

DARLINGTON COLLEGE

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – July 2008

Strategy statements

Darlington College is committed to working with employers to contribute to local, regional and national productivity.

In doing this 2 principle strands are recognised:

- The development of a range of training and business support services tailored to meet the needs of employers, and
- Increasing the knowledge, skills and competences of learners to realise their workplace and career potential

Principles

In order to deliver this strategy the College recognises the need to adopt the following key principles:

- To provide high quality, flexible, responsive solutions to meet both employer and employee need,
- All employer contacts to be treated in a respectful and efficient manner,
- All staff involved in employer relationships to maintain high standards of professionalism and work towards the highest levels of customer satisfaction
- To use the College Sector Engagement Groups as a key strategic responsiveness tool to both inform and retrieve labour market information that will influence future developments

Aims objectives and indicators of success

The College has a number of broad strategic aims and objectives for employer engagement and has developed indicators of success that reflect the key policy drivers; quality, responsiveness and flexibility and increased industry productivity and skills development. These aims and objectives contribute to wider strategic developments at regional and sub-regional level and are integral to the College's strategic plan. It should be noted that the individual aims and objectives are not necessarily standalone, since objectives may and do contribute to a number of aims.

1. **Aim one - to embed the Employer Engagement Team, within the College and raise awareness with Employers through a "one stop" business operation**

Objective	Indicators of success
To launch single corporate identity for employer engagement	Monitor use of communication channels, eg phones, website
To raise the profile of the new EE team in College through intranet and Business Bulletin	Feedback from staff Satisfaction Survey

To build on the strengths of existing relationships to develop new ones, thereby ensuring that the College's reputation of being a key player for employer focused educational and training is reinforced.	Increased repeat and new business Employer Satisfaction Survey
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2. Aim two - to improve the communication channels used by employers to make contact with the college

Objective	Indicators of success
To review current communication channels, identify any gaps and implement plans to address these gaps	Employers report improved communications
To develop and implement a fit for purpose Customer Relationship Management system that will consolidate employer databases across the college	Improved information available to monitor and assess communication with employers
To prepare effectively for the new CRM system by ensuring current databases are cleansed and updated	Number of web site hits for employer provision Feedback from employers

3. Aim three – to extend working relationships with key brokerages in order to improve provision and meet employer needs

Objective	Indicators of success
To review representation on key local and regional skills forums and groups, eg LSC/SSC, and explore further partnerships as appropriate	College membership of employer based networks Attendance at appropriate groups. Feedback from groups to inform planning
To review current employer networks , in terms of vocational area coverage and activities	Increase in number of Task and network Groups Feedback from Task Groups
To increase the rigour of market analysis and the use of LMI, enabling the College to be proactive in addressing changes in employer needs	New / redesign / closure of provision directly attributable to LMI New / redesign / closure of provision directly attributable to employer dialogue
To develop and expand Train to Gain, Apprenticeship and full cost provision through closer relationships with key brokerages and stakeholder networks	Increased contracts Compacts Representation on networks
To review progression routes to ensure that provision is available where appropriate at all levels, including HE	Increased range of provision HEI Networks

4. Aim four – to extend the college's ability to be responsive to employer needs

Objective	Indicators of success
To capture the employer voice through survey's covering all aspects of employer engagement, and forums	Employer Satisfaction surveys Trends of survey data Evidence of increased activity at forums
To ensure that all services offered cause minimal disruption to the employer and delivered desired outcomes	Repeat and new business
To embed a cross college approach to monitoring and tracking the progress of learners on WBL and Train to Gain programmes, enabling appropriate information to be fed back to employers on a timely basis	Standardised learner tracking WBL MIS System

5. Aim five – to embed within staff development training designed to improve employer engagement

Objective	Indicators of success
To review and encourage industrial updating opportunities for WBL Assessors	Additional industrial updating activity CPD Records updated
To ensure that college staff who correspond with employers are trained and focused to deliver excellent customer service	Increased customer service and related training Good dialogue between curriculum areas and the Employer Engagement team

6. Aim six – to review, develop and improve Quality Assurance processes for employer led provision

Objective	Indicators of success
To ensure the college demonstrates good employer related QA processes	Successful Training Quality Standard application Part A and Part B IV and EV reports Quality marks – eg Matrix Internal and external audit reports

7. Aim seven – to increase employer engagement activity

Objective	Indicators of success
To increase starts on apprenticeships programmes and Train to Gain, and expand business engaged in full cost activity with the college	Increased contracts Direct mailings Number of employer visits and conversion rates

	Number of new businesses using college services Churn rates (ratio of new to lost customers) Achievement of income targets, and year on year growth Business updates
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Success Measures

The Employer Engagement Strategy will be evaluated and monitored by the Director of Employer Engagement, who will report to the College Executive.

Measure of success will include:

- Employer surveys and high levels of satisfaction
- Employer data is managed and used effectively to deliver services to business
- Increased numbers of New businesses request training and development services to be delivered
- Conversion rates are monitored to show effectiveness of employer engagement
- Performance against external contacts and targets for income generation
- Trends in employer feedback
- Response times for dealing with enquiries are monitored and reviewed

End

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