



WorkSkills from Edexcel

WorkSkills for offender learners

People with a criminal record often experience great difficulty finding work. The factors working against them can include low self esteem, a lack of key workplace skills, poor educational experiences and discrimination on the part of employers. Such individuals need quality careers advice, but most importantly they need the opportunity to develop the skills to gain and retain a job.

Delivering the skills employers want

Offender skills and offender employment form an essential element of both the Government's Skills for Life and Skills Strategies policies. CBI-commissioned research shows that the key qualities that employers look for when recruiting are communication skills, teamwork, self-management and a positive attitude towards work*. **WorkSkills** delivers exactly the soft skills needed to be successful in employment and meet the needs of today's employers.

*The table below lists skills that an offender may already have, and suggests the **WorkSkills** units that they could take to gain formal recognition for those skills. It also identifies potential skills gaps and names the **WorkSkills** units which could help them to upskill.*

| Offender Learners: representative profile | WorkSkills unit suggestions | Learner benefits |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Potential unrecognised existing skills | Earn recognition | Offender Learners: |
| Self-knowledge | Self-Assessment | - gain formal recognition for knowing strengths and weaknesses and identifying goals |
| Group working | Working in a Team | - recognise the disciplines they have used during teamwork (in or out of custody) and their value to an employer |
| | Upskill | Offender Learners: |
| Appropriate workplace behaviour | Conduct at Work | - behave with confidence in a work environment |
| Job hunting skills | Searching for a Job | - learn which job roles match their abilities and how vacancies are advertised |
| Knowledge of diverse working environments | Alternatives to Paid Work | - gain valuable references from voluntary work and discover personal talents |

*Note: There are 88 units in the highly flexible **WorkSkills** suite. The central column of this table features just 5 of the units to give you a flavour of the choice available*

WorkSkills in action

Gary, 46, currently in custody

Gary is hoping for early parole next year.



Where I am now

"I suppose I'm what they call a persistent re-offender. I've been inside off and on since my early 20s. There's lots of reasons for my re-offending but lack of work is a big one. That's why I want to do **WorkSkills**. I know some people will never see past my criminal record. But in the past I've met employers who would have given me a job if I'd had skills to offer them. I reckon with **WorkSkills** I can get over that hurdle."

Where I want WorkSkills to take me

"Into a job – that's where I want **WorkSkills** to take me. I didn't think I had any skills to speak of but my teacher's explained that the things I've learned from working in prison will help me to take the *Working in a Team* unit. I'm definitely going to keep this up when I get out because then I'll get a BTEC. A proper qualification will give me the confidence to look for a job."

This is a representative composite case study based on conversations about WorkSkills held between Edexcel researchers and offenders.

Flexibility for offenders in custody

Not all offenders go to prison, but for those that do, transfers and early release make long term planning impractical. In this context, **WorkSkills** units in which small chunks of each qualification are awarded at a time, reduce the risk of an offender moving on without receiving official certification for the skills they have learnt.

This bite-sized, flexible approach to accreditation motivates offenders to achieve. It also allows them to build on their qualification (or part qualification) after their release with educational providers including FE colleges.

For further information please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/workskills
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About Edexcel

Edexcel, a Pearson company, is the UK's largest awarding body offering academic and vocational qualifications and testing to schools, colleges, employers and other places of learning in the UK and internationally. In 2007 we delivered 9.6 million exam scripts in over 85 countries, with 4.5 million marked onscreen using the groundbreaking ePen technology.

Our general qualifications taken internationally include GCSEs, AS and A Levels, IGCSEs and O Levels. Our vocational qualifications include NVQ and BTEC from entry level to Higher National Diplomas. Our entire vocational portfolio had over one million registrations across 45 countries.

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