

# Construction

**Level 1: Starting work in construction (M/502/3695)**

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## Introduction

Our Skilled for Life resources are designed to provide you with ideas for delivering the unit content and engaging tasks and activities that will help learners work towards assessment.

The materials consist of standalone sheets that can be used in a range of ways to suit most situations. Whether you are working in a classroom or a less formal learning environment, with individual learners or with groups, it is hoped that you will find these sheets and the accompanying tutor guidance notes useful.

The sheets are in pdf format; they are downloadable and may be photocopied for use only within your institution. Alternatively, learners can access them on-screen – the write-in sections are interactive so that answers to activities can be recorded electronically.

Each sheet addresses one or more of the assessment criteria in the unit (ACs are clearly marked at the top of each page). Page 1 of each sheet provides a starter stimulus or introductory idea based around the suggested unit content in the specification; it can be used to explain key concepts, or as the basis for a discussion. You could use the stimulus to draw together key learning points and encourage learners to engage with the topic or concept from the outset. There is plenty of scope for you to introduce your own content or ideas as well.

Page 2 of each sheet includes tasks that will consolidate learners' knowledge and understanding and, in some cases, may provide evidence for assessment.

This tutor guidance document provides detailed suggestions for how to use each of the resource sheets in the unit, and includes tips and advice together with suggested extension activities, alternative ideas and useful reference sources and answers to activities.

## Guidance for tutors

### Unit overview

This unit introduces learners to the employment opportunities available within the construction industry and encourages them to make informed choices about their potential career options. Learners will also have the opportunity to explore the different types of construction companies that exist, with the aim of developing their understanding of both large and small construction organisations and the range of work undertaken by them.

This unit provides learners with the opportunity to think about the factors that affect career choices from a variety of perspectives, including:

- learners' existing skills and aspirations
- skills and abilities learners might wish to acquire
- how different employment situations can affect learners' lifestyles
- the relationship between lifestyles and employment opportunities.

### Learning and teaching activities in this unit

#### **Resource sheet 1 - *What are the jobs?***

Employment within the construction industry covers a wide variety of jobs. Often, the positions available are split into the categories of professional, technical and craft. Although some learners may be familiar with these terms, a definition of each word should be provided for those who aren't.

In response to the job advert shown in the starter stimulus, ask learners to suggest as many occupations they can think of and task them to arrange these jobs into three separate columns for the terms introduced above. Encourage learners to see if they can identify what lies beneath this ordering system. Use a group discussion to confirm their understanding.

For visual learners, you may want to create cue-cards and use them to illustrate some of the differences between these different categories.

For learners with limited knowledge of the industry, provide a list of occupations, similar to the list provided in the starter stimulus, and ask them why manual trades might be classified as craft occupations. Explain to the learners the differences between professional and technical and ask them to arrange the remaining occupations into those categories.

Provide learners with other examples of current job vacancies from local papers or the internet. Ask learners to interpret the requirements for each position, for example the difference between CSCS and CIS.



### Stretch activity

To challenge more confident learners, ask them to compare and contrast the different types of employment, such as self-employed or contractor, encouraging them to investigate the facets of each type. For example, the benefits of self-employment, the purpose of volunteering, etc.

### Activity 1 - *Get the right job*

This activity begins to identify the requirements of different jobs. To generate ideas, you may want to start a group discussion with the learners in which they work together to identify specific skills and personal attributes required when working on a construction site, i.e. working as part of a team, physical fitness, etc. Ask learners to explain the relevance of job specifications, with respect to their own personality traits or interests.

During this activity, it is important that you emphasise to the learners that craft occupations require fluency in Maths and English. Learners need to be aware that these skills will be considered crucial in their professional careers.

### Resource sheet 2 - *Who to work for?*

This starter stimulus illustrates the wide variety of businesses operating in the construction industry and discusses local versus international, or personal versus corporate. In pairs, ask your learners to compare and contrast the two images and discuss what it might be like to be employed by each business. Alternatively, ask your learners what the 'bread and butter' work of these two businesses is, for instance: long-term contracts, small domestic properties, general building work, specialist trades, etc.

Place learners in small project groups and ask them to investigate the different nature of work undertaken by a range of different-sized organisations. Ask the learners to provide an image which illustrates each of the following terms, and then ask them to explain their understanding of it:

- Civil engineering and infrastructure
- Mechanical and electrical engineering
- Speculative building
- Maintenance and repair

- Refurbishment, renovation or restoration
- Manufacture and supply of building materials

This kind of learner-led activity is particularly useful for developing communication skills and the ability to work as a team member.

### **Activity 2 - The size of businesses**

This activity aims to further develop the learners' understanding of the type of work undertaken by different-sized construction companies and how the size of the business affects this. Ask learners, either individually or in pairs, to research two companies of different sizes (ideally one small and one large company) and then complete the chart in the activity.

For less able learners, support can be given to help them describe the differences by re-capping some of the issues between small and large companies to help them generate their own conclusions.



#### **Stretch activity**

Challenge learners by suggesting they develop their charts further by exploring the different types of opportunities available to them in the companies they have researched. This would be useful for future reference since it allows learners to build their general knowledge on the subject and also to develop their decision-making processes about career choices.

### **Resource sheet 3 - What is it like at work?**

This starter stimulus refers to the work-life balance, both in terms of lifestyle affecting availability for employment and work commitments impacting on home-life. For this resource to be effective, you must emphasise that learners need to be relatively honest and realistic about their intentions. Learners may require further support and insight from you as it may become apparent that their career choices are based on emotional rather than cognitive responses.

You could start the activity by asking the learners to identify the common characteristics of craft jobs; for instance: physical fitness, mental arithmetic, working in bad weather, monotony of machinery, etc. Encourage them to think about the less appealing aspects of these trades, and then ask them what personal strategies they might use to overcome these.



### Stretch activity

Challenge more confident learners by asking them to create a better diagram in which to compare and contrast the craft jobs with the professional or technical positions, perhaps by using other words for the different sections.

### Activity 3 - How does work affect us?

This activity follows on from the previous discussion concerning the work-life balance. You could collect the learners' comments or write some suitable statements which describe the reasons for wanting employment. Alternatively, you could ask your learners to work in pairs and write nine statements of their own as a way of demonstrating their understanding of this task. Suitable phrases could include the following.

- I want to work for a multi-national company.
- I want to work in my own neighbourhood.
- I want to work in the same business as my friends.
- I want a job that will give me money to do other things.
- I want a wage for what I currently do as a hobby.
- I want to spend lots of time with my family and friends.
- I only want to work for one company for my whole life.
- I want to keep learning at work and do a wide range of jobs.
- I don't mind working late nights or weekends.

One possible way of visually displaying these sentences is through the use of a 'Diamond Nine'. This has the added advantage over other ranking exercises due to its visual structure. Although it can be done with simple strips of card, writing the text onto tiles which slot together into a diamond allows for more connections to be made between the individual statements. It is useful for when there are no 'right or wrong' answers, such as in this case.

### Resource sheet 4 - Making career choices

These case studies reflect the difficult choices to be made about short-term gains versus long-term prospects. Use them to start a group discussion about the decision-making process, with respect to career choices. You may need to prompt your learners to think more about the general principles behind the stories rather than the actual details. You may wish to encourage them to examine the consequences or risks of each decision.

With respect to personal development and work-readiness, you may want to promote one or more of the following skills.

- **Analytical** – evaluating and organising of information.
- **Application** – applying knowledge or techniques into practice.
- **Creative** – when other, less obvious, solutions may be necessary.
- **Communication and social** – being engaged in a group discussion.
- **Self-awareness** – being aware of own prejudices and bias.

Case studies provide an opportunity for learners to reflect upon questions which don't always have a definitive answer, and, since it is often the actual process rather than the end result that is the most significant, this may be an ideal opportunity to assess students for Learning Outcome 5 and 6.

#### **Activity 4 - Which career for you?**

The activity sheet demonstrates the benefit of making realistic career choices, through research and acquiring up-to-date information. You may want to provide a ready-made selection of job opportunities in order to highlight significant points such as entry requirements or qualifications, provision of in-house training, length of contract, type of employment, etc. Encourage learners to complete the table and explain why their personal skills and abilities fulfil the job specifications, and how this employment opportunity relates to their own aspirations. If learners have home-life commitments that affect their chances of employment, discuss the possibility of alternative strategies with them and encourage them to investigate suitable solutions.

### **Guidance for Assessment criteria 5.1, 6.1 & 6.2**

Activity sheets have not been supplied for the following assessment criteria. Instead, guidance for assessing these assessment criteria relating to teamwork, following instructions and communicating appropriately can be found below. Learners will need to exhibit these skills throughout this unit (and the other units they undertake) and you will need to record their abilities when displaying these skills.

#### **Assessment criteria 5.1**

This assessment criteria is about demonstrating good team working skills through working responsibly and cooperatively.

Providing an example which demonstrates the ability of learners to work in a team is a common requirement on a job application form. For

learners with a limited work-related experience, this would be an ideal opportunity for them to develop that statement themselves. You might want to consider a small group project, where they research and present the advantages and disadvantages of cooperation versus competition. You could also encourage learners to identify examples which illustrate the social responsibility of an individual within a group. You may also want to deliver a session on SWOT analysis, through which your learners will recognise the value of team-work, including peer-assessment.

Alternatively, the assessment criteria could be evidenced through a witness statement from a member of staff after observing the individual learner's performance in other activities.

### **Assessment criteria 6.1**

This assessment criteria is about following instructions when working with others.

This is another requirement commonly seen on application forms so, if possible, encourage your learners to compose personal statements covering this themselves. Although their piece of writing may not be completely sufficient to fulfil the criteria, it is a useful formative exercise in developing the cognitive skills required to produce a personal statement to complement their CV. You might consider setting a small group project where learners compare examples of 'following instructions when working with others'.

Alternatively, the assessment criteria could be evidenced through a witness statement from a member of staff, after observing the individual learner's performance in other activities.

### **Assessment criteria 6.2**

This assessment criteria is about communicating appropriately with others.

Having 'good communication skills' is often a mandatory requirement in job specifications so, like the previous examples, use this activity as an opportunity to improve your learners' literacy skills. Encourage them to research the meaning of this phrase with regard to working in construction. Develop their understanding further by asking them why effective spoken communication is particularly important in construction. To help generate ideas, provide an example such as: 'effective communication is essential for everyone's safety and the success of work outputs.'

Ask learners to identify examples of speaking skills (how to express oneself, respond properly, give relevant information to colleagues, supervisors, etc.) and listening and comprehension (clarifying instructions, confirming explanations, etc.).

Alternatively, the assessment criteria could be evidenced through a witness statement from a member of staff, after observing the individual learner's performance in other activities.

## **Useful resources**

### **Websites**

<http://tlp.excellencegateway.org.uk/tlp/cbe/resource/>  
Resources for Construction and the Built Environment

<http://www.cbelearning.com/default.aspx>  
Construction and the Built Environment teaching resource for the diploma

<http://www.bconstructive.co.uk/>  
CITB Apprenticeship website

<http://www.citbcsni.org.uk/careers>  
CITB Northern Ireland which provides downloadable factsheets on different occupations

<http://www.ciob.org.uk/careers/buildingcareers>  
Information about graduate occupations and opportunities

<http://www.cskills.org/>  
The CITB (Construction Skills) website

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/advice/planning/jobfamily/Pages/construction.aspx>  
Profiles of a range of different jobs in construction

<http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Embedded Learning/Employability/Skills for construction/>  
Skills for Life embedded learning for working in construction