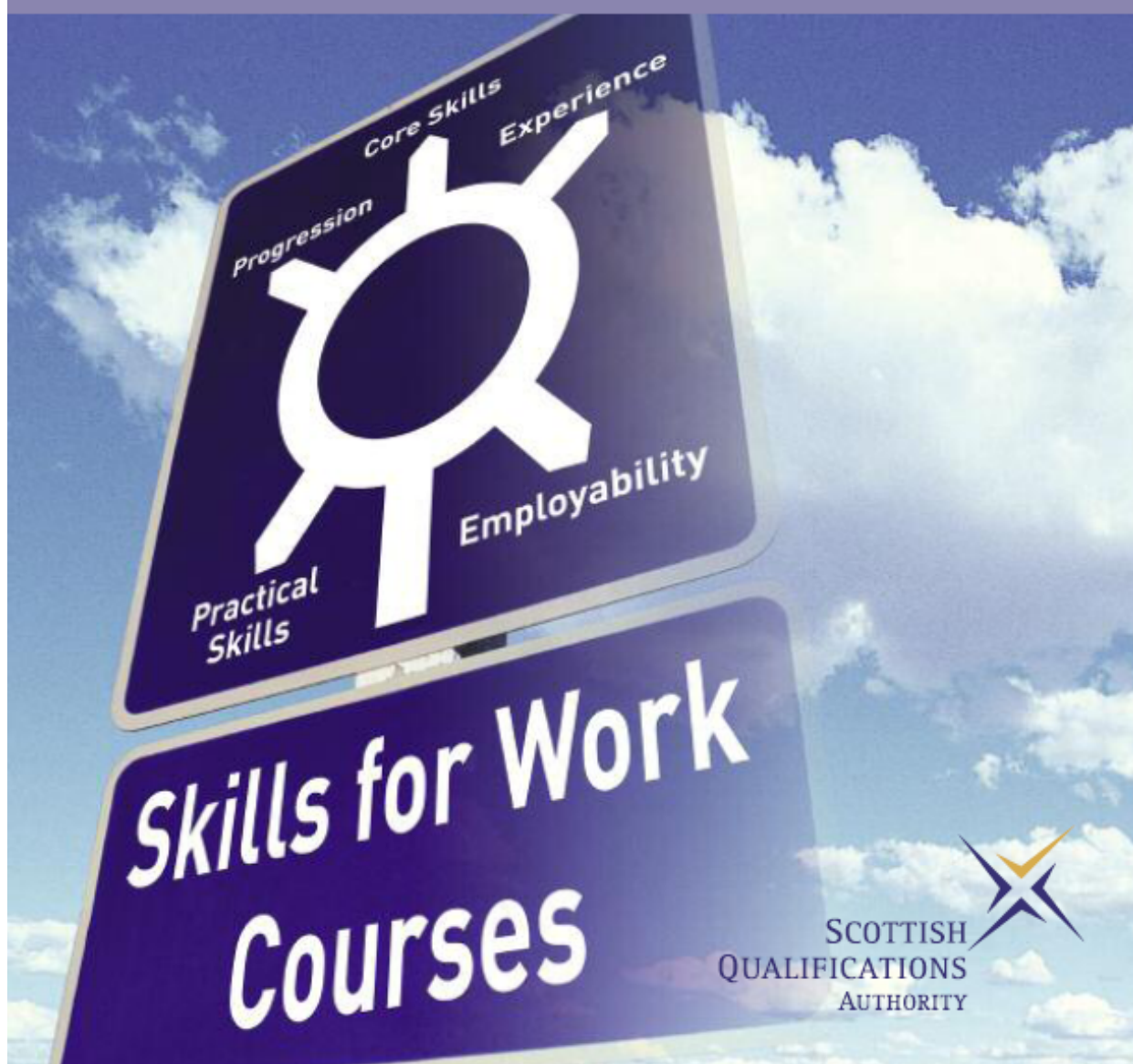


# Information Pack for Centres

December 2006

**NQ**  
NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS



SCOTTISH  
QUALIFICATIONS  
AUTHORITY

## Skills for Work Courses — 2007/8

### Information Pack for centres - contents

This pack contains information on the thirteen Skills for Work Courses, which will be available to all centres to offer in session 2007/8, subject to SQA's normal approval processes. The information will assist centres new to Skills for Work, as well as those centres who have been participating in the Skills for Work pilot, with their planning.

The pack includes:

- ◆ an introduction to Skills for Work Courses and an overview of developments, including information on planned revisions to the first five Courses implemented in 2005/6
- ◆ the rationale for Skills for Work Courses
- ◆ information on each of the Skills for Work Courses available in session 2007/8
- ◆ information on support materials available for Skills for Work Courses
- ◆ guidance on SQA's approval process
- ◆ transition guidance for pilot centres
- ◆ information for parents which centres may wish to use

A separate package with detailed information on each of the thirteen Skills for Work Courses is included with this pack.

This information pack will also be available on the Skills for Work pages of SQA's website [www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork](http://www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork)

For further information, please contact the Skills for Work e-mail address at - [skillsforwork@sqa.org.uk](mailto:skillsforwork@sqa.org.uk)

## Skills for Work Courses

### Introduction and overview of development

It has been recognised for some time that there is a need for new vocational Courses for young people in the 14-16 age group, which will give them the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills which will help to prepare them for the world of work. In November 2004, the Scottish Executive Report *A Curriculum for Excellence* called for 'more skills-for-work options for young people, robustly assessed, to help them to progress into further qualifications and work'.

Following on from this Report, five new Skills for Work Courses were developed and implemented in session 2005/6 with a number of centres accepted by the Scottish Executive Education Department to participate in a pilot programme and approved by SQA through its normal approval processes to offer the Courses. This pilot is being supported and evaluated to inform future development of Skills for Work Courses.

The first five Courses developed are listed below:

◆ Construction Crafts	Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
◆ Sport and Recreation	Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
◆ Early Education and Childcare	Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
◆ Early Education and Childcare	Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)
◆ Financial Services	Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)

A further five Courses were then developed and these have been implemented in the current session 2006/7, again as part of the pilot programme.

These are:

◆ Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering	Access 3 (SCQF level 3)
◆ Hairdressing	Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
◆ Rural Skills	Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4)
◆ Construction Crafts	Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)
◆ Sport and Recreation	Intermediate 2 (SCQF level 5)

In Skills for Work Courses, emphasis is placed throughout on two key features:

- ◆ developing the generic employability skills which employers value
- ◆ learning through practical experiences

The Courses are intended to provide progression pathways to further education, training and employment. Given the practical nature of the Courses, experiential learning in appropriate learning environments is an essential feature of each Course, although work placement is not essential.

The detailed rationale for Skills for Work Courses is enclosed.

## **Level and Structure of Courses**

It is the intention that, over a period of time, an appropriate range of these Courses will be developed and tailored to the needs of candidates at levels from Access 2 to Higher. Courses at Access 2 and 3 will normally consist of three 40 hour Units, while at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher the Courses will normally consist of four 40 hour Units.

Courses are awarded upon successful completion of the Units which make up the Course. Units are assessed internally by the centre delivering the Course and externally verified by SQA. There is no additional Course assessment and the Courses will not be graded. The added value in the Courses is focused on the development, assessment and recording of progress in agreed generic employability skills.

## **New Courses for session 2007/8**

Three new Courses are being developed for session 2007/8 and these are the first Courses to be developed outwith the pilot programme. These will be available to all centres, subject to SQA's normal approval processes, in session 2007/8. Further details about each of these Courses are included in this pack:

- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ◆ Hospitality            | Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4) |
| ◆ Engineering Skills     | Intermediate 1 (SCQF level 4) |
| ◆ Health and Social Care | Higher (SCQF level 6)         |

## **Revision of Pilot Courses**

The first five Courses implemented in 2005/6 have now been reviewed in the light of extensive feedback from pilot centres gathered from centre visits, support events and interviews carried out by SQA, HMIe and the National Foundation for Educational Research. Feedback on all five of the Courses has been very positive. Only minor changes are being made to four of the Courses for session 2007/8 and Early Education and Childcare at Intermediate 2 is undergoing more extensive revision. Further details about revisions to each of these Courses are included in this pack.

The five Courses implemented in 2006/7 will remain unchanged for 2007/8, but may be subject to revision in 2008/9, depending on stakeholder feedback.

## **Titles of Courses and Certification**

The term *Skills for Work* has been used to describe this development. However, when young people receive their certificates, the Courses will appear on the certificate in the same way as for any other National Course. Successful candidates will see Course titles such as 'Financial Services – Intermediate 2', 'Hairdressing – Intermediate 1' or 'Sport and Recreation – Intermediate 1' on their certificate.

## **Partnerships and reporting of attainment**

All of the Skills for Work Courses have been designed primarily for school learners from the third year of secondary education upwards and are mainly, but not exclusively, being delivered through partnerships between schools and colleges. At the planning stage, it is important that partnerships agree which partner will be responsible for delivering the Course and entering candidates. In this context it is important to note that the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) has confirmed the availability of Dual Reporting of Attainment for pupils certificated in **August 2007**.

In practical terms, this will mean that school pupils undertaking Course(s) delivered in partnership with a college (or other approved centre) will have their attainment in those Course(s) credited to their school - as well as to the actual delivering centre.

For example, if a school is about to embark on a one or two year Skills for Work Course in 2007/8 which is being delivered by a college partner or other approved centre, then the delivering partner will be responsible for:

- ◆ following SQA's normal approval process to offer the specific Course
- ◆ entering candidates and submitting their results

In the above example the school *will be credited with the attainment* and will **NOT** have to:

- ◆ seek approval from SQA
- ◆ enter candidates and submit results

## **Rationale for Skills for Work Courses**

Skills for Work Courses are designed to help candidates to develop:

- ◆ skills and knowledge in a broad vocational area
- ◆ Core Skills
- ◆ an understanding of the workplace
- ◆ positive attitudes to learning
- ◆ skills and attitudes for employability

A key feature of these Courses is the emphasis on *experiential learning*. This means learning through practical experience and learning by reflecting on experience.

### **Learning through practical experience**

- ◆ Teaching/learning programmes should include some or all of the following:
  - learning in real or simulated workplace settings
  - learning through role play activities in vocational contexts
  - carrying out case study work
  - planning and carrying out practical tasks and assignments

### **Learning through reflecting at all stages of the experience**

- ◆ Teaching/learning programmes should include some or all of the following:
  - preparing and planning for the experience
  - taking stock throughout the experience, reviewing and adapting as necessary
  - reflecting after the activity has been completed, evaluating and identifying learning points

The Skills for Work Courses are also designed to provide candidates with opportunities for developing *Core Skills* and enhancing skills and attitudes for *employability*.

## Core Skills

The five Core Skills are:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Numeracy
- ◆ Information Technology
- ◆ Problem Solving
- ◆ Working with Others

## *Employability*

The skills and attitudes for employability, including self-employment, are outlined below:

- ◆ *generic skills/attitudes valued by employers*
  - understanding of the workplace and the employee's responsibilities, for example time-keeping, appearance, customer care
  - self-evaluation skills
  - positive attitude to learning
  - flexible approaches to solving problems
  - adaptability and positive attitude to change
  - confidence to set goals, reflect and learn from experience
- ◆ *specific vocational skills/knowledge*
  - Course Specifications highlight the links to National Occupational Standards in the vocational area and identify progression opportunities

Opportunities for developing these skills and attitudes are highlighted in each of the Course and Unit Specifications. These opportunities include giving young people direct access to workplace experiences or, through partnership arrangements, providing different learning environments and experiences which simulate aspects of the workplace. These experiences might include visits, visiting speakers, role play and other practical activities.

*A Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive 2004) identifies aspirations for every young person. These are that they should become:

- ◆ successful learners
- ◆ confident individuals
- ◆ responsible citizens
- ◆ effective contributors

The learning environments, the focus on experiential learning and the opportunities to develop employability and Core Skills in these Courses contribute to meeting these aspirations.

## Skills for Work Courses — 2007/8

In 2007/8, thirteen Skills for Work Courses will be available to all centres to offer, subject to SQA's normal approval processes. These are:

◆ Construction Crafts	Intermediate 1 ( <i>Revised</i> )	SCQF level 4
◆ Sport and Recreation	Intermediate 1 ( <i>Revised</i> )	SCQF level 4
◆ Early Education and Childcare	Intermediate 1 ( <i>Revised</i> )	SCQF level 4
◆ Early Education and Childcare	Intermediate 2 ( <i>Revised</i> )	SCQF level 5
◆ Financial Services	Intermediate 2 ( <i>Revised</i> )	SCQF level 5
◆ Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering	Access 3	SCQF level 3
◆ Hairdressing	Intermediate 1	SCQF level 4
◆ Rural Skills	Intermediate 1	SCQF level 4
◆ Construction Crafts	Intermediate 2	SCQF level 5
◆ Sport and Recreation	Intermediate 2	SCQF level 5
◆ Engineering Skills	Intermediate 1 ( <i>New</i> )	SCQF level 4
◆ Hospitality	Intermediate 1 ( <i>New</i> )	SCQF level 4
◆ Health and Social Care	Higher ( <i>New</i> )	SCQF level 6

Codes for all of the above Courses will be available on SQA's website in April 2007.

## **Skills for Work Courses — information and support materials for centres**

Centres planning to offer Skills for Work Courses in 2007/8 will have access to the following information and support materials:

- ◆ an update letter will be sent to all centres early in 2007
- ◆ all Skills for Work Course and Unit Specifications will be published on SQA's website in April 2007; centres will be notified when this takes place
- ◆ National Assessment Bank items (NABs) will be produced for each Unit; the first of these for each Course will be published on SQA's secure website in April 2007 and all NABs will be available by August 2007
- ◆ learning and teaching resource packs will be available for each Unit and there will be a Course pack for each Course which focuses on Course induction and employability skills; these packs are being produced by the Scottish Further Education Unit (SFEU) and will be available to download from the SFEU and the Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) websites; the first of these will be available in April 2007 and all packs will be available by August 2007
- ◆ launch events are being planned for April/May 2007 to support centres which are implementing the three Courses which are new for 2007/8 - Engineering Skills (Intermediate 1), Hospitality (Intermediate 1) and Health and Social Care (Higher). Details will be provided in the update letter early in 2007
- ◆ Skills for Work information update events are also being planned for April/May 2007; these will be primarily designed to update Authorities and partnerships who have participated in the pilot and to support them in making the transition from pilot to mainstream conditions. Details will be provided in the update letter early in 2007
- ◆ specific transition guidance for pilot centres will be issued by Qualifications Managers for each Course

Centres will also have access to information on SQA's website [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) and advice from the following key contacts:

### **General enquiries**

General enquiries should be directed to SQA's Customer Contact Centre on 0845 279 1000 or e-mail at [customer@sqa.org.uk](mailto:customer@sqa.org.uk)

### **Subject/Course specific enquiries**

Subject enquiries should be directed to the appropriate Qualifications Manager for each subject. Contact details for all SQA's Qualifications Managers are available on the subject pages of SQA's website [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

### **Approval related enquiries**

Approval enquiries should be directed to the Approvals Section on 0845 213 5351

### **Skills for Work pilot enquiries**

Enquiries related to the Skills for Work pilot should be directed to Donald Paterson in the National Qualifications Product Development team on 0845 213 5562 or e-mail at [donald.paterson@sqa.org.uk](mailto:donald.paterson@sqa.org.uk)

## Skills for Work Courses — SQA Approval

Skills for Work Courses are not on SQA's 'automatically approved' list of qualifications. Therefore centres must seek approval before offering these Courses for the first time.

All centres wishing to offer Skills for Work Courses for the first time in session 2007/8 will require to be approved to offer the specific Courses which they plan to offer. SQA's Customer Support Managers and staff within the Approvals section will provide support with this process where required.

Approval must be sought for *each* Course which the centre plans to offer, including each level of a Course as resources, equipment, accommodation and staff qualifications/experience required may be different at each level.

Centres will be required to follow SQA's normal approval processes and show that they meet the approval criteria to offer the Course(s).

Where centres have devolved authority for approval they can follow their own internal approval procedures in relation to these Courses and advise SQA of the outcome. Centres who do not have devolved authority for approval must complete an application for approval to offer a specific qualification, Form SA1(2).

For **approval to offer specific qualifications** SQA must be sure that you have made provision for the following in respect of the qualifications that you will be delivering:

- ◆ staff with appropriate experience/qualifications
- ◆ equipment/resources
- ◆ accommodation
- ◆ learning materials
- ◆ assessment materials
- ◆ internal systems to meet SQA's quality requirements

Centres can visit the Approval section on our website [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk) or contact the Approvals team on 0845 213 5351 for more information about the approval process.

## **Skills for Work Courses — transition from pilot to mainstream**

Those centres who have been involved in the Skills for Work pilot during 2005/6 and/or 2006/7, should be aware of the transition from the pilot phase to the mainstream availability of Skills for Work Courses. There are two issues in particular concerning this transition that pilot centres should consider:

1. the ongoing role of the pilot agreements during 2007/8 for certain candidate groups and centre responsibilities under those agreements
2. the effect of any amendments being made to Units and Courses that have been delivered during the pilot

### **1. Pilot Agreement**

Candidate groups which began their Skills for Work Courses during session 2006/7 and will complete their Courses in session 2007/8 will still fall under the terms of the Pilot Agreement between the Local Education Authority/independent centres and the Scottish Executive.

Under the terms of the Pilot Agreement, Local Authorities have responsibility for ensuring, through their partnership agreements with colleges or other partners, that certain requirements are met. These requirements include, for example:

- ◆ provision of appropriate and comprehensive selection and induction programmes
- ◆ participation of students, parents and carers and teachers/lecturers in ongoing feedback and final evaluation of pilot
- ◆ HMIE evaluation visits to centres throughout the pilot with a focus on guidance and support and student progress
- ◆ participation of centre staff in support meetings and support visits organised by SQA
- ◆ provision of statistics on candidate numbers, leavers, entries, results, etc, by specified dates

(To see the full list of roles and responsibilities covered by the Pilot Agreement, centres should consult Appendix 2 of *Operational Guidance for all Skills for Work Pilot Centres in session 06/07*, a copy of which can be found on the Skills for Work pages of SQA's website – [www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork](http://www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork)).

The Pilot Agreement **will not** apply to the delivery of Courses to any candidates entered for Skills for Work Courses after August 2007.

## **2. Revision of Phase 1 Courses/Units**

The five Phase 1 pilot Courses listed below are being revised for session 2007/8:

- ◆ Construction Crafts (Intermediate 1)
- ◆ Sport and Recreation (Intermediate 1)
- ◆ Early Education and Childcare (Intermediate 1)
- ◆ Early Education and Childcare (Intermediate 2)
- ◆ Financial Services (Intermediate 2)

Centres should ensure that they are using the revised versions of the Phase 1 Course and Unit Specifications, National Assessment Bank (NAB) items and SFEU Support Packs for all new candidates from session 2007/8 onwards.

Centres should follow the specific transition guidance which will be issued by SQA at the time the revised Courses and Units are made available in April 2007. Centres with candidates who have completed part of a Skills for Work Course at the time revised Courses and Units become available should take particular care to check if they are allowed to transfer to the new Unit(s) part way through the Course or if they must complete the Course using the old versions of the Unit(s).

NB: Further information on the revisions to Phase 1 Courses can be found in the Course information sheets included with this pack.

## **Skills for Work Courses — a new opportunity**

### **Information for Parents**

#### ***What are Skills for Work Courses?***

Skills for Work Courses are new Courses which are vocational and practical in nature and which are aimed at learners from third year in secondary education upwards.

The Courses are designed to help learners to develop:

- ◆ skills and attitudes which will enhance employability
- ◆ an understanding of the workplace
- ◆ positive attitudes to learning
- ◆ the Core Skills valued by employers – communication, numeracy, working with others, information technology and problem solving
- ◆ skills and knowledge in a particular vocational area

#### ***Why are these Courses being introduced?***

Consultation with a wide range of people involved in Scottish Education has confirmed that there is a need for these new Courses which encourage young people to develop important knowledge and skills for the world of work and life, through practical experiences linked to particular occupational areas. All young people need to be equipped with an understanding of the realities of the workplace whether they are planning to continue with their studies in Further/Higher Education or go straight into employment.

Skills for Work Courses help to broaden the young person's experience and help them to make informed choices whatever career path they eventually choose. These Courses are mainly being delivered through partnerships between schools and Further Education colleges and this partnership approach gives young people the opportunity of learning in a different environment outside school.

### ***What skills will young people develop on these Courses?***

By taking a Skills for Work Course, young people will acquire practical skills and develop knowledge and understanding in the particular occupational area which is the focus of the Course. They will also develop the general employability skills and attitudes which are valued by employers and are needed in order to be successful in the workplace.

### ***What is meant by 'employability'?***

Employability is a term used to refer to the general skills and attitudes which employers value in an employee. Developing these skills and attitudes is an important feature of the new Courses. Examples of these skills and attitudes are:

- ◆ understanding of the workplace and the employee's responsibilities, for example time-keeping, appearance, customer care
- ◆ self-evaluation skills
- ◆ positive attitude to learning
- ◆ flexible approaches to solving problems
- ◆ adaptability and positive attitude to change
- ◆ confidence to set goals, reflect and learn from experience

### ***How will the Courses be assessed?***

The aim is to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge and skills from each of the areas covered by the Course. To do this, achievement will be assessed at key points throughout the Course and learners will be actively involved in both the learning and assessment processes. The assessment will involve a variety of approaches including gathering folios of evidence, personal records, activity checklists and short tests. To gain a Course award, learners will be required to successfully complete all of the Units which make up the Course. In line with many vocational qualifications, these Courses will not be graded and will therefore not require a final Course exam.

### ***How will the Courses be certificated?***

When learners receive their certificates from SQA, the Courses will appear on the certificate in the same way as for any other Course. For example, someone who completes a Skills for Work Course successfully will see the title and the level (eg Financial Services - Intermediate 2, Hairdressing - Intermediate 1, or Sport and Recreation - Intermediate 1) on their certificate.

### ***What Courses are available?***

The Courses available to schools, colleges and other partners, providing they meet SQA's requirements in terms of staff qualifications/experience, accommodation and resources, are:

◆ Construction Crafts	Intermediate 1 and 2
◆ Early Education and Childcare	Intermediate 1 and 2
◆ Engineering Skills	Intermediate 1
◆ Financial Services	Intermediate 2
◆ Hairdressing	Intermediate 1
◆ Health and Social Care	Higher
◆ Hospitality	Intermediate 1
◆ Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering	Access 3
◆ Rural Skills	Intermediate 1
◆ Sport and Recreation	Intermediate 1 and 2

Schools, colleges and other partners involved will be able to provide details of the particular Skills for Work Courses from the above list which they are offering in 2007/8. The intention is to develop more Skills for Work Courses in different vocational areas from Access 2 to Higher over the next three to five years.

### ***Where can I find more information on the content of the Courses?***

Your school/college will have information on the structure, content and progression opportunities relevant to each Course. This will help when Course choices are being made. You may also wish to visit SQA's website where you will find out more about Skills for Work Courses at [www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork](http://www.sqa.org.uk/skillsforwork)