

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	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