing insight into the latest news and developments pertaining to vocational qualifications and training, including Modern Apprenticeships. Secondly, we have the SVQ Info Update, which details coding and information directly relating to currently available SVQs and Core Skills. This section also includes contact information for Awarding Bodies, Standards-setting Bodies and Sector Skills Councils, and also contains general SVQ system and stakeholder information.

We hope you like the new format. If you have any questions or comments you would like to make about the style or content of the new edition of the Update, please e-mail them to: paul.griffiths@sqa.org.uk

SEPTEMBER 2004

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List of 'Appropriate' Exams launched by Financial Services Skills Council

The list of examinations that are designated by the Financial Services Skills Council (FSSC) as 'appropriate' came into force on 1 July 2004. The list is published on the Financial Services Skills Council website at:

<http://www.fssc.org.uk/cgi-bin/go.pl/exams/index.html>

The list includes examinations that were not on the Financial Service Authority's 'approved' list (which practitioners were required to adhere to until 30 June 2004). The Skills Council will be responsive to regulatory and industry developments which need to be reflected in examinations for employees in the sector.

The FSSC is also beginning to publish Standards for Appropriate Examinations covering the activities of people advising on: packaged products; standard and lifetime mortgages; and long-term care insurance products. As these Standards are published, awarding bodies will bring forward proposals for appropriate examinations that meet the Standards. When these proposals are accepted, the new examinations will be added to the list, which will continue to be updated.

The aim of the Examination Review, which is being carried out by the FSSC as an accreditation and endorsement body, is to reflect the needs of the sector in setting up a clear industry-wide, single qualifications framework.

For queries about the list of appropriate examinations contact:

Alison Cecil-Smith at: alison.cecil-smith@fssc.org.uk

New Directors appointed at Skills Council

Lucy Courtenay of the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII) is to join the Financial Services Skills Council as the new Director of Standards and Accreditation – the latest in a series of senior appointments at the FSSC. This follows the earlier appointment of Mary Greene, who has a strong track record in establishing and developing new businesses within the financial services sector, as Business Development and Research Director.

In her new role at the FSSC, Greene will promote views from across the financial services industry directly to government through Employer Forums, secure appropriate government funding for companies to use in training their staff and co-ordinate the latest market intelligence to help keep the market at the leading edge. Her previous roles include Sales Director at Eagle Star and Managing Director of the Financial Times Fund Ratings business.

Courtenay's role will be to oversee the completion of the Examination Review and development of industry standards and frameworks. She will also implement the Skills Council's accreditation scheme.

Tom Caple will move from his post as Head of Sector Engagement to take up the role of Policy and Network Development Executive. Working with

the executive team, Caple will monitor and evaluate the impact of the Skills Council on the sector and across the Skills for Business Network within which the FSSC operates with other sector skills councils, identifying best practices which can be introduced into the industry.

Teresa Sayers, Chief Executive of the FSSC, said 'We are delighted that Mary and Lucy are to join the executive team at the Skills Council. Both bring with them a wealth of industry knowledge and experience, and I look forward to working with them to progress the Skills Council's aims and objectives.'

Members of the board for the Financial Services Skills Council, which is chaired by David Prosser, Group Chief Executive of Legal & General, include David Kenmir, Managing Director of Regulatory Services of the Financial Services Authority; Richard Wastcoat, Managing Director of Fidelity Investment Services Ltd; and Sir David Howard, Chairman Charles Stanley & Co Ltd.

The candidates' progress: customer services training in partnership

Jackson Mills Associates is a young training provider which seeks to offer innovative and flexible training and development opportunities in accordance with needs identified by clients. Tilecraft Services (Paisley) Limited was started in 1978 by three tile fixers who initially focused mainly on commercial work although they undertook small house building projects for a select few developers. Turnover, £650k at the end of 1998, has increased in the last few years to £3.2m.

Tilecraft is committed to training and development of all employees. In the past, this has focused on offering trade apprenticeships, but more recently it has offered administrative staff the chance to develop new skills and attain accredited qualifications.

Recently, two administrative candidates, Lisa Reynolds (24), Administrator, and Lisa Murray (17), Administrative Assistant, have been undertaking the Modern Apprenticeship in Customer Service, at level 3.



Lisa Murray



Lisa Reynolds

As well as working through the six Customer Service Units, the two candidates also undertook projects in a way which enabled them to pull together much of the material collected in their portfolios. Four administration Units were selected as part of the MA framework with Core Skills Information Technology and Numeracy, all of which made this an ideal mix of skills for the development of these candidates.

Scott Wotherspoon, Director of Tilecraft Services said, 'I was particularly impressed by the way in which these two young staff members applied themselves to the tasks and committed to the project work. From the outset they began to question how they could improve the way in which the company operates.'

Lisa Reynolds undertook a project with the aim of developing a system which would allow more accurate forecasting of purchasing requirements. To obtain the information required Lisa consulted with the company surveyor in order to assess the level of standardisation in the building of new houses and the specific requirements in relation to the work undertaken by Tilecraft. There were a number of objectives in this process:

- to cut down on tile wastage
- to reduce labour costs (time wasted if insufficient supplies)
- to provide more accurate and effective estimates
- to improve performance in relation to deadlines
- to make ordering easier

This was achieved using spreadsheets. With the assistance of the company surveyor, Lisa was able to identify the quantity of tiles and associated materials required for the vast range of new-build housing developments, improving the accuracy of the figures with feedback from other Tilecraft employees. This project, as well as meeting the objectives set out, had the added benefit of creating an information resource which could be accessed by Tilecraft staff, thereby minimising the reliance on one individual. Lisa's Modern Apprenticeship portfolio details the various developments of the new system and the way in which she incorporates feedback into the new system.



Scott Wotherspoon

'There have been clear benefits to the company,' Scott added, 'and these are not just the financial benefits of cutting down on waste. Everyone is happier – the tile-fixers go to a job confident that on-site they have everything they need, the company's reputation with housebuilders has improved, and we're no longer on the suppliers' case with emergencies.'

Lisa Reynolds said, 'Doing the MA was a big step for me, but as a result of completing it – and especially the project – I am now being offered other development opportunities. It has definitely been a successful project and has definitely been well worth the time setting it up. Now instead of being overwhelmed at the thought of such a major change I am constantly looking for ways to improve our systems.'

Lisa Murray's project has had less tangible results as it was geared more towards improving communications between Tilecraft, its employees, its suppliers and its customers. Lisa worked towards developing a new purchasing system which would allow the company to respond more swiftly to any difficulties encountered. Of particular concern was the number of occasions where there was an insufficient supply of the required tiles as a result of damage or delays in supply (despite the accurate forecasting developed by Lisa Reynolds, problems do still occur). Lisa's project now enables Tilecraft to identify potential problems at an early stage, and to consult with customers with a view to providing them with options. Lisa's project has resulted in the following benefits:

- improved relations between Tilecraft and customers
- minimal conflict at the sharp end for tile fixers confronted by unhappy customers
- improved communications at all stages in the process
- it minimises frustration

Lisa Murray offers these thoughts. 'Jackson Mills have helped because they have given me a better way to look at things. Rather than dealing with small problems and doing things the way they have always been done, I learned to look at problems more closely, understand why they are happening and how to change systems to stop them happening.'

JHP Training and Nestlé UK: working together to develop skills

Ayr-based JHP Training has teamed up with Nestlé UK at its factory in Girvan to work together in assisting the development of skills in employees in the fields of Management and Distribution and Warehousing.

Nestlé UK in Girvan has been working closely with JHP Training, who this year celebrate their 21st anniversary in the training industry, to provide on-the-job training to employees wanting to improve their skills and prospects. The partnership has proven to be very successful so far, and feedback from both employees and the JHP Trainer Assessors involved,

Michael O'Rourke and Tracy Morgans, has been very positive. Alan Kerr, an employee at Nestlé UK who previously undertook a Distribution and Warehousing SVQ, said, 'The SVQ programme is highly relevant here at the Girvan factory. It provides an incentive for our team to develop and reaffirm existing skills, and demonstrates that Nestlé UK values us and is committed to investing in our development.'

Michael O'Rourke found working with the candidates at Nestlé UK 'a pleasure – they were committed to their qualification coursework, which was completed to the highest standard.'

Modern Apprenticeship updates

Keeping up-to-date with developments in Modern Apprenticeships can be difficult. Framework documents – which explain how each apprenticeship works and the mandatory and optional outcomes that apply – are constantly being revised to meet employer demands, and new policy initiatives from the Scottish Executive and the enterprise networks also contribute to an ever-changing landscape. However, two sources of information are available: the MA Bulletin and MASCOT database.

MA Bulletin

MA Bulletin is a 12-page glossy magazine with all the latest news and information about Scottish Modern Apprenticeships. It also gives a complete listing of all the different types of apprenticeship available as well as highlighting examples of good practice. It is published by Sector Skills Alliance Scotland and sponsored by Highlands & Islands Enterprise. The magazine is available – free of charge – to any organisation or individual with an interest in Scottish Modern Apprenticeships. If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive future issues, please contact [Stuart McKenna](mailto:stuart.mckenna@ssascot.org.uk) at SSAScot by e-mail at: stuart.mckenna@ssascot.org.uk

MASCOT database

The MASCOT database gives details of the content of all Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks available in Scotland. The database is updated weekly, and is very easy to access, with several different search options. MASCOT is at: www.mascot.uk.com



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