

A woman with her hair in a ponytail and a man are standing in a workshop, looking at a clipboard together. They are both wearing dark polo shirts. The background shows industrial equipment and a computer monitor.

SKILLS
WORK4

VET & BUSINESS
PARTNERSHIP

Work-Based Learning

Compilation of Draft Booklets developed by CDETB

- Employer Engagement
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Developing Learner Soft Skills
- Completing the Work Experience Supervisors Report
- Externships for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers

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www.skills4workproject.eu

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An Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúnaíochtaí Éireannacha
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Erasmus+

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Introduction and background to the project

The VET mission is to support learners in acquiring knowledge, skills and competences to successfully enter the world of work. Therefore work experience is a fundamental aspect of vocational training across Europe.

The Skills 4 Work project is funded by the Irish National Agency (Leargas) under the new Erasmus + Programme.

The Skills4Work project aims to improve work experience pathways for VET students by creating and validating a Work Based Learning (WBL) implementation model engaging VET organisations and business. The emphasis is on learning from each other's experience and engaging in a real dialogue with employers by developing the model in close collaboration with local enterprises. Through practical implementation of different work based learning approaches and feedback from enterprises, the project will develop hands-on implementation guidelines that will improve significantly the quality of work experience for both the VET students and enterprises in partner countries. The project will benefit VET teachers by creating continuing professional development (CPD) materials and transnational transfer of good practice through joint peer learning events organised as part of the CPD.

Project objectives:

- To learn about existing work experience programmes in partner countries through practical study visits organised for VET teachers as part of the CPD strategy. To foster mutual learning between project partners.
- To set up a VET & Employers Working Groups in each partner country to collaborate together on developing and validating WBL implementation model and engaging in a dialogue on meaningful work experience practices.
- To develop WBL implementation guidelines for VET.
- To develop CPD materials for VET teachers.
- To extend employer participation in work-based learning practices across partner countries.
- To disseminate project outcomes across EU Member States.

The focus of the project is on practical exercises in Ireland, Slovenia, Germany and the UK that evaluate the effectiveness of different WBL models and engage in collaboration with local enterprises. Based on that the following three outcomes aimed at VET providers, teachers and students as well as employers across EU include:

1. WBL implementation model for VET
2. CPD materials for VET teachers
3. VET – Business Partnership

Further information about the project and its outcomes can be found at www.skills4workproject.eu

Background to this resource

This booklet is one of the outcomes of the Skills4Work project and is a compilation of five booklets developed by CDETБ to capture some of the learning gained during the project and to support and contribute to a quality model of WBL. The booklets were developed following several stages of project activity which involved:

- CDETБ VET teachers taking part in Skills4Work study visits and completing learning logs from the visits to partner organisations to identify effective and proved CPD approaches and practices in the field of work experience
- Reviewing and analysing three main WBL models in Europe: apprenticeships, on-the-job training periods in companies and WBL integrated in a school-based programme
- Setting up and managing the work of a VET & Employers Working Group in Ireland
- Engaging in a process to identify the key principles underpinning a quality WBL model
- Contributing to the development of a WBL implementation model and developing tools, resources and approaches to support the model
- Engaging in a process of consultation, development and piloting

It is anticipated that the booklets will be added to over time and currently includes:

1. Employer Engagement
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Developing Learner Soft Skills
4. Completing the Work Experience Supervisors Report
5. Externships for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers

The booklets remain in draft format and will continue to go through a process of review, modification and localisation over the coming months so that the information and approaches are fit for purpose and contribute to a quality model of WBL.

The CDETБ Skills4Work project team would like to acknowledge the huge learning facilitated by all of the project partners on WBL and to the following CDETБ colleges and centres who participated in the project.

- CDETБ Curriculum Development Unit
- Further Education Support Service (FESS)
- Finglas Training Centre
- Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education
- Ballsbridge College of Further Education
- St Kevins College
- Cabra Community College

Section 1: Work Based Learning: Employer Engagement

Introduction

Colleges and training centres have an important part to play in preparing learners for future careers in the world of work and in helping them to acquire general life skills. At present the market place for graduates is dependent upon the economic environment and the skills, knowledge and competencies of the graduate to adapt to this ever changing climate.

As we have learnt from the recent recession employment for life, (or a job for life) is no longer a reality so colleges and training centres need to help their learners develop transferable skillsets so that they are able to adapt to changing working environments.

Meeting the needs of employers and learners can be achieved by ensuring that learners who graduate have achieved the required standard and understanding of their chosen career area with the relevant skills, knowledge and competencies to gain employment. Therefore engagement and constructive relationships between providers and employers must be encouraged, supported and reviewed regularly to ensure that this is achieved.

European Study Visits - Insights and Examples

In 2015 and 2016 teachers and management engaged in a number of Erasmus+ study visits to learn about work based learning. It was clear from discussions and observations that collaboration between employers and Further Education Colleges and Training Centres has increased and relationships are being built on. This is being driven by the demand for relevant skills in each of the employment sectors.

Outlined below are a small sample of insights and examples of practice captured while on the study visits. These demonstrate how some European education providers interact with and manage their relationship with employers.

The practices are based on reasonable and realistic expectations which encourage all parties involved to build long-lasting relationships.

Contact with Business / Employers

Within each of the education institutions visited as part of the study visits there was a contact person or a dedicated staff member responsible for relationships with business and business organisations whose duties included:

- Identifying a contact point / person with the employer and business organisation to facilitate engagement
- Understanding employer activities and their key business objectives
- Informing employers about what is happening in colleges and centres to help them understand and appreciate the aims of programmes and training courses. This was achieved through invitations to employers and employer organisations to attend recruitment interviews, open days / evenings and host business meetings
- Providing contacts between the employer / business and lecturer / instructor to facilitate updating each other on areas such as facilities, equipment and curriculum change etc.
- Developing a strategy for reviewing and expanding databases and allowing for the inclusion of new businesses.

Meeting Employer Needs - Expectations in Relation to Programmes

Examples of approaches helping to meet employer's needs and expectations in relation to courses/programmes on offer included:

- Where employers or business organisations have been directly involved in the design of a programme their commitment to supporting that program and learners is usually greater

- Involvement with employers and business organisations facilitates colleges and centres to identify skills gaps which can be integrated into a learners programme
- Consideration is given to including additional training identified / required by employees e.g. a unit of learning that would be additional to the requirement of a programme / curriculum
- Through contact with business, education providers gain a better understanding of the standard that employers require learners to achieve
- In the changing jobs market where new skills and knowledge are required it is important that teaching staff have the necessary understanding of what is required of learners to gain employment in specific vocational areas. Interacting with employers and employer groups provides opportunities for teachers, tutors and trainers to update their own knowledge
- Making programmes more relevant can be supported by including:
 - ▶ current market statistics
 - ▶ linking training to employability
 - ▶ involving employers with the delivery of work related aspects of programmes and course activities
 - ▶ demonstrating the positive impact that courses can have upon business.

Supporting Employer Engagement

In summary some key approaches and factors to consider regarding employer engagement include:

- Establishing links with employers and businesses by identifying a single point of contact to co-ordinate engagement between bodies
- Identifying the areas where business organisations and employers can participate / cooperate
- Linking training standards to employer expectations
- Creating a mechanism for feedback from employers.

Other factors to consider

- Funding: it takes more time and more staffing than anyone would like to pay for
- Employer coordinators report that they need more time and staff to do the range of different tasks related to employer engagement
- It can be difficult to engage smaller business to participate
- Convincing prospective partners of the benefits of a partnership can be challenging
- Developing trust between the education and training provider and employers takes time and effort
- There can be challenging practicalities involved in introducing modules / units required by employers into courses due to lack of time, facilities, equipment and staff skills (resource limitations)
- The over involvement of some employer and business organisations (bodies insisting that their requirements are priority) and excluding the needs of other smaller bodies
- Education and training providers need to create meaningful opportunities for partnership bodies so that they can provide inputs into programme development and programme delivery
- Education and training providers need to create opportunities for staff to maintain current industry and business knowledge, skills and experience
- Strategies need to be put in place to meet learner's basic skills shortfalls
- Education and training providers need to demonstrate the advantages and value of their institution to employers
- Engagement with employers and business can only occur through a common interest and benefit to all bodies therefore a contact point must be established between employers and business contacts must be encouraged and maintained.

Section 2: Work Based Learning: Roles & Responsibilities

Introduction

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector provides learners with the skills, knowledge and competencies to access employment and / or higher education.

A fundamental aspect of the VET sector is work based learning (WBL), which provides learners with the opportunity to:

- Apply the skills, knowledge and competencies gained in the academic setting within a workplace environment
- Enhance academic knowledge by gaining valuable practical skills in a professional environment
- Develop personal and interpersonal skills relevant to their chosen field of study
- Develop an understanding of their chosen organisation / industry and enhance their employability.

This section aims to provide clarity and suggestions around the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in work based learning (WBL) i.e.

- the college/centre
- the employer
- the learner.

Suggested Roles and Responsibilities of the College / Centre

- Proactively communicate with employers on a range of issues e.g. the timing of WBL, background to the college / centre and its courses / learners, progress of learner during WBL etc.
- Outline to employers what skills, knowledge and competencies learners have already gained
- Provide employers with a selection of desirable learning outcomes on completion of WBL
- Provide the contact details of a liaison within the college / centre for WBL feedback and to address any challenges that may arise during WBL
- Provide the employer with all relevant information and support documentation required prior to WBL
- Maintain a database of any / all contact between the college / centre and the employer to facilitate a mutually rewarding and tailored experience for all participants
- Provide evidence of adequate insurance cover for the learner whilst on WBL
- Prepare the learner for WBL by outlining
 - the nature and demands of the WBL environment
 - the expectations of employers in relation to professionalism and appropriate standards of behaviour in the workplace
- Facilitate the learner in acquiring any additional certification that may be required by the employer for WBL e.g. Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Garda Vetting etc.
- Support the learner in securing, completing and reflecting on a positive WBL experience.

Suggested Roles and Responsibilities of the Employer

- Provide meaningful work based learning relevant to the learner's course of study
- Provide the learner with the opportunity to apply college / centre based learning within the business environment and complete any learning objectives that may have been set
- Assign the learner a supervisor / mentor to provide initial induction, professional support, guidance, direction and constructive feedback on his / her performance whilst on WBL
- Provide the college / centre with the contact details of the learner's supervisor / mentor for the duration of WBL
- Communicate to the college / centre any specific skills, knowledge or competencies that the learner should bring to the WBL environment, in addition to any specific features of the placement e.g. the requirement to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Advise the college of the main activities in which the student will be engaged
- Provide adequate information, materials, personnel and facilities that may be required by the learner whilst on WBL
- Provide equal opportunities for all learners to fully participate in and benefit from WBL
- Ensure the safety, health and welfare of learners whilst on WBL
- Inform the learner of any / all relevant confidentiality, data protection and other applicable rules, regulations, procedures and directives that will apply during WBL
- Advise the college / centre of any issues that may arise during the WBL period
- Return all relevant WBL documentation to the learner / college / centre as required.

Suggested Role and Responsibilities of the Learner

- Secure a WBL placement relevant to their course of study, with support from the college / centre
- Provide the employer with all required documentation / certification prior to commencement of WBL
- Fully participate in the WBL environment, including the undertaking of all reasonable tasks requested by the WBL employer
- Maintain a regular attendance schedule, to be agreed with the employer prior to WBL commencement
- Discharge all WBL duties in a professional, timely, honest, courteous, proactive and collegial manner at all times
- Fully comply with all Health, Safety & Welfare at Work requirements of the organisation whilst on WBL
- Fully comply with any confidentiality, data protection and other applicable rules, regulations, procedures and directives of the WBL employer
- Immediately inform the WBL employer and college / centre if unable to attend the WBL organisation for any reason
- Return all relevant WBL documentation to the college / centre upon completion of WBL
- Maintain a record of reflection on action for the WBL e.g. WBL log / diary
- On WBL conclusion complete all outstanding assessment documentation as directed by the college / centre.

Section 3: Work Based Learning: Developing Learner Soft Skills

Introduction

Work experience / work placements provide learners with first hand experiential learning and are typically a period of time spent in an organisation with the objective of learning and developing from the experience. The learner develops an understanding of workplace practices, and connects these practices with what they do in the classroom so that they are better prepared for current, emerging and future career opportunities and meeting employer / industry needs.

Work Experience / work placements are important because they help learners to see the value that employers place on different types of skills sets. Employment skills are usually divided into two groups of skills; hard skills and soft skills.

Hard skills are the technical abilities that apply directly to a specific role e.g. using a computer programme, proficiency in a foreign language, data analysis etc. Employers want to hire professionals who have technical skill sets, but they also place high importance on employing people who are a good fit for a team and the company.

Soft Skills help to build positive working interactions with others and can influence perceptions of each other. They include: good personal qualities and attributes; work ethic and habits; attitudes and social manners.

People with good soft skills can for example, engage in effective communication and listening skills, they have the ability to make decisions and solve problems, they provide good customer service, collaborate well in teams and they can plan, organize, and prioritize work.

Soft Skills are an important part of what learners develop during their course and while on work experience / work placement.

Purpose of Soft Skills

Soft Skills help learners to get on with or adapt to work or personal life situations. At work soft skills can influence and impact on interactions with supervisors, co-workers, customers and clients.

Soft Skills can always be developed or improved and learners need to be aware of and reminded that they are responsible for how they behave, their actions, and attitudes etc. during work experience / work placements.

What Employers have to day about Soft Skills

A group of teachers and trainers participated in an externship programme with a company / organisation in early 2016 as part of the Skills4Work project.

During the externship each asked the following question:

- Does your company / organisation expect young people to possess soft skills and if so, what skills are they expected to have?

The soft skills identified below give an insight into two companies and the wide ranging soft skills identified as important by them.

Company 1 – Financial Services

Soft skills identified by different departments:

- Asset Administration section: Time management, organisational skills, outgoing personality, proactivity, confident telephone manner, willingness to ask questions
- Client Management section: Persistence, self-management, flexibility, innovativeness, initiative, assertiveness, excellent people skills
- Reporting section: Outgoing team player, ability to work with others, willingness to ask a lot of questions, initiative, ability to give own opinion
- Investment section: Strong work ethic, ability to work as part of a team, common sense
- Marketing section: Communication skills critical, excellent document composition / editing skills
- Property section: Ability to communicate clearly: correctly (spelling & grammar) and professionally, persuasive manner

Company 2 – Construction

Soft skills identified:

- No room for messing and all students / employees have to follow instructions and take personal responsibility for themselves as a construction site is a very dangerous place.
- It is also important that everyone that is permitted on site follows Health & Safety, including wearing the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Employees need to be keen to learn and ready to pick up brand new information, be able to communicate and share their knowledge with others around them and be a good team player.
- They need to be interested in innovation.

Supporting Soft Skills Development

Teachers, tutors and trainers can support learners to develop or improve their soft skills before, during and after work experience / work placements.

Below are some examples of activities to support each stage.

Before Work Experience / Work Placement

Examples of activities:

- The teacher, tutor, trainer identifies with learners a wide range of soft skill types and explanations / descriptions prior to going out on work experience / work placement.

See - Work Experience / Work Placement Assessment Criteria. This is an extract from section 4 of this booklet entitled 'Work Based Learning: Completing the Work Experience Supervisors' Report. This resource provides the headings / criteria that supervisors use when rating learners for CDETBs Programme Module Leading to QQI Level 5 Work Experience (5N1356). Listed underneath each criterion are possible examples of practice. The resource is useful as it provide useful examples of many of the essential soft skills that learners need

- The teacher, tutor, trainer invites learners to keep a soft skill journal where learners keep a note of soft skills and situations where they use soft skills both effectively and ineffectively. See Sample- Learner Soft Skills Journal
- The teacher, tutor, trainer invites learners to identify the soft skills they aspire to develop or improve while on work experience / work placement and to complete an action plan. See Sample - Learner Soft Skills Action Plan.

During Work Experience / Placement

Examples of activities:

- The completed Learner Soft Skills Action Plan (See sample) is shared with the work experience / work placement supervisor / mentor at the start of the work placement. Supervisors / mentors are invited to support learners with the development of some or all of the soft skills as appropriate but are also invited to provide feedback on progress
- During the work experience / work placement learners are invited to keep a log / diary to record their soft skill experiences etc. See Sample - Learner Soft Skills Reflective Log

This reflective log can be used as an aid to compliment any work experience log / diary that needs to be maintained as part of a course e.g. CDETB Programme Module Leading to QQI Level 5 Work Experience (5N1356).

After Work Experience / Placement

Examples of activities:

- When learners return from their work experience / work placements they are invited to reflect on the overall experience and identify how their soft skills have improved / developed from the beginning of the placement through to completion of the placement. See Sample - Learner Soft Skills - Evaluation.

Work Experience / Work Placement Assessment Criteria

The list below covers many of the personal skills that learners should be able to demonstrate when on work experience / work placement. More information about these skills can be found in section 4 of this booklet.

1. Observation of good timekeeping e.g.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arrives on time for work placement ■ Resumes work promptly when returning from lunch and coffee breaks ■ Completes the required number of hours per working day, as agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gets promptly down to task when arrive at the placement ■ Carries out tasks in time efficient manner ■ Notifies the site if you need to be absent
2. Working independently while under general direction e.g.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Listens to and carefully follows directions regarding tasks to be completed ■ Seeks clarity appropriately when needed e.g. ask relevant questions ■ Adheres to instructions while completing tasks ■ Completes the tasks assigned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proactive – seeks new/additional work once assigned tasks are completed ■ Seeks help from appropriate person/s when needed ■ Seeks feedback
3. Meeting deadlines e.g.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agrees manageable deadlines ■ Maintains the agreed upon work schedule ■ Seeks clarity on what needs to be achieved and by when ■ Seeks extensions on deadlines, if legitimately required ■ Stays on task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Puts in extra time/effort to complete task/s, if needed ■ Flexible approach to work tasks ■ Ability to multi-task ■ Ability to adapt to changing needs and demands
4. Personal presentation e.g.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appropriately dressed for work e.g. uniform, protective clothing & shoes, clean & professional clothes, skirt, suit ■ Meets relevant hygiene standards e.g. cleanliness, tidy hair, clean hand and nails, fresh breath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appropriate posture for work, where relevant ■ No chewing gum or eating during work tasks
5. Adherence to health, safety and other relevant regulations e.g.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Knowledge of relevant regulations ■ Knowledge of reporting requirements ■ Appropriate reporting where needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dresses appropriately e.g. non-slip soles, hard-hat, low heels, etc. ■ Safe & hygienic practices and routines e.g. hand washing ■ Safe operating of machinery and equipment

6. Demonstrate effective personal communication skills

- Confidence
- Enthusiasm
- Positive attitude
- Proactive
- Demonstrates initiative
- Awareness of roles
- Polite, mannerly & pleasant communication
- Organises thoughts appropriately
- Willing to relate to others differently
- Self-awareness
- Sensitive to and respectful of others
- Critical thinking
- Motivated
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to take personal responsibility

7. Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills e.g.

- Verbal Communication
 - ▶ Speaks appropriately for different audiences e.g. formal, informal, appropriate topic
 - ▶ Uses appropriate voice quality and tone
 - ▶ Uses appropriate and relevant language
 - ▶ Clear and concise when speaking
 - ▶ Takes initiative when speaking
 - ▶ Effective participation in discussions in different situations e.g. meetings, break-times
 - ▶ Effective listening: show interest, avoid distractions and unnecessary interruptions
 - ▶ Shows empathy
 - ▶ Listens effectively to instructions
 - ▶ Provides feedback effectively
 - ▶ Receives feedback in positive manner
- Non-verbal communication
 - ▶ Uses appropriate body language, posture, movement
- Written communication
 - ▶ Plans writing tasks
 - ▶ Uses appropriate language
 - ▶ Checks for spelling, grammar errors, etc.
 - ▶ Rereads before sending/presenting to supervisor
 - ▶ Appropriate written communication for audience

8. Demonstrate effective technological communication skills e.g.

- Uses appropriate technology for assigned tasks e.g. fax, e-mail, SMS
- Uses technological software related to the vocational area e.g. e-mail, SMS, Skype, appointment systems, online record cards, clocking in and out
- No use of personal technology devices in work time, e.g. mobile phone for social media, SMS, etc.

Sample Learner Soft Skills – Journal

Learners Name:		College, Centre Name:	
Name of Organisation / Company:		Workplace Supervisors Name:	

To be completed by the Learner:

Date	<i>Identify a situation where you used a soft skill either effectively or ineffectively.</i>	<i>What led to this and what happened after?</i>

Date	<i>Identify a situation where you used a soft skill either effectively or ineffectively.</i>	<i>What led to this and what happened after?</i>

Date	<i>Identify a situation where you used a soft skill either effectively or ineffectively.</i>	<i>What led to this and what happened after?</i>

Date	<i>Identify a situation where you used a soft skill either effectively or ineffectively.</i>	<i>What led to this and what happened after?</i>

Learner's signature:

Date:

Tutors signature:

Date:

Sample Learner Soft Skills - Action Plan

<i>Learners Name:</i>		<i>College, Centre Name:</i>	
<i>Name of Organisation / Company:</i>		<i>Workplace Supervisors Name:</i>	
To be completed by the Learner			
<i>Identify the soft skills you hope to improve / develop during your work experience / work placement</i>	<i>Give reasons for selecting each soft skill improvement / development</i>		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Learner's signature:

Date:

Tutors signature:

Date:

Work place supervisor's signature:

Date:

Sample Learner Soft Skills - Reflective Log

During the work experience / work placement learners are invited to keep a log / diary to record their soft skill experiences etc. This reflective log can be used as an aid to compliment any other work experience log / diary that needs to be maintained as part of a course or the Programme Module Leading to QQI Level 5 Work Experience (5NI1356)

<i>Learners Name:</i>		<i>College, Centre Name:</i>	
<i>Name of Organisation / Company:</i>		<i>Workplace Supervisors Name:</i>	

Date:

<i>Soft Skill</i>	<i>Reflection</i>

Date:

<i>Soft Skill</i>	<i>Reflection</i>

Date:

<i>Soft Skill</i>	<i>Reflection</i>

Date:

<i>Soft Skill</i>	<i>Reflection</i>

Learner's signature:

Date:

Tutors signature:

Date:

Work place supervisor's signature:

Date:

Sample Learner Soft Skills - Evaluation

When learners return from their work experience / work placements they can reflect on the overall experience and identify how their soft skills have improved / developed from the beginning of the placement through to completion of the placement.

<i>Learners Name:</i>		<i>College, Centre Name:</i>	
<i>Name of Organisation / Company:</i>		<i>Workplace Supervisors Name:</i>	

Describe how your soft skills have developed while on your work experience / work placement

Learner's signature:

Date:

Tutors signature:

Date:

For learners working towards a Programme Module Leading to QQI Level 5 Work Experience (5N1356), the work experience / work placement supervisor can give the learner feedback on their soft skills on the Supervisors Report form.

Section 4: Work Based Learning: Completing the Work Experience Supervisor's Report

Introduction

This section is designed to support:

Employers by:

- Unpacking the criteria as stated for example in the supervisor's report for the CDET B Programme Module Leading to QQI Level 5 Work Experience (5N1356)
- Assisting workplace supervisors in their understanding of the stated criteria in the supervisor's report
- Ensuring a consistent interpretation of the criteria when making judgements on learner performance

In addition, this resource will support:

Colleges / Centres by:

- Providing a resource to support colleges and centres in conducting the workplace element of assessment
- Facilitating consistency of interpretation of the criteria across centres

Teachers / Tutors / Trainers by:

- Providing a resource to support teaching and learning
- Creating an awareness of the expectations associated with the criteria to be applied for the work based element of the Level 5 Work Experience programme module

Learners by:

- Unpacking the criteria as stated in the supervisor's report
- Proving clarity on the expectations associated with the criteria to be applied for the work based element of, for example, the Level 5 Work Experience programme module

Unpacking the Criteria in the Supervisor's Report

(as stated in the CDET B Programme Module leading to the NFQ Level 5 QQI Work Experience Minor Award 5N1356).

Rating Levels

Supervisors are asked to judge learner performance on the supervisor's report under a number of stated criteria and rate performance linked to each criterion as *excellent*, *very good*, *good*, *satisfactory*, *unsatisfactory* or *unable to assess*.

The table below provides a possible interpretation of what these rating levels mean.

Excellent	A comprehensive, highly structured and focussed performance while on placement
Very Good	A thorough and well organised performance while on placement
Good	Adequate and competent performance while on placement
Satisfactory	Minimum acceptable standard achieved while on placement
Unsatisfactory	A performance on work placement that fails to meet the minimum acceptable standard
Unable to assess	This will be ticked only if the supervisor is unable to assess the item, e.g. if technology isn't used as part of the work placement

A work place supervisor would expect to see an overall improvement in the learner's understanding of the relevant vocational setting before allocating a satisfactory rating level or higher.

Criteria

The supervisor's report identifies eight key criteria. Each criterion is unpacked below with examples to help to give some clarity around their meaning.

These explanatory statements, while not exhaustive, may help to assist supervisors when making judgements on learner performance while in the workplace.

1. Observation of good timekeeping	
■ Arrives on time for work placement	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Resumes work promptly when returning from lunch and coffee breaks	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Completes the required number of hours per working day, as agreed	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Gets promptly down to task when arrive at the placement	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Carries out tasks in time efficient manner	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Notifies the site if you need to be absent	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Working independently while under general direction	
■ Listens to and carefully follows directions regarding tasks to be completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Seeks clarity appropriately when needed e.g. ask relevant questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Adheres to instructions while completing tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Completes the tasks assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Proactive – seeks new/additional work once assigned tasks are completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Seeks help from appropriate person/s when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Seeks feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Meeting deadlines

- Agrees manageable deadlines
- Maintains the agreed upon work schedule
- Seeks clarity on what needs to be achieved and by when
- Seeks extensions on deadlines, if legitimately required
- Stays on task
- Puts in extra time/effort to complete task/s, if needed
- Flexible approach to work tasks
- Ability to multi-task
- Ability to adapt to changing needs and demands

4. Personal presentation

- Appropriately dressed for work e.g. uniform, protective clothing & shoes, clean & professional clothes, skirt, suit
- Meets relevant hygiene standards e.g. cleanliness, tidy hair, clean hand and nails, fresh breath
- Appropriate posture for work, where relevant
- No chewing gum or eating during work tasks

5. Adherence to health, safety and other relevant regulations

- Knowledge of relevant regulations
- Knowledge of reporting requirements
- Appropriate reporting where needed
- Dresses appropriately e.g. non-slip soles, hard-hat, low heels, etc.
- Safe & hygienic practices and routines e.g. hand washing
- Safe operating of machinery and equipment

6. Demonstrate effective personal communication skills

- Confidence
- Enthusiasm
- Positive attitude
- Proactive
- Demonstrates initiative
- Awareness of roles
- Polite, mannerly & pleasant communication
- Organises thoughts appropriately
- Willing to relate to others differently
- Self-awareness
- Sensitive to and respectful of others
- Critical thinking
- Motivated
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Ability to take personal responsibility

7. Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills

■ Verbal Communication

- ▶ Speaks appropriately for different audiences e.g. formal, informal, appropriate topic
- ▶ Uses appropriate voice quality and tone
- ▶ Uses appropriate and relevant language
- ▶ Clear and concise when speaking
- ▶ Takes initiative when speaking
- ▶ Effective participation in discussions in different situations e.g. meetings, break-times
- ▶ Effective listening: show interest , avoid distractions and unnecessary interruptions
- ▶ Shows empathy
- ▶ Listens effectively to instructions
- ▶ Provides feedback effectively
- ▶ Receives feedback in positive manner

■ Non-verbal communication

- ▶ Uses appropriate body language, posture, movement

■ Written communication

- ▶ Plans writing tasks
- ▶ Uses appropriate language
- ▶ Checks for spelling, grammar errors, etc.
- ▶ Rereads before sending/presenting to supervisor
- ▶ Appropriate written communication for audience

8. Demonstrate effective technological communication skills

- Uses appropriate technology for assigned tasks e.g. fax, e-mail, SMS
- Uses technological software related to the vocational area e.g. e-mail, SMS, Skype, appointment systems, online record cards, clocking in and out
- No use of personal technology devices in work time, e.g. mobile phone for social media, SMS, etc.

Supervisor/Assessor Comments

In addition to rating learners under each criterion, work place supervisors will also find a space on the report form for further comments.

How the final mark for a learner is calculated

(Programme Module leading to the NFQ Level 5 QQI Work Experience Minor Award 5N1356)

After the work place supervisor returns the completed supervisor's report to the college / centre, the assessor in the centre applies the assessment criteria below to arrive at the learner's final mark.

The maximum mark that a learner can achieve is 40 (40% or overall mark for this programme module)

Assessment Criteria	Maximum Mark	Learner Mark
Work Experience Supervisor's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Satisfactory in at least 6 categories: 15 -23marks ■ Good in all categories or very good in at least 6 categories: 24 - 31marks ■ Very good in all categories or excellent in at least 6 categories: 32-40 marks 	40	
TOTAL MARKS	40	

Level 5 Work Experience 5N1356 – Supervisors Report

Learners Name:		College, Centre Name:	
Name of Organisation / Company:		Workplace Supervisors Name:	
No. of days worked:		Tel No:	

Guidelines: This report forms an important part of the overall assessment of Level 5 Work Experience 5N1356 for QQI certification. It should be completed by a supervisor/manager who has observed the Learner in the workplace. The Workplace Supervisor/Manager should indicate the Learner's performance by placing a tick for each of the criteria under one of the headings. *Excellent should only be used in cases of outstanding performance*

Criteria	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unable to Assess	Supervisor/Assessor Comments
Observation of good timekeeping							Brief description of work undertaken by Learner Any comments or suggestions on work experience arrangements Any other comments
Working independently while under general direction							
Meeting deadlines							
Personal presentation							
Adherence to health, safety and other relevant regulations							
Demonstrate effective personal communication skills							
Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills							
Demonstrate effective technological communication skills							

Learner's signature:

Date:

Workplace Supervisor's signature:

Date:

Assessor's signature:

Date:

Section 5: Work Based Learning: Externships for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers

What is an internship / externship?

An internship involves first hand experiential learning and is typically a period of time an individual spends working in another organisation with the objective of learning and developing from the experience.

Most people are familiar with the term 'internship' but may not be as familiar with the term 'externship'. One of the most common types of WBL for teachers is a teacher externship. Internships and Externships are similar in that they provide temporary work experience to help individuals gain skills and relevant experience in specific field areas. Internships often involve some form of payment while externships are not usually paid.

An externship is generally much shorter in duration than an internship and because of its short duration can sometimes involve more job shadowing than hands-on experience.

Purpose of an Externship

An Externship Model of professional development can support Teachers, Tutors and Trainers to:

- expand their knowledge, skills and confidence (academic, technical , 21st Century etc.) and make connections between the curriculum, programme or subject they teach and the workplace
- learn through direct experience about needs, realities, trends, challenges and practices in different institutions or work environments
- develop an understanding of workplace practices to ensure that what they do in the classroom with learners is more informed, meaningful and up to date so that learners are better prepared for current, emerging and future career opportunities and meeting employer / industry needs
- expand their capacity to implement meaningful and engaging teaching and learning methodologies in the classroom by drawing on case studies and real world work examples
- engage meaningfully with employers and develop mutually beneficial working partnerships and understandings about workplace and education requirements and expectations.

Length of an Externship

While the Skills4Work project piloted one and two day externships an externship can in theory be any length from one day to several weeks or months and can take place at different times of the year depending on the arrangements possible at local level in different college / centre types e.g. during periods when learners are out on work placements, at the start of the academic year before classes commence, in term time when a visiting guest business / industry representative might cover classes or during holiday periods when a teacher, tutor or trainer might wish to make their own personal professional development arrangements. The length and scheduling will in practice be influenced and decided on by several factors or considerations.

Some of these might include:

- the time of the year and the length of time a teacher, tutor or trainer can realistically be released from their college or centre if the externship is being scheduled during term time
- the arrangements that can be put in place for the learners while the teacher, tutor or trainer is participating in an externship programme to minimise disruption of their learning
- the type of skills, learning or/ experience the externship will provide and how much time is needed to realistically achieve this
- the number of teachers, tutors or trainers participating in externships and any overlapping periods
- the level of commitment and time the host placement / employer can dedicate to the externship.

Types of Externship Opportunities

Externships opportunities are diverse, for example:

- Placements in Industry / business linked to specific programmes being delivered by teachers, tutors or trainers
- International study trips / exchanges to gain cultural insights and practical experience of different systems
- Placements in educational institutions e.g. for the purpose of comparing approaches, standards, benchmarking etc.
- Observerships e.g. involving observation and work shadowing.

How to Source an Externship

Externships can be sourced in many ways. A few examples include:

- Approaching a company or organisation that the college / centre already has a relationship with e.g. through student work experience placements, supplier of goods or services to the college / centre etc.
- Word of mouth e.g. by talking to friends, family or colleagues to seek recommendations or contacts
- Making contact with professional associations or networks
- Conducting keyword searches on the internet e.g. targeting specific company types and following up with a personal contact
- Attending exhibitions or job fairs and talking to personnel on stands
- Making connections through LinkedIn
- Getting ideas for companies by reading magazines and newspapers e.g. business sections, advertisements etc. and following up.

Typical stages that might be involved in an Externship

Stage 1: Planning the Externship

- A Teacher, Tutor, Trainer indicates an interest in participating in an Externship. They identify an area of a programme that they teach (or will be teaching in the future), that they would like to be the focus of their externship e.g. they might identify one or more learning outcomes from a programme.
- The Teacher, Tutor, Trainer completes an *Externship Application Form* (see sample) and uses this as the basis on a preliminary discussion with their Principal, Head of Centre or other appointed person. The form should address areas such as externship area of interest, specific focus of externship and objectives, possible host companies / employers, possible length of externship and when it might take place etc..
- As part of the discussion, address how learners might be supported when the Teacher, Tutor, Trainer is away on the externship e.g.
 - ▶ are the learners on work experience themselves at this time?
 - ▶ what type of substitution arrangements can be put in place if needed?
 - ▶ can the externship be done before / after courses start / finish?
- During the meeting if there is agreement in principle to the externship taking place, an action plan can be drawn up using an *Externship Action Plan* (see sample). This sets out and agrees how the externship will be further progressed and implemented.
- A potential host company / organisation can then be contacted and a plan for the externship agreed. A named person should be identified who will be the point of contact and mentor in the company / organisation. Goals and expectations should be clarified and agreed for all parties.

Stage 2: During the Externship

To maximise the externship opportunity a teacher, tutor, trainer should:

- Engage as appropriate in a range of activities; See - *Sample activities that might take place during an Externship* and *Sample Questions that could be asked during an Externship*
- Be aware of and sensitive to employer needs and wishes and workplace requirements
- Be realistic about what can be achieved in the time available balanced with making the most of the opportunity
- Keep a log and record experiences
- Reflect on how things are going and how the externship is potentially supporting the delivery of a programme to learners and what new ideas, case studies, approaches etc. might be implemented in the classroom
- Think about what peer sharing could take place with colleagues when they get back to their college / centre
- Start to complete an evaluation e.g. See - *Sample Evaluation of Externship by Teacher, Tutor, Trainer*

Stage 3: After the Externship

- Contact the host company / employer to thank them for the opportunity
- Invite that the host company organisation to complete an evaluation form e.g. See *Sample Evaluation of Externship by Host Company / Organisation*
- Reflect on learning and skills achieved during the externship
- Finish completing the - *Evaluation of Externship by Teacher, Tutor, Trainer*
- Disseminate and share the learning experience from the externship at college / centre / organisation level
- Make recommendations to management on any aspect of the process that needs adjustment for future externships
- Implement the learning from the externship in the classroom with learners

Sample activities that might take place during an Externship

1. Visit different departments within the company / organisation to get a good overview of the roles, range of work, facilities etc. available
2. Arrange for HR to provide an insight into recruitment, roles /positions, skills needs, pay and conditions, training, performance review processes, policies and procedures etc.
3. Request resources that might give an insight into the company / organisation e.g. annual reports, brochures, articles, online links, PowerPoint presentations etc.
4. Job Shadow in different sections / departments or with employees with different roles
5. Keep a log / prepare a presentation that can be used when you return to your college / centre to share your learning with other teachers / tutors / trainers
6. Build a portfolio of resources that can be used with learners when you return to the classroom.
7. Provide the company / organisation with knowledge of the FET sector and the opportunities for employing FET graduates and further networking opportunities

Sample questions that could be asked during an Externship

The questions below provide some ideas about the type of questions a teacher, tutor or trainer might ask either before and /or during an Externship to help gain insight into the host placement and maximise opportunities for learning. Questions can be directed as appropriate to managers, supervisors, HR personnel, employees etc.

The questions below have been either inspired, adapted or taken from the Teacher Externship Guide developed by the College and Career Academy Support Network (2010) <http://casn.berkeley.edu/resources.php?r=251>

1. Please provide a brief description and / or history of your company / organisation
2. Who are your clients or customers?
3. How is your company / organisation structured?
4. What business or industry changes / issues are impacting on your company / organisation?
5. What changes / issues do you anticipate will impact on the company / organisations future development?
6. Describe the company's / organisations culture
7. How many people are employed?
8. Do you see the local labour markets' need for new workers in your field increasing, decreasing or remaining steady?
9. In what specific areas, if any, is there new job growth? How might this labour market change in the next five years?
10. What level of education, training, skills, or experiences does an applicant need for an entry-level position? What new skills are required of entry-level employees?
11. What is the entry-level wage?
12. How do you locate future employees?
13. What, if any, industry certifications do you consider desirable for a prospective employee?
14. Does the company expect new employees to possess soft skills and if so, what skills do they expect them to have? (i.e. punctuality, formal or informal atmosphere, dress code, etc.)
15. What is your company policy on attendance / tardiness?
16. Describe a typical workday for an employee?
17. What training do you give employees?
18. How do you evaluate employees?
19. What are the positive / negative aspects of working in your company / organisations field?

20. What skills are recommended for workers in the field who wish to advance?
21. What is the role of technology in the company / organisation? How has technology affected the company / organisation? What new technologies are emerging in this field?
22. What should I be teaching in my classroom / programme to prepare learners for employment in a company / organisation like this?
23. What would you recommend teachers, tutors, trainers do to strengthen the relevance of colleges / centres to the workplace?
24. In terms of the content and learning outcomes that learners engage with in their courses, is there evidence of a connection between the curriculum and the work place? Do you see any gaps existing?
25. Are there areas that our college / centre could enhance, so as to better prepare learners for work placements?
26. What advice would you give a student who is interested in working in an organisation / company like this?
27. Would you be willing to speak to my class group about your work?

Sample Externship Application Form

Sections 1-9 should be completed by the applicant in advance of a meeting with the Principal, Head of Centre or designated person

Teacher, Tutor, Trainer Name:	
College, Centre Name	
Proposed externship host	
Proposed length of externship	
Proposed dates	
What do you hope to achieve by undertaking this externship?	
What programme module will this externship support? How will it link with the programmes Learning Outcomes?	
How will this externship benefit your Learners?	
What provision might be made for your learners during your externship?	

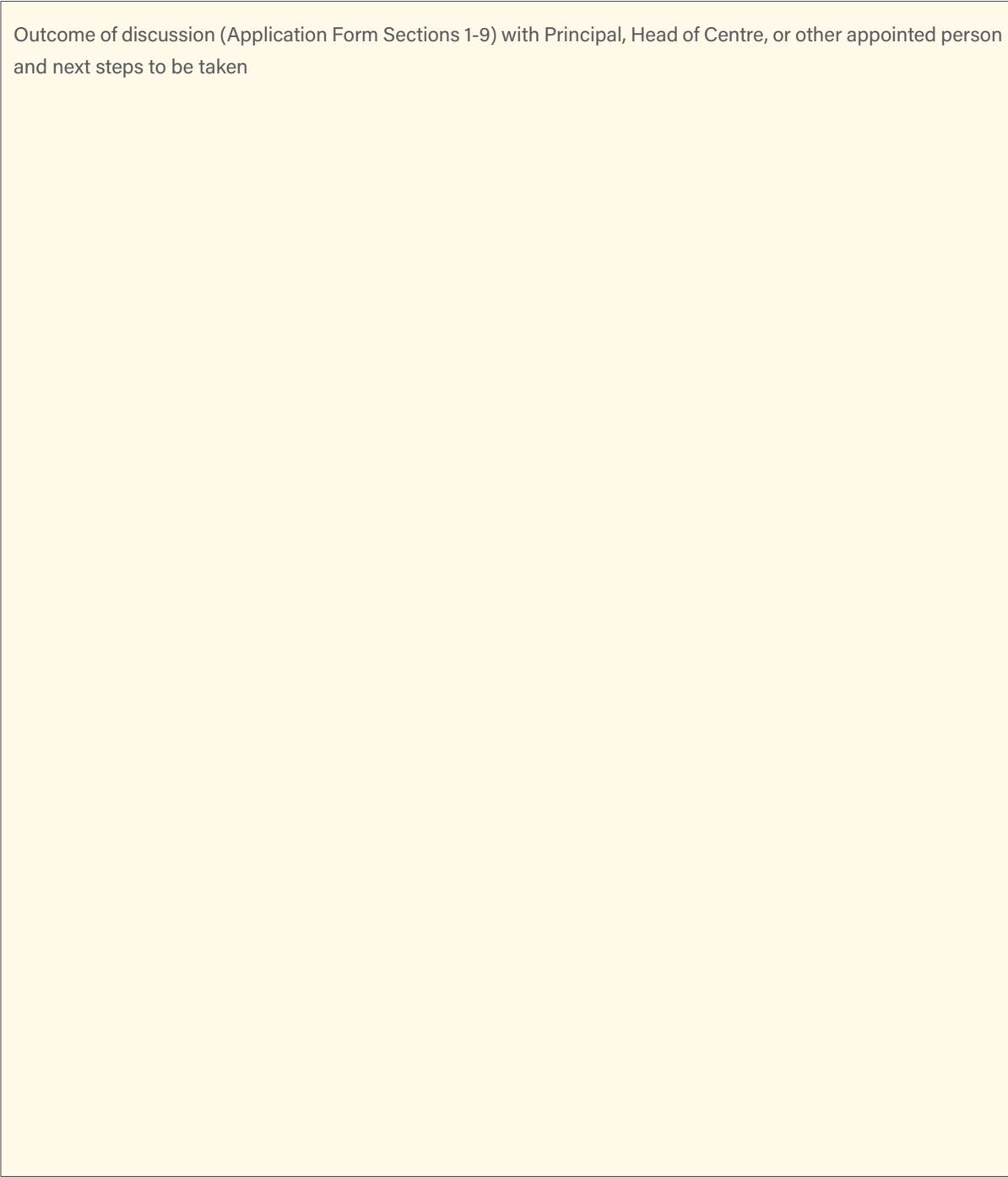
Signed:

Date:

Sample Externship Action Plan

To be completed during the meeting with the Principal, Head of Centre or designated person

Outcome of discussion (Application Form Sections 1-9) with Principal, Head of Centre, or other appointed person and next steps to be taken



Signed: _____
Principal, Head of Centre, or other appointed person

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Applicant

Date: _____

Sample Evaluation of Externship by Teacher, Tutor, Trainer

Name:	Position:
College Name:	Company Name:
Date:	Duration of Internship:
FET Sector:	

1. Give a brief description of the company:

2. Is there an established relationship between the college and the company already? If so, please give details:

3. Does the company expect young people to possess soft skills and if so, what skills do they expect them to have? E.g. punctuality, dress code, etc.)

4. In terms of the learning outcomes of programmes you are teaching, is there evidence of a connection with the work place? Please comment on where you see potential gaps existing:

5. From your discussions and observations are there areas that the college / centre can enhance, to better prepare learners for their work placement?

6. Are there any challenges in preparing learners for this particular workplace? If so what are the challenges and how might the college / centre address them in the future? (i.e. access to relevant training materials, time learners spend in the work place etc.)

7. In your opinion, are students being prepared appropriately for this type of work place in terms of their content knowledge and the skills and competences needed to effectively function in the organisation? If you answer no what areas or approaches might be considered in the future?

8. Having met with the company and experienced the work place, are there any areas you would change in relation to the following:

- ▶ Your teaching approach

- ▶ The content knowledge and competences you are helping learners to achieve

- ▶ How you assess learners

- ▶ Other

9. How beneficial was this experience for you? Would you recommend this to your colleagues?

10. How might this experience be enhanced in the future?

Sample Evaluation of Externship by Host Company / Organisation

Host Company:	
Contact (Individual Completing Evaluation):	
Position:	
Telephone:	email:
Name of teacher, tutor, trainer who undertook the externship:	
Date(s) of externship:	

Please rate the externship by ✓ the statement that best represents your experience:

Your company / organisation...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Was contacted in sufficient time before the start of the externship					
2. Was clear about the expectations of the externship and your role					
3. Felt it was a beneficial experience for the teacher, tutor trainer					
4. Felt it was a beneficial experience for your company / organisation					
5. Would engage in an externship again					

Comment:

Signed:

Date:

PROJECT PARTNERS



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To find out more about the project visit
www.skills4workproject.eu
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