

## Introduction to Work Place Skills (IWPS) Frequently Asked Questions Updated May 2018

### Q. What is Introduction to Work Place Skills (IWPS)?

IWPS consists of existing of SQA nationally recognised core skills units (Communication, Numeracy and ICT) which supports the SDS Customised Unit Practical Work Place Skills: First Steps. The customised unit forms a structured framework around the delivery of work experience. The award is SCQF credit rated and sits at SCQF level 3. IWPS is suitable for delivery within stage 2 of the [Employability Pipeline](#).

### Q. How long does it take to deliver IWPS?

IWPS has 33 SCQF credit points, which equates to notional 330 hours of learning. As part of IWPS, an individual will complete a 150 hours work experience, this can be delivered 1- 2 days per week. It is important to emphasise to learning providers that there can be a cross over in terms of content. Therefore, depending on the model/type of programme, it can take an average of 10-12 weeks to deliver the full IWPS qualification.

### Q. How does a learning provider get approval to deliver the IWPS qualification?

If the learning provider is already an SQA Approved Centre, they should approach their SQA account manager (they should be aware of who this is; if they are not, the person who manages their SQA entries will know), or **call the SQA Contact centre on 0303 333 0330**.

The SQA account manager will supply the provider with the SA1 approval form which they need to complete. The process of approval should take no longer than 4-6 weeks if everything is in order.

**Note** that colleges and schools do not receive “devolved approval” for this award and will also have to complete the SA1 approval form.

If the learning provider is not already an SQA Approved Centre, the organisation will need to apply to become one. This involves having robust quality assurance policies and procedures in place.

**SQA are very supportive of centres wishing to become approved. Please contact SQA to discuss this in more detail.**

### Q. How much does it cost to get approval/enter candidates for the IWPS award?

If the Approved Centre (SQA’s name for any approved provider) is experienced in delivering both employability and core skills units from SQA, they are likely to only be asked to undertake a “desktop” approval. This means that the External Verifier (EV) will only view the documentation that is sent to them and either rubber stamp it or ask for further evidence; this costs £50. If the centre has no experience in delivering these areas, they may require a visit from an SQA External Verifier.

**The entry fee for IWPS award is £37.50 per candidate. Note that the centre would also be charged £37.50 to enter only the SDS Customised Unit -Practical Work Place Skills; First Steps. However, if a candidate achieves only some parts of IWPS, the centre can withdraw the candidate from the group award and enter them into the individual units they have achieved at no extra cost.** Please contact SQA directly to discuss approvals and costings.

**Q. What resources can SQA support centres with to help them gain approval?**

The approval process asks about how the award will be delivered (teaching and learning materials) and how it will be assessed. For information on the NQ & Work place Core Skills Units please refer to the SQA secure website, which is open to all SQA Approved Centres. **If you don't have access to the Secure site then please contact SQA for further details.**

**Q. How is IWPS externally verified?**

Once an SQA Approved Centre gains approval and enters candidates, they will be selected for a verification activity. Qualification verification is the process by which SQA ensures centres are delivering and assessing candidates in line with the qualification standards and that assessment decisions comply with SQA quality assurance criteria.

**Q. The SDS customised unit, "Practical Work Place Skills; First Steps," uses employer endorsement as the primary part of the assessment process. How can an SQA Approved Centre ensure the reliability of such an approach?**

The SDS customised Unit Assessment Support Pack (ASP), provides detailed guidance on the approach an assessor can take to manage the use of the employer scorecard and ensure standardisation is achieved.

**Q. Does IWPS qualification cover job search?**

No - IWPS focuses on core skills and individuals becoming equipped with the skills, behaviours and attributes required for the work place. However, providers should consider delivering job seeking skills within their wider curriculum to support their learners needs. [My World of Work](#) – web based service provides resources and useful tools on job seeking and career information and advice. We would encourage all providers to access [My World of Work](#) with all their learners.

**Q. When is the best time to cover the SQA Core Skills Units?**

It is generally recommended that the preparatory phase is for the completion of the core skills units and preparing the learner for the work experience unit. This is set out in detail in the arrangements document. For information on Core Skills Units please refer SQA website.

**Q. What happens if the individual does not stay in the placement for the 150 hours?**

If the individual leaves the placement before the 150 hours is completed, the employer cannot assess them. Therefore, the IWPS will not be awarded in this case. If the individual changes placement, part of the way through the 150 hours, they must do at least 100 hours with the assessing employer to meet the requirements of SDS/SQA. A candidate may only change placements twice (a maximum of three times in exceptional circumstances), as set out in the guidance for the Practical Work Place Skills Unit: First Steps.

**If the individual finds employment during the 150 hours, this could be with the existing work placement employer or a different employer. We would encourage the providers to continue discussions with the employer to complete the score card and allow the individual to complete the IWPS qualification.** Please refer to the IWPS arrangements document for further guidance on this.

**Q. What if a candidate has already completed some of the SQA Units of the Qualification but not the work placement?**

If a candidate has completed units for the qualification, they will gain recognition of prior learning (RPL) and should not be required to re-do the learning. When the provider enters the candidate for the group award on the SQA system, the SQA system should automatically be able to identify this RPL.

**Note** the provider would still be required to enter the candidate for the whole group award.

**Q. What happens if an employer does not want to complete the paperwork to assess and sign off the individual?**

Before the individual starts the placement, the learning provider should negotiate with the employer what has to be undertaken and by whom. Part of the learning provider's role is to support the employer in the assessment process and completing the paperwork. Feedback has suggested that employers did not find this onerous and were accustomed to doing it to review their existing staff. A user-friendly scorecard is provided to make it as easy as possible for them. **Full guidance on how to approach this can be found in the Practical Work Place Skills: First Steps Unit documentation.**

**Q. What if the employer employs the candidate before they have completed the 150 hours, but does not then want to complete the scorecard?**

If the candidate completes 150 hours with the employer, but the provider is finding it difficult to get the employer to complete the scorecard, the scorecard can be completed without an employer signature, providing there is evidence of this positive outcome. **Full guidance on how to approach this can be found in the Practical Work Place Skills: First Steps Unit documentation.**

**Q. Can individuals have RPL for qualifications/modules they have already done?**

Yes – Learning providers should have processes in place to accredit RPL; if individuals have already successfully completed modules that will be on their SQA record.

**Q. What qualifications do staff delivering the award need?**

This particular type of qualification does not insist on assessor, verifier or other qualifications for staff that deliver the award. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the centres will be required to demonstrate the application of appropriate assessment and verification of the qualification, in accordance with their quality assurance policy. **It would be highly recommended that assessors and verifiers are experienced and skilled in these areas** (which assessor, verifier qualifications are designed to demonstrate). Note that the centres will be asked to provide details of delivering staff qualifications and experience to gain approval for delivery.

**Q. How long does paperwork need to be kept?**

SQA guidelines should be followed and the centres should have their own Internal Verification policy.

**Q. What are individuals being paid while they are participating in IWPS qualification?**

If learning providers are delivering **IWPS as part of the Employability fund** - Individuals, who are not in education, employment or training, aged 16, 17 or 18 and not in receipt of benefit, will get £55 training allowance from the [Employability Fund](#).

If individuals are over 18 and are in receipt of benefit **please refer to programme rules for eligibility on [Employability Fund](#).**

Those over 18 and on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or on other benefits such as universal credit will need to abide by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) rules in order to avoid their benefits being stopped. **Please refer to the EF programme rules for further guidance.**

The IWPS qualification can also be funded through a variety of national or local programmes on [The Employability Pipeline](#). – **Please check with individual providers for information on how they are funding their individual training programmes.**