

BTEC Centre Guide to  
**Employer  
Involvement  
2017**

# Introduction

The DfE requires all Awarding Organisations ‘to confirm that providers have secured employer involvement for every learner’ taking an approved Tech Level qualification on the 2018 and later lists, and for Technical Certificates on the 2019 and later lists. All students aged 16-19 working towards one of these qualifications must undertake ‘meaningful activity’ involving employers from a list of eligible activities reproduced below.

Whilst the DfE has allowed for flexibility in the way that providers and employers work together to support students’ learning, the contribution that meaningful activities make to the qualification must be significant. Activities and their contribution to the students’ learning are set out in each qualification specification. They relate to one or more elements of the mandatory content of the qualification as a minimum.

Meaningful activity involving employers should come from the following list of eligible learner activities:

- Undertake structured **work-experience or work-placements** that develop skills and knowledge relevant to the qualification
- Undertake **project(s), exercises(s)** and/or **assessments/examination(s)** set with input from industry practitioner(s);
- 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 learner’s 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.

The following activities, though positively regarded, will not be included as meaningful activity:

- 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 such as CV writing, and interview training
- Learner attendance at career fairs, events or other networking opportunities
- Simulated or provider-based working environments
- Employers providing students with job references.

# Monitoring of Employer Involvement

Pearson will monitor the contribution of Employer involvement through the Quality Management Review process (QMR) and through Standards Verifier subject specific sampling.

## Quality Management Review

The measures for QMR that specifically relate to Employer Involvement are as follows:

These objective measures require BTEC centres to demonstrate that they are compliant to employer involvement and associated record keeping. Employer Involvement requirements will be covered by the following additions to existing quality measures:

### QO.1 Centre Management Systems

- **QO.1 quality measure:** “(have a policy and procedures for managing) centre and individual learner involvement with employers”
- **Note:** QO.1 already has an effective quality measure that assures that “all assessors are signed up to this requirement.”

### QO.4: Annual Programme Evaluation & Review

- **QO.4 quality measure:** “(demonstrate that the outcomes of review process) provides confirmation that centre procedures to track centre employer involvement have been monitored and verified; and that employer involvement records for individual learners have been accurately maintained.”

### QO.7: Learner on Programme Support & Progress

- **QO.7 quality measure:** “(provide a learning experience that) enables individual learners to have realistic opportunities to participate in appropriate employer involvement activities that enhance their programme of study.”

## Evidence required

QO.1: able to manage both centre and individual learner engagement with employers.

- Provision of a policy statement and procedures, together with suitable documentation and tracking mechanisms.
- Sufficient briefing for teaching staff and managers responsible for the implementation of these requirements.

QQ.4: provision of employer involvement tracking evidence. This evidence should be monitored and verified for accuracy

- Review documentation that demonstrates the inclusion of these requirements in the centre quality review activities.
- The specific evidence requirements detailed at this end of this guidance note.

QQ.7: evidence that appropriate activities enhance learner programme

- Delivery and lesson plans
- Delivery and learning materials
- Programme file information and meeting minutes relating to the involvement of employers

## Standards Verification

If you have learners registered on a new Technical Programme, your allocated Standards Verifier (SV) will request a copy of your Employer Involvement Plan at the same time as they request the Assessment Plan(s) usually between December and February. **You may use your own paperwork for recording Employer Involvement or utilize the paperwork provided for you in this guide.**



# Involving Employers in Education

## Strategic Planning

All centres involved in the teaching of the new Technical qualifications will need to prepare an Employer Involvement plan for each Technical Programme offered (as previously identified). The development of this plan will require time and planning, ensuring that employer links are made, relationships established and a clear understanding of expectations for both employers and learners. There must also be a clear structure in place for the recording of learner involvement in meaningful activities. Whilst we appreciate that many centres will have experience of employer engagement we would still encourage you to review this guide.

## The Benefits

The desired outcome of a programme of study is to assist a learner to be “work ready” with the addition of sector-focused employer participation that will contribute directly to learning and / or assessment of sector specific skills and knowledge. The use of employer involvement can really help to bring the understanding of the “world of work” to life for the learner. The DfE employer involvement requirements for the new Technical qualifications can be seen as an opportunity to enhance a programme of study and allow the learner to link theory to practice through meaningful activities in their chosen field of study. From the employer’s perspective this provides an opportunity to invest in their community and the future workforce and help shape the programme of study in conjunction with centre staff.

## Establishing a relationship

Whilst many centres have a good understanding of how to make contact with employers and establish a good working relationship, here are a few things to remember:

- Consider how you might make the initial contact with an employer to get involved in any activity. You may already have established methods for linking with employers but if you are approaching an employer for the first time you need to consider the best way to engage with them and establish if they are prepared to get involved. In many instances starting with smaller activities will help the employer to understand the expectations and also help them to see the benefit of their involvement.

- Within the DfE definition of “meaningful activity” it states “the contribution that meaningful activities make to the qualification must be significant and relate to the qualification as a minimum.” Therefore think clearly about the possible activities you may want to arrange and how they relate specifically to the programme of study.
- Keep it jargon free! Education has its own language, so it is important when engaging with employers that you ensure they understand the programme of study, the timescales, expectations and proposed outcomes.
- Go with a plan! Make sure you know exactly what you want the employer to input into the programme and when.
- Remember that an employer is offering their time over and above their normal workload, so try to ensure you give them adequate lead in times and are able to work around their commitments.
- Ensure clarity in all communications. Make sure the employer is well briefed and is supported to undertake the agreed activity.
- Set agreed goals.
- Developing a solid platform for the relationship with the employer can provide long term benefits for the programme and the learners involved.

## **An Agreed Framework**

- It is important to have an agreed framework or plan of action with the employers involved in the programme. This includes a clearly defined working model that has input from both the centre and the employers with clear milestones and opportunities for continuous dialogue and feedback.
- It is important that the teaching staff are well briefed in terms of the proposed employer input so that there is a clear understanding of where responsibilities lie and to ensure a seamless and worthwhile experience for the learners involved.

## **Be Prepared**

- Internally all staff involved in the teaching of the programme need to be fully briefed and aware of the proposed employer involvement and ready to respond to employer needs.
- The learners need to be advised as to what is expected of them and what to expect in terms of their involvement in “meaningful activities” with employers.
- The employer needs to know what their role is, what to expect and to be supported.
- Establish and maintain clear communication channels between the centre and the employer.
- Implement key milestones to ensure that timeframes and targets are met by all.
- Establish and implement a review and evaluation process. Lessons can always be learnt as to how to improve the learner experience the following year.

## Management of “Meaningful Activities”

Every centre involved in employer based activities would benefit from designating a manager or lead who will have responsibility and oversee the on-going relationship with the employer(s) involved in the programme. This individual can act as a single point of contact for the employer and liaise with centre staff. Through sound planning and regular monitoring of the agreed framework/ plan this will ensure that employers and learners gain the maximum benefit out of their involvement. The better briefed all parties are the more likely there will be a positive outcome. The centre must always remain sympathetic to the needs of the employer and the demands on their time.

## Review and Evaluation

Once the programme has been through an academic year, it would be useful to take time to reflect on all aspects of the course, the employer involvement that has taken place, the view of participants and to ensure that the correct evidence was captured. This could include reviewing:

- The goals agreed and set – did they meet and fulfil expectations of all parties?
- Reviewing progress made – were milestones met, was communication effective, was the outcome as expected?
- Review and evaluate all aspects of employer involvement as part of the programme of study ensuring that you gain the views of all parties involved against a defined set of criteria.
- Ensure you maintain evidence of this evaluation to meet the needs of the annual Pearson Quality Management Review including effective recording of activities undertaken by learners.



## Employer Involvement

Once clear links have been established, centre communication with the employer in reference to the expectations of the types of “meaningful activities” that are required from employer involvement is key.

- What the employer is expected to undertake – outline in your employer engagement plan what is expected of them in the short, medium & long term. Liaise regularly with the employer making sure they do understand what is required and what counts as “meaningful activities”. In the long term ask established employers to act as mentors to new employers participating in the scheme
- How do we do it? – the employer will want to understand the benefits of the time they will be investing in “meaningful activities” alongside running their own business. Empower your employers to be Expert Witnesses for students in their establishment. The paperwork that is required to be filled in by employers should be easy to follow and relevant. Spend time with the employers at the beginning explaining the audit trail and why it is important to make the experience both count for the learner and contribute towards the overall qualification
- What is expected of the centre? – expectations should be the first thing to establish once you have engaged with any employer. Be honest and tell them how much time will need to be spent by them engaging with students and what additional work will need to be completed.

Centres will need to be mindful that whether engaging with a large established blue chip company which has a designated training centre or SMEs local to your centre, all could play a part and may be able to provide young people with opportunities such as, structured work experience or work placements. Employers have been key for many years in building the foundations of different qualifications and have identified that they need young people in their businesses to fulfil the skills gap that would otherwise fall short without such opportunities.

The employer involvement that is required will need to be outlined and in any centre devised Employer guide the centre may wish to prepare for their specific programme of study. The objectives for how this can be undertaken need to be very specific to the industry.

Regular meetings should be held and triangulated between the centre, employer and learner to ensure full commitment and understanding by all parties to confirm that all key milestones are adhered to and met.

## Teaching Staff

The teaching staff and employer should both be aware of what tasks are being undertaken by the learner and when. If the learner is covering a topic in the classroom then the opportunity to put this into practice in the workplace should be discussed and implemented. A good learning plan will aid in this process.

Employer relationships take a long time to establish and build upon, and establishing what is required, by when and by whom will not happen overnight – be patient. Invite employers into your centre to view facilities, offer CPD opportunities to their staff members, look at other opportunities such as manning a stand at a careers fair, or talking to students about the industry. Whilst these activities are not deemed to be “meaningful activities” all are essential to building key contacts in industry whilst providing learners with a more comprehensive programme of engagement.

All activities should be planned with employers and a meetings schedule to review student progress should be in place.

## Learner Engagement/Participation

The key to success is engagement; every learner needs to feel engaged with their own learning and be able to recognise the worth of their own participation.

All learners should follow a centre induction onto their qualification where the expectations of the course and the support the centre can provide the student should be discussed.

With the qualification offering both “on the job” and classroom based activities, a clear understanding as to how these activities link together and the expectations of both components would need to be set out and discussed.

A list of what is classed as “meaningful activities” should be made available to the learner and employer, so they are able to plan appropriate activities that count towards their overall final portfolio submission.

The centre should assign an assessor / centre contact to the student and the employer, who would undertake regular assessments, reviews and carry out assessments of evidence where appropriate.

The ultimate goal is for learners to gain new skills through being demonstrated to & taking part in activities with and alongside employers.

# Appendices

Examples of paperwork you may wish to use to capture meaningful employer activities. These forms are available for you to use but are not compulsory.

#### Appendix 1: Compulsory Documentation

- **BTEC Involvement Plan**, available on the Pearson website at: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/assessment-and-verification/btec-assess-verify-forms.html>
- This form is to be filled in by the centre when engaging with employers. Evidence of individual learner employer engagement will need to be provided by the centre to confirm that the activity took place. This can be achieved either through a centre based ILR or the engagement initial plan provided. (Please see Appendix 2)
- Whilst this form is deemed compulsory the centre may choose to use their own centre devised form rather than the one provided. Any centre based form must include the information identified in the Btec devised form.

#### Appendix 2: Useful Documentation

Many centres have established paperwork for the purpose of evidencing employer involvement. You may find some or all of the documentation below useful for recording evidence of Employer Involvement if required.

- **A witness testimony** from an Expert Witness/Industry Practitioners. (An expert is defined as “An individual who offers special expertise in a particular field”)
- **Learner Journal** – example of paperwork to be included within a journal style document to capture work undertaken during work experience or other meaningful activities.
- **Assessment Activity Record** – document that can be used by the centre representative with the learner to capture a 121 activity – such as observation, testimony, discussion or other relevant activities. A continuation page may be added to the end of the document.
- **Assessment Question and Answer Record** – document which can be used to capture either a verbal questions and answer session with a learner alongside an observation, preparation for a recorded/taped professional discussion to expand on an activity undertaken or that has been written up in the learner journal, or to capture missing required evidence.
- **Engagement Initial Plan** – the plan is a key part of making sure all parties understand who is responsible for doing what and by when. It is a plan and any plan is subject to change, don't be afraid to change the plan if circumstances change but having a plan is key.

## Appendix 1: Compulsory Documentation

### BTEC Employer Involvement Plan

BTEC National Diploma in Sport					
Qualification	Employer Engagement Detail and contact	Planned Date of Engagement	Planned Number of learners engaged	Actual number of learners engaged	Additional Notes
Unit 1	Nuffield Placements – Contact John Smith john.smith@hotmail.com	Mar-17	10	8	8 learners completed 5 days placement shadowing gym instructors and PT's – 2 were unable to complete due to illness
Unit x					
Unit x					
Unit x					
Unit x					
Unit x					
Unit x					

Lead Internal Verifier Signature

Date

This is a plan designed to show the Standards Verifier the overarching approach to Employer Involvement within a qualification / group of qualifications. The Standards Verifier may ask to look at specific evidence for individual learners relating to the units being verified.

## Appendix 2: Helpful Documentation

### Witness statement

Student name:			
Qualification:			
Unit number & title:			
Date activity undertaken			
Description of activity undertaken (please be specific as possible)			
Assessment & grading criteria for which the activity provides evidence			
How the activity meets the requirements of the assessment criteria, including how and where the activity took place			
Witness name:			
Witness job role:			
Witness signature:		Date:	
Student name:			
Student signature:		Date:	
Assessor name:			
Assessor signature:		Date:	

## Appendix 2: Helpful Documentation

# Example of Learner Journal paperwork

Date :

**Outline by student of meaningful activity undertaken:** *(putting a list of what is included under the heading meaningful activities in the front of the journal)*

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**What went well? What do I need to improve on? What would I change?** *(PLTS reflection)*

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**Employer Feedback:**

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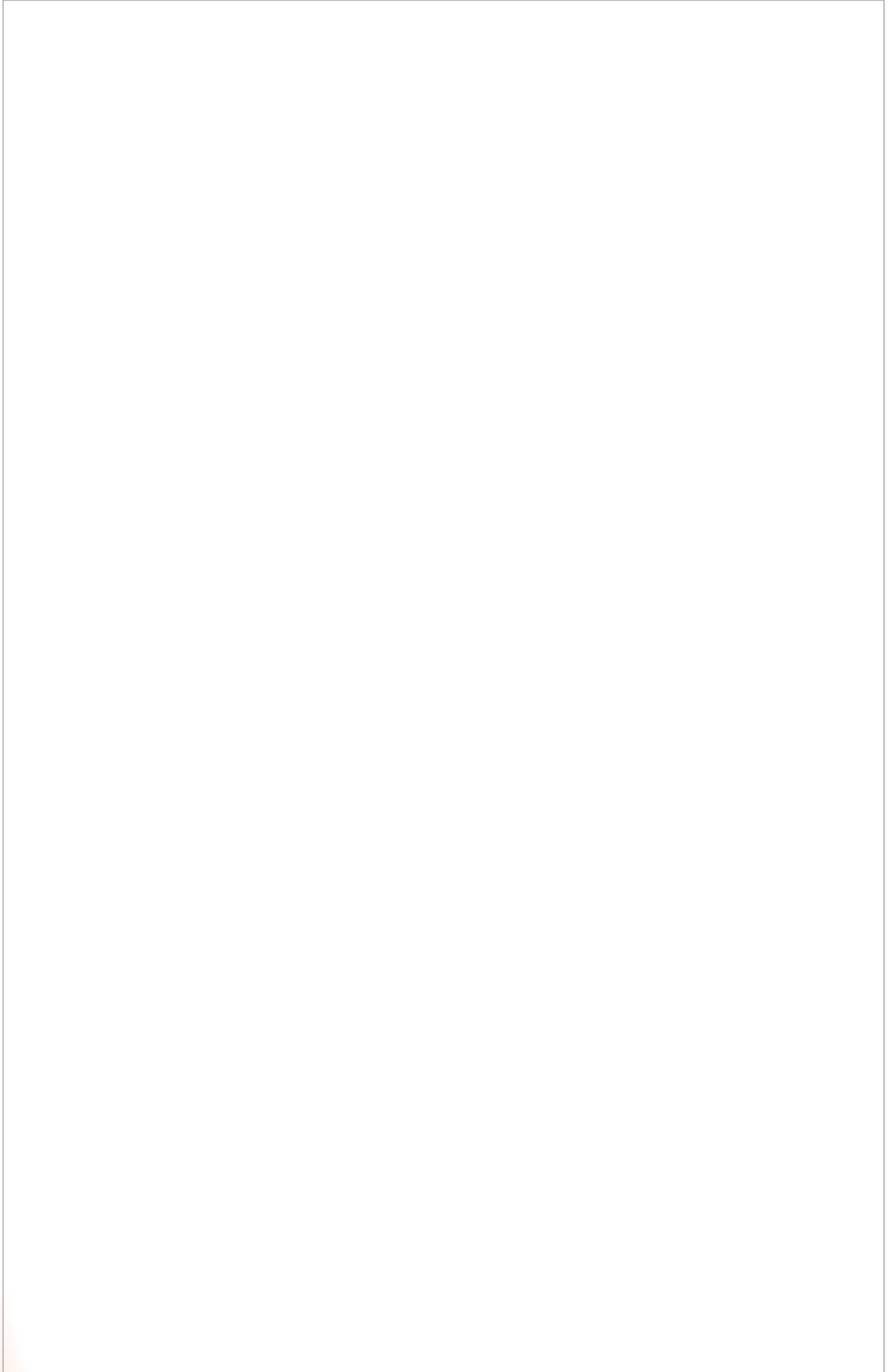
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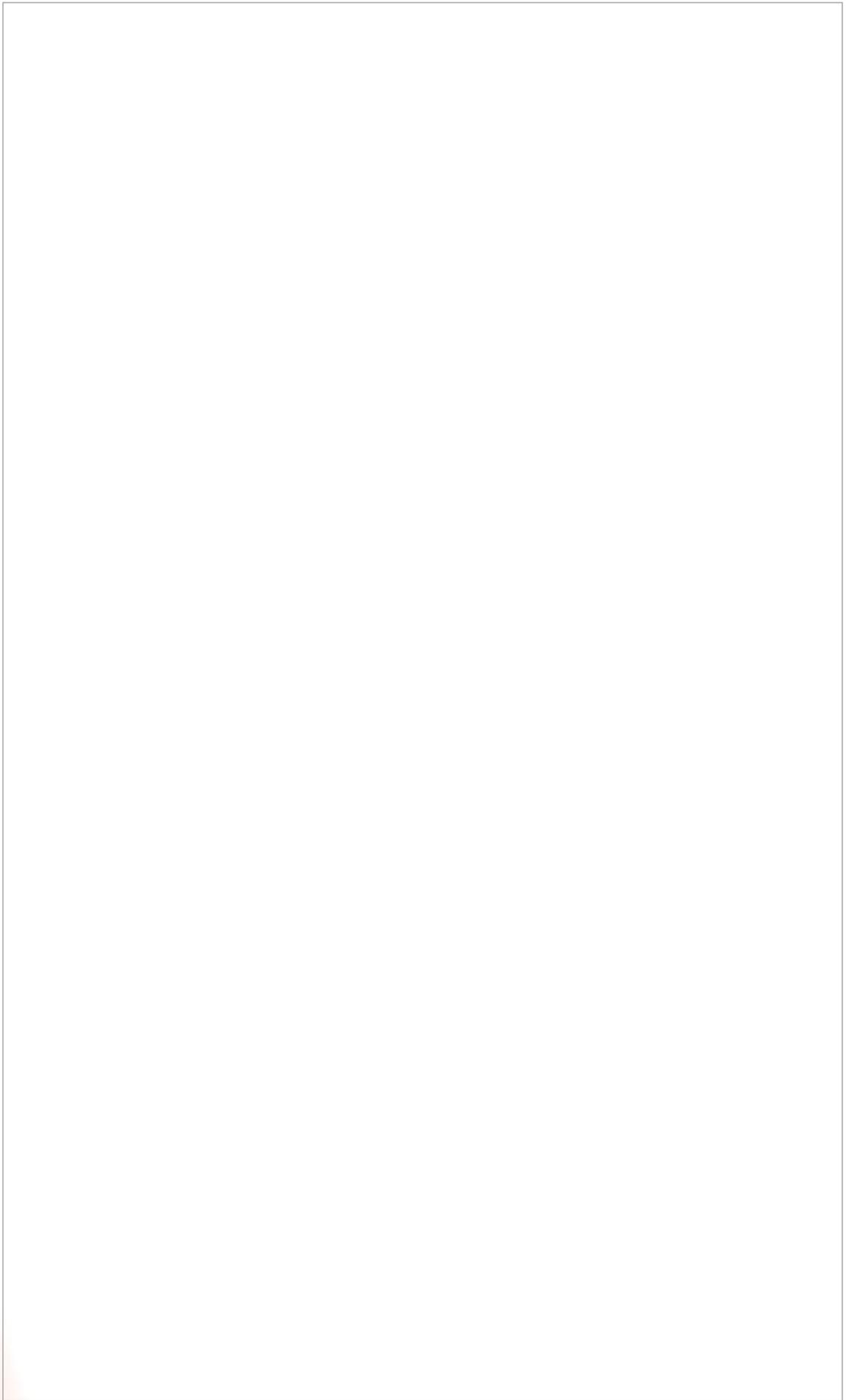
**Number of Hours spent on this activity:**

Learner Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*These following pages are left intentionally blank for you to use to attach additional evidence such as photographs, literature, additional write ups.*









## Appendix 2: Helpful Documentation

### Engagement Initial Plan

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief outline of activity to be undertaken by employer	Date to be completed/reviewed

Agreed Centre based activities to be undertaken by the centre representative:

Brief outline of activity to be undertaken by centre	Date to be completed/reviewed

Agreed actions for the learner to capture these activities:

Brief outline of activity to be undertaken by learner	Date to be completed/reviewed

Review Dates:

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3

Learner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Centre Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Amendments to Plan:

Brief outline of activity to be undertaken by employer	Date to be completed/reviewed	Signature

# Employer Involvement Policy

## Purpose/Scope

That there is a clear and accurate plan for Employer Involvement for the new Technical Qualifications for individual learners

That the activities undertaken with Employers are “meaningful”

To assure that individual learners and participating employers are clear on activity aims and objectives

To be part of an audit trail of learner employer involvement achievement records

To provide feedback to inform centre quality improvement of employer involvement

## Definitions/Terminology

Examples of ‘meaningful activity’ include:

- structured work experience or work placements that develop skills and knowledge relevant to the qualification
- project(s), exercise(s) and/or assessments/examination(s) set with input from industry practitioner(s)
- units delivered or co-delivered by an industry practitioner(s) - this could take the form of master classes or guest lectures
- industry practitioners operating as ‘expert witnesses’ that contribute to the assessment of a student’s 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

## Responsibilities

The centre will need to consider that there is an appropriate member of staff to ensure that meaningful activity is undertaken by learners studying on Technical Qualifications.

## Procedures

**Staff briefing:** all Assessors, Lead Internal Verifiers and Internal Verifiers require regular briefing on BTEC processes

**Employer Involvement Plan:** annually agreed to cover all learners, designated units and assignments. The plan should be drawn up at the beginning of the programme and monitored throughout the year

**Confirmation of meaningful activity:** carried out before the activity is undertaken to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Documented records of meaningful activity must be kept

**Internal Verification of meaningful activity:** must verify a sufficient sample of activity undertaken. Where required feedback and support should be given to designated Unit Assessors

**Standards Verification:** you should have in place monitoring and review procedures for Standards Verification outcomes. Procedures are required to deal with unsuccessful standards verification samples.

**Meaningful activity records:** must be correctly maintained and kept securely for 3 years after certification.

This is what an Employer Involvement Policy might look like. You may use this as a starting point for your own policy. Customise and badge it for your centre. Specific procedures, based on your policy and relevant to your centre, should be developed.

## Employer Involvement Policy

### Aim

- Employer involvement in the delivery and/or assessment of technical qualifications provides a clear 'line of sight' to work, enriches learning and raises the credibility of the qualification
- To ensure a designated lead for Employer Involvement
- requires all learners to undertake meaningful activity involving employers during their study
- To ensure that there is an accurate and detailed recording of meaningful employer involvement for every individual learner
- The contribution of meaningful activities to the qualification must be significant and relate to the qualification as a minimum.

### In order to do this, the centre will

- Produce an Employer Involvement plan at the start of the programme that reflects the meaningful activities that contribute to the technical qualification.
- Produce a clear and accurate meaningful activity plan that covers all learners
- Establish and agree milestones with employers to develop, execute and review meaningful activities for learners
- Confirm learner engagement against the defined meaningful activities identified.
- Ensure effective, reliable and accurate tracking / recording of individual learner involvement in meaningful activity in relation to the individual learner field of study

- Prepare the learner to engage actively and positively with opportunities offered with employer involvement
- Develop robust and accurate recording procedures that minimise the opportunity for malpractice
- Maintain a robust and rigorous quality assurance procedure
- Provide evidence for standards verification and quality management review as required by the awarding body
- Monitor SV and QMR reports and undertake any remedial action required
- Share good practice between all Technical qualification teams in reference to employer involvement
- Ensure that all staff teaching on Technical qualifications understand the requirements and importance of meaningful employer involvement.
- Provide resources to ensure effective employer involvement and accurate monitoring and recording.
- A Standardised centre approach to documentation used across the centre for the purpose of employer involvement
- An annual review of employer involvement to ensure that activities are meaningful and appropriate and enhance all future employer involvement
- Secure records of all activities are maintained

**BTEC qualification specifications:** These provide guidance on assessment for each BTEC qualification. All staff teaching on BTEC programmes must have access to the relevant specification. They are published on our website.

**BTEC Guide to Centre Assessment and BTEC Guide to Centre Assessment Levels 4-7:** Valuable resources for centres in planning, quality assuring and delivering BTEC programmes.

**BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification:** A valuable resource for centres in planning, quality assuring and delivering BTEC programmes.

