Enhanced Information Technology

Programme Specification

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Contents

1.   Introduction

This Programme Specification sets out the requirements for delivery of the Enhanced Information Technology Programme. It provides an overview of the programme requirements, including learner eligibility and entry conditions; and details the data submission requirements to enable Medr to monitor programme delivery and learning outcomes for the Enhanced Information Technology Programme.

This Specification also forms part of the Agreement between institutions and the Welsh Ministers for the delivery and funding of Enhanced Learning Programmes. You must ensure that your Enhanced Information Technology Programme provision adheres to this Programme Specification.

Two programmes of study are currently available; at level 2 and level 3.

2.   Purpose of the Programme

The Enhanced Information Technology Programme is a one-year programme, which has been developed to equip learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to enter into a career in the Information Technology industry.

The Programme covers a range of occupational routes at level 2 and level 3 and offers an opportunity for learners to gain industry-recognised qualifications alongside hands-on work experience.

The main aim of the Enhanced Information Technology Programme is to progress learners:
- preferably onto a full apprenticeship in the Information and Communications Technology industry; or
- into employment upon completion of the programme.

At the same time the Programme will look to:
- increase the standard number of hours of learning delivered by institutions to a minimum of 24 hours per week to cover for an enhanced curriculum;
- provide an opportunity for learners to gain level 2 or level 3 qualifications across a range of occupational routes;
- deliver qualifications to learners that meet identified employer needs within the region;
- utilise direct employer engagement through the work placement element of the learning programmes; and
- prepare participants for entry into employment via the Apprenticeship Programme where they will work towards an Apprenticeship framework.

3. Delivery Overview

Each programme should be delivered on a full-time basis for a minimum average of 24 hours per week over a total of at least 40 weeks.

As an integral part, programmes must include at least 5 weeks of work placement (up to a maximum of 12 weeks)[1] or the equivalent in individual days and should also incorporate a series of workplace trips or visits from industry specialists. It is expected that this will involve a minimum of 5 visits in the first 6 months of the programme.

As this is an Enhanced Information Technology Programme, the learning and training undertaken should be at a higher level of intensity than normal provision, with some learning undertaken at a higher level where needed in order to satisfy the expectations and requirements of the sector.

4. Learner Eligibility and Entry Requirements

To be eligible for entry onto the programme a learner must be aged 16 to 24 on 31 August, immediately prior to the commencement of the programme. Please note that Medr also expects priority to be given, in the first instance, to those learners aged 16 to 19 on the 31 August, immediately prior to the commencement of the programme.

The following minimum requirements will apply for all entrants to the programme:

Level 2
- a minimum of 4 GCSEs at grade C or above,
- at least one grade C must be achieved in:
  either
  - o GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy or
  - o GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language

OR
- successful completion of a level 1 Diploma in Information Technology with an appropriate mix of units.

Level 3
- a minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade C or above,
- at least one grade C must be achieved in:
  either
  - o GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy or
  - o GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language

OR
- successful completion of a level 2 Extended Certificate or Diploma in Information and Communications Technology with an appropriate mix of units.

Note: Learners who have achieved a grade D in GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy may be admitted on a level 2 or level 3 programme provided they have achieved a grade C or above in GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language. By the

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[1] The same minimum average of 24 hours per week applies.

same token, learners who have achieved a grade D in GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language can be admitted provided they have achieved a grade C or above in GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy. Only one grade D in either GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy or GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language is acceptable, but not in both. Learners who have achieved a grade D on entry in either GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy or GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language should be working towards a grade C or above as part of their programme of learning.

Colleges may want to set higher eligibility criteria if previous experience suggests completion and successful outcome require more than the minimum set out in this document.

5.   <u>Programme Content</u>

In line with the requirements set out in the *Post-16 Funding Framework – Guide and Programmes Directory*[2], each programme must follow the same basic structure as other full-time learning programmes, namely:
- a Core;
- Main Qualification(s);
- Community Learner Industry Focus (CLIF); and
- Work Related Experience (via Work Placement).

The Core

The core of the programme must include the delivery of relevant Essential Skills Wales (ESW) or GCSE qualifications to support entry on to an Apprenticeship programme. The minimum requirement includes Essential Communication Skills and Essential Application of Number Skills.

The level of ESW may be different to the main qualification(s), based on the outcomes of the initial diagnostic assessment for each learner. ESW qualifications may be at the same level or one level above or below, but as a minimum we would expect learners on the level 2 programme to be undertaking ESW at level 1 and learners on level 3 programmes to be undertaking ESW at level 2.

Learners working towards GCSE Mathematics / GCSE Mathematics Numeracy or GCSE English / GCSE Welsh (First) Language are not required to undertake separate Essential Communication Skills and Essential Application of Number Skills alongside each GCSE.

Main Qualification(s)

Main qualification(s) within learning programmes must be selected from those listed on the Qualifications in Wales database[3] as eligible for funding and approved for delivery, and must relate to the ICT Professionals learning area.

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[2] Please see <u>Funding for providers</u>.
[3] The QiW database can be accessed via the following link: <u>Qualifications in Wales</u>.

This component of the programme must include, as a minimum, <u>at least one full Diploma</u> in an Information and Communications Technology discipline. The Diploma must be at the same level as that of the learning programme.

The GLH for the Main Qualification component must total at least 500 GLH. Where a full Diploma has fewer than 500 GLH, FE institutions should supplement the learner's programme with additional qualifications (or qualification units) to arrive at 500 GLH.

Please note that any additional qualifications or qualification hours delivered under the Main Qualification Component must be at the same level (or a level above) as that of the learning programme.

Community Learner Industry Focus (CLIF)

This component of the programme should be used to support the delivery of additional learning in response to specific sector or employer demand.

Qualifications delivered under the CLIF should add value to a programme by developing wider skills or by developing skills to a higher level to aid progression to employment or an apprenticeship programme. CLIF is met through delivering Quality Assured Lifelong Learning (QALL) units or equivalent recognised learning listed on the QiW database and may be delivered at a lower or higher level than the main qualification.

Institutions also have the flexibility to tailor the CLIF to provide additional support for individual learners, e.g. to develop literacy and numeracy skills or personal and social skills.

Work Placements

For the work placements, institutions are expected to work with employers to provide meaningful and hands-on work experience for learners. This element of the programme can be completed outside of term time or during half-term.

The Programme must include at least one work placement with an employer not partly or wholly owned by the institution. A college-based Realistic Working Environment (RWE) should only be used as a last resort to make up the required number of days.

Please note that the use of RWE may adversely affect the progression of a learner, as feedback from industry indicates that a placement in a True Work Environment is more advantageous for learners looking to progress to employment or an apprenticeship.

Institutions must ensure that arrangements are in place to oversee any work placements; including up-to-date health and safety and risk assessments.

Institutions must also ensure that each learner has a Work Placement Plan, which sets out his/her planned attendance and the arrangements in place for monitoring the placement. A suggested template for a Work Placement Plan is attached at Annex A.

Toolkit

Each learner is eligible to receive a toolkit, the value of which should be at least £200. Financial provision for the purchase of this has been included in the overall programme funding.

6.   Data Submission Requirements

Medr will use data from the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR) / Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) to monitor programme delivery and learning outcomes for the Enhanced Information Technology Programme.

In line with the conditions set out in the annual *Grant Award Letter*, institutions must ensure that data is submitted in the correct format and in a timely manner.

The LLWR User Support Manual[4] and the PLASC Technical Completion Notes[5] set out the guidelines that institutions should follow when submitting data for the current academic year.

Programme Codes

The following programme codes (LP74) should be used for learners on the Enhanced Information Technology Programmes:

0601B02B   Enhanced IT Practitioners Level 2
0601B03B   Enhanced IT Practitioners Level 3

Recording of Work Placement(s)

Medr will use the information submitted via the LLWR fields *LP12 (Employer Name)* and *LP13 (Employer Postcode)* to monitor this requirement, thus institutions must ensure that data is completed in a timely manner for each learner. We appreciate that some learners will not be linked with an employer or have a work placement in place at the start of the programme, thus the expectation is that the relevant details to be populated as soon as the employer information is known and whilst the learner is still on-programme.

Institutions must also ensure that any hours spent on work placement with an employer are recorded using the following LLWR fields:
- *LP70 (Estimated Work Based Hours)*; and
- *LP72 (Actual Work Based Hours)*.

7.   Monitoring and Audit

Monitoring and audit will play a role in ensuring that the guidance is being applied consistently and to help assess whether policies, procedures and controls are adequate.

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[4] See Lifelong learning Wales record (LLWR).
[5] See Pupil level annual school census (PLASC).

Monitoring Approach

The approach to monitoring will focus on the following areas:
- compliance with the programme's specifications; and
- learning outcomes for the programme.

This will be achieved through a combination of in-year and end-of year monitoring; a data matching exercise; and detailed audit testing of learners on Enhanced Programmes.

Compliance with Programme Specification

Medr will use LLWR / PLASC data to monitor compliance with the programme specification. This will include:
- regular monitoring of learners' work placements using *LP12* and *LP13* data; and
- monitoring of the data from the programme and activity datasets to check that delivery requirements are being met.

Learning Outcomes

Learner destination is a key performance measure for the programme and crucial in evaluating programme delivery. The expectation is that the majority of learners who successfully complete the Enhanced Information Technology Programme will progress to employment and, ideally, employment with an apprenticeship in an Information and Communications Technology discipline.

We recognise, however, that a handful of learners may wish to continue with their full-time studies after completing an Enhanced Information Technology Programme. Where this is the case, we would expect learners who complete the level 2 programme to progress to a level 3 programme in Information and Communications Technology or a related discipline.

For learners who have completed the level 3 programme, progression should be on to the second year of a full-time level 3 programme where the learning will support progress towards entering full-time higher education or on to an apprenticeship programme.

Audit Testing

In addition to the approach to monitoring set out above, all data returned by the Further Education institutions will be subject to existing end of year audit requirements[6]. Within this, a particular emphasis will be placed in the *Auditors' Notes for Guidance* to ensure that external auditors appropriately sample learners undertaking the Enhanced Programmes.

8.   Contact details

For any queries relating to the content of this Programme Specification, please contact Medr at the following mailbox: InvestmentandPerformance@medr.cymru.

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[6] The audit requirements for the current year will be published at the end of the academic year.

9.   Annexes

A. Recording the Work Experience[7]

Enhanced Information Technology Programme – Work Placement Plan	
Learner Name:	
Qualification(s) being undertaken:	
Employer Name:	
Work Placement Address:	
Nature of Business:	
Name of person learner will report to:	
Planned attendance:	
Planned monitoring visits by tutor:	

I agree to the above Work Placement Plan:

Signed by Learner:	Signed by Tutor:	Signed for Employer:
………………………………	………………………………	……………………………..
Learner name:	Tutor name:	Position in company:
………………………………	………………………………	……………………………..
Date:	Date:	Date:
………………………………..	………………………………	……………………………..

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[7] NB: This is only a suggested template for the Work Placement Plan