

Skills for Work Courses

A New Opportunity for Young People

In my article in the last issue of *Broadcast*, I spoke about the new Skills for Work National Courses being piloted in the following areas:

Title	Level
Construction Crafts	Intermediate 1
Early Education and Childcare	Intermediate 1 and 2
Financial Services	Intermediate 2
Sport and Recreation	Intermediate 1

There has been a very positive response to the development of these Courses and interest in the pilot programme has been even greater than might have been anticipated. 21 local authorities, 29 colleges, 145 schools and around 1,500 young people are participating in the first year of the pilot. The Courses are mainly being delivered through partnerships between schools and colleges, although there are some other types of partnerships involved in the pilot programme. Most of the young people taking part are in S3 and S4 and will complete their Course by 2007, although a small number of learners should complete their Course in 2006.

The Courses are intended to provide pathways to employment, training or further education. They involve a strong element of learning through involvement in practical activities which are directly related to a vocational area. However, they also place a strong emphasis on those general 'skills for employment' which are valued by employers and which should provide a better understanding of what is expected of young people when they move into the workplace.

The pilot will give centres delivering the Courses the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences to the Scottish Executive and SQA. This invaluable information, from both learners participating in the Courses and staff delivering and managing the Courses, will help in the development of future Skills for Work Courses.

Next stage of the pilot

The development of Courses for the next phase of the pilot is now well underway. The following new Courses will be launched in May 2006 for implementation in August 2006:

Title	Level
Practical Experiences: Construction and Engineering	Access 3
Rural Skills	Intermediate 1

Hairdressing
Construction Crafts
Sport and Recreation

Intermediate 1
Intermediate 2
Intermediate 2

SQA held an information event on 15 December 2005 for local authorities and colleges interested in offering these Courses. This event was attended by delegates from 21 local authorities and 26 colleges, as well as representatives from SQA, SFEU, SEED and LTS.

Delegates were given information about progress with the implementation of the first year of the pilot and the proposed structure for the new Courses. Delegates also had an opportunity to discuss issues about the pilot and to provide feedback useful to SQA and our partners.

Future Developments

It is intended that, over a period of time, more of these Courses will be developed in relevant vocational areas, 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 in total, while at Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher the Courses will normally consist of four 40 hour Units in total.

Courses will be awarded on successful completion of the Units which make up the Course. There will be no additional Course assessment and so the Courses will not be graded.

Titles of Courses and Certification

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

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