



# Sector-based work academies

How Jobcentre Plus can help you  
fill your vacancies more efficiently

**jobcentreplus**

Department for  
Work and Pensions

v1.2 May 2012

# Sector-based work academies – a way to create a skilled workforce for your business

## **What are sector-based work academies?**

The Government has introduced a new range of measures to help get Britain working. Sector-based work academies are one of those measures available in England\* to help those who are ready for work and receiving benefits to secure employment. They are designed to help meet your immediate and future recruitment needs as well as to recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow your business.

A sector-based work academy can last up to six weeks and has three key components:

- Pre-employment training- relevant to the needs of your business and sector
- A work experience placement - of great benefit to both the individual and a business
- A guaranteed job interview

The key feature of sector-based work academies is that they offer a flexible approach and can be adapted to meet the needs of your business.

If you are unable to offer all three components, we may be able to work with you to overcome this – such as enabling you to join together with other employers as a consortium approach.

Participants will remain on benefit throughout the period of the sector-based work academy and Jobcentre Plus will pay any travel and childcare costs whilst they are on the work experience placement. There is no direct cost to an employer for sector-based work academies as the costs are covered by government funding.

## **Pre-employment training**

The Government is committed to ensuring that people looking for employment have the essential skills to succeed in the workplace. Jobcentre Plus, colleges and other training providers want to work with employers like you to design the content of sector specific training to meet the needs of your business and those of the local labour market. The training is fully funded through the Skills Funding Agency\* and delivered by Further Education colleges and training providers. The training will enable participants to undertake units on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It will also be possible for your business to deliver the training without public funding.

\*Skills and further education is a devolved policy area and sector-based work academies are available in Scotland funded through Scottish Government or other partner organisations. Similar support is available through the 'Routeways to Work' programme for claimants in Wales.

### **Work experience placement**

A work experience placement in your business will enable participants to develop their skills and have the opportunity to work in a real environment. The length of a work experience placement is determined at the initial discussion between you and Jobcentre Plus and it provides invaluable benefits for both businesses and individuals participating in a sector-based work academy.

The key principle to supporting participants during the placement should be to treat them as regular employees as far as possible whilst they remain on benefits, but recognising that they may initially need additional coaching and supervision. Preparing for the work experience placement will ensure that you and the participant will get the most from this experience

In order for businesses and individuals to both benefit from the work placement element we would ask that you:

- Explain what you need them to do
- Inform them of management and reporting arrangements
- Facilitate positive working relationships
- Provide an overview of your business and its values and culture
- Give a tour of the workplace
- Provide guidance on using any equipment
- Provide guidance on health and safety
- Explain standard workplace practices such as, security procedures, dress code, sick leave/ absences, lunch and break times.

### **Guaranteed job interview**

A guaranteed job interview for one of your vacancies will provide participants with valuable interview experience.

You may also want to consider whether an apprenticeship opportunity would be of benefit to your business at this time. As the participant will be part qualified you may wish to consider employing them on an Apprenticeship to finish their training. You can find out more about apprenticeships at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk) or you can discuss this with Jobcentre Plus who will be able to provide you with more information.

# Why should you get involved?

**Your business could benefit from being part of sector-based work academies for the following reasons:**

- This is a flexible programme that can be tailored to meet your recruitment needs
- You can recruit staff with the right training and skills from the outset developed through fully funded pre-employment training
- We will work with you to understand what skills you need recruits to have – this will help ensure that the pre-employment training is fit for purpose
- An opportunity to provide work experience placement for potential employees to ensure they are suited to that type of role and your company
- Work experience placements allow developmental opportunities for existing employees for example, by developing their mentoring, supervisory and coaching skills
- Reduces the risks within the overall process of recruiting new employees
- An opportunity for positive publicity to show how like-minded businesses are working together to meet their social responsibilities

## **How a sector-based work academy could operate**

Jobcentre Plus has been working with employers in two areas of the country to test the sector-based work academy approach. Below is an example from one employer who has had success in recruiting by this method.

Wates Construction in partnership with their social enterprise partner, Atom Community Regeneration has found using sector-based work academies an excellent way to find the right people for their regeneration projects.

Working closely with the Skills Funding Agency and Liverpool College they were able to decide on exactly the right sort of training required for their supply chain partners and in doing so were able to effectively recruit from the outset.

After two weeks of skills training in a local college and part-time work experience for a further two weeks which included a guaranteed job interview on completion, Wates and their supply chain partners interviewed 15 people of which 11 were offered employment opportunities.

Wesley Allmark- Project Director from Wates Construction said. “The combination of training and site experience has delivered exactly what we wanted. It has saved us valuable time not having to do the training ourselves and our recruits have hit the ground running. All candidates are showing great potential and I am confident that a solid career in construction is ahead of them.”

# How to get involved

**To find out more contact your local Jobcentre Plus employer engagement team.**

If you are interested in finding out more information about our services for employers in general you can contact the us on 0845 128 1456

**jobcentreplus**

Department for  
Work and Pensions