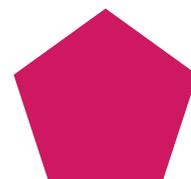


Technical Qualifications

Employer Involvement Centre Guidance



Version 1.3
November 2017
For external use

Version 1.3 Change history

This is Version 1.3 of the Technical Qualifications – Employer Involvement Centre Guidance document. This document is subject to regular revision, and maintained electronically.

Electronic copies are version controlled.

3.2 Revision to the approval process

3.4 Revision to the submission process

Table of Contents

Section 1: Background	4
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 Why is employer involvement important?	5
1.3 What counts as 'meaningful' employer involvement?	6
1.4 Minimum requirement	7
1.5 Planning and contingency	7
1.6 Line involvement	7
1.7 Timetabling of employer involvement activities	7
1.8 Additional requirements for employer involvement activities	8
1.9 External guidance on work experience	8
Section 2: Delivery	9
2.1 Effective employer involvement	10
2.2 Employer involvement activities and acceptable evidence	11
Section 3: Quality Assurance	12
3.1 Quality assurance process	13
3.2 Approval	13
3.3 Delivery	14
3.4 Submission	15
3.4.1 Employer involvement requirement met	15
3.4.2 Employer involvement requirement not met	15
Appendix 1: Additional Support	16

Section 1: Background



1.1 Introduction

City & Guilds Technical Qualifications are vocational qualifications, designed for learners aged 14 to 19 who wish to specialise in a technical occupation or occupational group. They provide opportunities for the learner to progress to employment, an apprenticeship, or further learning. Technical Qualifications can be taken as part of the TechBac, or as standalone qualifications.

Employer involvement is a mandatory component of the delivery and assessment of Key Stage 5 Technical Qualifications for 16-19 year olds. The employer involvement component does not contribute to the overall qualification grading, but is a requirement that all learners must meet. As such it is subject to external quality assurance by City & Guilds.

In order to meet the employer involvement component requirement, centres must provide evidence that all learners have been involved in 'meaningful' employer involvement activities. Section 1.3 of this document covers what is and isn't considered 'meaningful' in this context.

Centres must record the range and type of employer involvement each learner has experienced. These records must be available for external quality assurance by City & Guilds upon request.

This document:

- provides useful guidance on what employer involvement is and why it's important
- suggests potential methods of involving employers effectively
- details what the requirements are regarding technical qualifications
- explains how City & Guilds will quality assure this requirement.

1.2 Why is employer involvement important?

Employer involvement is essential to enrich learner experience and is a fundamental part of the qualification. Centres are required to involve employers in the delivery of technical qualifications and/or their assessment, for every learner. Effective employer involvement will:

- give learners the opportunity to work with real employers and experience a real workplace
- encourage learners to record, reflect and review upon their experiences
- build mutually supportive relationships that are beneficial to centres and employers
- bridge the gap between education and employers
- support centre staff's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through their involvement with employers
- offer employers the chance to have an impact on the quality of learning, and ensure that training and study is relevant to their business needs
- create a direct 'line of sight' to employment and higher education for learners
- create opportunities for ongoing dialogue between centres and employers.

1.3 What counts as 'meaningful' employer involvement

To be eligible, employer involvement activities must relate to the content of the qualification. Employer involvement will be quality assured by City & Guilds, with the possible outcome that learners not meeting the requirement will not be able to achieve the qualification certificate

The Department for Education (DfE) has provided the following examples of which activities are considered to be 'meaningful' and count towards meeting the requirement. They have also provided examples of activities that would be generally beneficial to learners, but that would not count towards meeting the requirement.¹

The following activities meet the requirement for meaningful employer involvement:

- Learners undertake structured work-experience or work-placements that develop skills and knowledge relevant to the qualification with an employer relevant to the qualification;
- Learners undertake project(s), exercises(s) and/or assessments/examination(s) set with input from industry practitioner(s);
- Learners take one or more units delivered or co-delivered by an industry practitioner(s). This could take the form of master classes or guest lectures;
- Industry practitioners operate as 'expert witnesses' that contribute to the assessment of a learners work or practice, operating within a specified assessment framework. This may be a specific project(s), exercise(s) or examination(s), or all assessments for a qualification.

In all cases participating industry practitioners and employers must be relevant to the industry sector or occupation/occupational group to which the qualification relates.

The following activities, whilst valuable, do not meet the requirement for meaningful employer involvement:

- Employers' or industry practitioners' input to the initial design and content of a qualification;
- Employers hosting visits, providing premises, facilities or equipment;
- Employers or industry practitioners providing talks or contributing to delivery on employability, general careers advice, CV writing, interview training etc;
- Learner attendance at career fairs, events or other networking opportunities;
- Simulated or provider-based working environments e.g. hairdressing salons, florists, restaurants, travel agents, small manufacturing units, car servicing facilities;
- Employers providing learners with job references.

¹ Taken from the document *Vocational qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds* (DfE, March 2015), p22

1.4 Minimum requirement

Planning a range of activities will enrich a learner's experience and is a key part of the successful delivery of the qualifications. The minimum requirement for meaningful employer involvement being met, however, would be for learners to fully meet any **one** of the activities identified by the DfE.

Example

Learners take one or more units delivered or co-delivered by an industry practitioner(s). This could take the form of master classes or guest lectures.

In this instance we would expect that a centre would arrange more than one master class or guest lecture, to meet the 'co-delivery' requirement. If this is not possible then a different employer involvement activity should also be arranged.

Centres should consider the specific needs and requirements of learners. Some employer involvement activities may suit certain learners better than others. Alternatively some candidates may not be able to access certain activities. Therefore planning a range of different activities and working with more than one employer will allow all learners to have access to meaningful and useful experiences.

1.5 Planning and contingency

Centres must also plan and provide contingencies for learners who may be absent for employer involvement activities, so that they are not disadvantaged. Planning a range of activities is one way to minimise the likelihood of this happening. Where learners are unable to undertake all employer involvement activities due to illness, temporary injury or other indisposition, centres should contact the City & Guilds Quality team for further guidance.

Centres must record all contingencies that are put in place as part of their documentation of employer involvement activities.

1.6 Live involvement

Learners will gain most benefit from direct interaction with employers and experienced industry practitioners; however the use of technology (e.g. the use of live webinars) is encouraged to maximise the range of interactions. Where learners are able to interact in real time with employers, including through the use of technology, this is classed as 'live involvement'.

1.7 Timetabling of employer involvement activities

As stated previously, learners who have not met the minimum requirement for employer involvement cannot achieve the component, and will therefore not achieve the qualification. It is important therefore, that centres give consideration to scheduling employer involvement activities, and that enough time is allotted throughout delivery and assessment of the qualification to ensure that requirements are fully met.

1.8 Additional requirements for employer involvement activities

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all relevant health and safety, and safeguarding requirements are met when arranging activities with employers.

1.9 External guidance on work experience

The DfE has published non-statutory guidance on work experience as part of study programmes that centres may find helpful when planning meaningful employer involvement activities.

This is available here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-work-experience-as-a-part-of-16-to-19-study-programmes

Section 2: Delivery



2.1 Effective employer involvement

Whilst many centres may have established links with local employers, for some this type of formalised involvement may be a new process. Below are some suggestions as to how effective employer involvement could be achieved.

- **Effective research and early involvement.**

Centres should contact local employers to understand the skills requirements for the sector in the local area to indicate which programmes might have high demand. By contacting employers early on, there is more opportunity for effective involvement throughout the delivery of the qualification.

- **Working with a range of employers.**

Whilst there is no specific requirement for centres to work with more than one employer, working with a range offers a diversity of potential experiences for learners. It also minimises the impact if an employer withdraws from the programme.

- **'Buy in' from senior team and employers.**

Getting involvement from senior teams, for both centres and employers, will mean employer involvement programmes get the required level of commitment and support.

- **Communication.**

Centres and employers should establish clear lines of communication in order to maintain a constructive working relationship. This might involve having a staff member who acts as the key contact for dealing with employers.

- **Thinking creatively.**

Work placements are a great way to provide meaningful experience for learners, but employers can also be involved at all stages of the delivery of qualifications; from curriculum planning, through to teaching and assessment. Flexibility of approach is important when developing programmes of employer involvement. Employers can identify the areas of skills and knowledge in their particular industry that they would wish to see emphasised for learners who may apply to work with them in the future.

- **Live interaction.**

Learners will gain most benefit from direct interaction with employers and industry practitioners. Where learners are able to interact in real time with employers, including through the use of technology, this will be classed as 'live involvement'.

- **Audio and video evidence.**

It is considered good practice to record learning activities, either through audio or video means, to allow learners to revisit their experience and to provide a contingency for absent learners. This is not classed as live involvement however, and any involvement of this type for a learner must be identified as contingency.

2.2 Employer involvement activities and acceptable evidence

The table below lists the various types of acceptable employer involvement activity that could be undertaken in the delivery and/or assessment of the KS5 Technical qualifications.

***Please note** – where there are a number of similar activities (e.g. multiple guest lectures) then centres can upload a sample of attendance registers, rather than all of them.

Required evidence must be submitted to City & Guilds. This is at cohort level and must list all learners involved, including their name and enrolment number.

Additional evidence should be retained by centres, wherever possible. This may be both at cohort and at individual learner level. This evidence should be available upon request by City & Guilds and may be required for the following reasons:

- external audit, or regulatory purposes
- non-compliance and/or potential malpractice
- for use as 'best practice' exemplar materials.

Section 3:

Quality assurance



3.1 Quality assurance process

As the employer involvement component is a requirement for achieving the qualifications, it is subject to external quality assurance by City & Guilds. There are two stages at which this will happen, as outlined in the table.

Stages	Type of activity	Evidence	Submission method	Frequency
Approval	Remote or visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker	Electronic	Once, when QAP is submitted
Submission	Remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker (completed)Learner attendance records (sampled)	Electronic	Each academic year when learners have submitted

3.2 Approval

Any centre wishing to offer Technical Qualifications will need to go through the standard Qualification Approval (QAP) process (detailed information on this process can be found in the *City & Guilds Centre Manual*, available on the website). In addition, for KS5 qualifications, centres must also submit a plan showing:

- planned activities to allow every learner to experience meaningful employer involvement
- where sufficient and suitable industry practitioners are expected to be sourced from.

Centres can use the *Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker*, which is available on the Quality Assurance documents section of the City & Guilds website for this. Alternatively, they can use their own document provided that it contains the same information. Centres must have these planners available for the qualification approval visit. At the approval stage, they should indicate that the centre understands the requirement and has a realistic plan in place in order to meet it.

These plans must be submitted for approval to the City & Guilds Moderation Support team, at employerinvolvement@cityandguilds.com. If the centre has any additional supporting evidence at this stage, then this could be reviewed as well.

Supporting evidence could include:

- Letters/emails sent to and received from prospective employers
- Statements from employers confirming involvement
- Topics/synopsis for guest lectures / masterclasses
- Current employer/learner records from existing employer involvement (if relevant)

The Moderation Support team will assess whether the centre planners meet the employer involvement, with three possible outcomes:

- a) The planner meets requirements
- b) The planner requires further development to meet requirements
- c) The planner has not been completed/is not available

For outcomes b) and c) centres will be given improvement actions and a deadline for re-submission of the Planner. The Moderation Support Team will provide feedback and advice to centres as to how to improve their employer involvement plan.

Where centres still cannot show sufficient commitment from employers and/or a credible activity plan, qualification approval may be removed. City & Guilds will endeavour to provide advice and support to centres so that this is a last resort, however.

Please note – this initial quality assurance check of the employer involvement plan will only take place at qualification approval, not on an annual basis. Ongoing quality assurance monitoring will take place at the submission stage, when learners complete, each academic year (see Section 3.4).

3.3 Delivery

Centres should continue to use the *Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker* (or equivalent) throughout the delivery and assessment of the qualification to record their employer involvement activities throughout the academic year.

In some instances, understandably, the employer or type of activity may change from what was documented at the approval stage. Provided that employers/activities are suitable and meet requirements, this is acceptable. The Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker is a good way to capture these changes and evidence what contingencies may have been put in place.

Centres should contact City & Guilds if they are having any difficulties, or require further advice.

3.4 Submission

The deadline for submission of employer involvement results and evidence is in June. The specific submission date is available in the *Technical checklist for delivery* on the City & Guilds website. Centres are required to:

- indicate that the employer involvement requirement has been met for each learner when submitting their results for the synoptic assignments for moderation
- submit the completed *Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker* (or equivalent) with the declaration signed
- submit the required evidence for the types of activity undertaken (as detailed in Section 2.2 of this document).

Centres are required to submit employer involvement results and evidence via the Moderation Portal, the online platform designed to support delivery of the Technical Qualifications.

For more information on using the Portal, please refer to *The Moderation Portal Centre Guide*, available on the website.

City & Guilds will then review the *Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker* (or equivalent) and will sample the submitted evidence to ensure all learners have met the requirements for employer involvement.

In addition to the required evidence, centres should retain additional evidence at cohort and learner level, to be made available if required by City & Guilds. Please note, an *Employer Involvement Planner and Tracker* exemplar is available on the website.

3.4.1 Employer involvement requirement met

Where the employer involvement requirement has been met by learners, this component will contribute to their achievement of the overall Technical Qualification.

3.4.2 Employer involvement requirements not met

Where the employer involvement requirement has not been met for any learners, the centre will receive feedback and improvement actions, along with timescales for completion. Centres then have the opportunity to resubmit their evidence.

If a centre still cannot provide evidence that learners have met the requirements to achieve the component, then the learner will not be able to achieve the overall Technical Qualification.

Appendix 1: Additional support



More information on all aspects of approval, delivery and assessment for Technical Qualifications can be found on the City & Guilds website at www.cityandguilds.com/techbac

City & Guilds Technical Qualifications sit at the heart of the City & Guilds TechBac, a new approach to skills-based education designed to prepare learners for the world of work. They can be combined with City & Guilds Workplace Skills to attain the City & Guilds TechBac, or can be delivered as standalone qualifications.

Available resources and support include:

- qualification handbooks
- schemes of work
- sample assessments
- digital learning packages.

For specific queries about employer involvement, please contact: employerinvolvement@cityandguilds.com

For quality assurance issues, please contact: moderationsupport@cityandguilds.com

For general queries, please contact: centresupport@cityandguilds.com

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Technical Qualifications – Employer Involvement Centre Guidance. Version 1.3 November 2017