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- The orientation was changed to landscape and margins adjusted to fit more text on one page

SDS Self-Assessment Exemplar 2023-24

Service Delivery

Title	Full Question	Describe and Evaluate what you do	What do you want to enhance?	Grade
Initial Assessment and Recruitment	1.1.1: How effective are our processes for recruitment and initial assessment of learners?	<p>Prior to starting on the programme, we meet each learner on a 121 basis to understand their motivations, ASN and any other requirements. At this session they undertake a half hour "off the shelf" assessment package which gives us a baseline on their core skills, personal development needs and learning style. Although meta-skills are not part of the framework(s) we currently deliver, we have introduced it into the initial assessment process This allows us to positively plan a tailored programme for each individual. All potential MA learners complete an application form. All Business and Administration learners are employed and are referred by the employers to the programme. Assessor meets potential learners and their supervisors initially in the workplace to discuss job role and duties and to understand how this matches the apprenticeship framework requirements. Engineering MA learners apply for the qualification and complete an online skills assessment and aptitude test in the office to determine whether they have the correct skills and aptitude to be an engineer. They are also interviewed by the senior assessor. The online skills assessment and aptitude testing enables us to measure learner current levels of aptitude to ensure that they have the appropriate skills to complete the qualification. This ensures that we are getting apprentices on the right units for them and their employer. The ITP is reflective of any additional support required by the learner, and this is shared with appropriate staff. Learner feedback says that they feel that they receive the appropriate support to help them to complete their programme. We run an SQA Navigator report for all learners during the initial assessment phase to identify prior learning and achievement, including Core Skills. Early identification of gaps in Core Skills enables us to fully utilise naturally occurring evidence and map this to the Core Skills units for our apprentices.</p>		Green

Induction	1.1.2: How effective are our processes for each learner's induction?	<p>All learners receive a comprehensive induction into their MA programme. All learners receive an induction book related to their programme of study which includes detailed policies and procedures, including re-assessment, data protection and health and safety. Learners are also introduced to their assessor / tutor during their induction and contact details and methods of communication are shared with them. The introduction of the induction handbook and its associated tutor induction handbook has been particularly effective as it allows us to ensure that all of our staff are providing a consistent and high standard induction and staff know when/if they have missed anything. For the Engineering MA we have 1 start date per year, and all learners are brought into the centre for a group induction prior to starting at college. New Engineering Employers all receive an induction which includes discussions about their roles and responsibilities, particularly in years 2-4 when the learner is work based. When we meet employers for initial assessment of new apprentices, we discuss with employers their requirements and input to the programme to ensure they are fully aware of requirements. This is a really helpful induction for employers to understand where they input etc. Business and Administration MA – inductions are carried out by the assessor in the workplace. Learners receive information on the format of the course, and we discuss unit choices with them. This is planned with the employer to ensure that the learner has time put aside for this, and the employer is also involved when selecting units (see above Initial assessment). Involvement of the employer and learner at this early stage ensures that the course content is closely mapped to the work activities undertaken by the learner. As a result, the evidence required is easily obtained and contextualised for the learner.</p>		Green
Learning and assessment planning	1.1.3: How effective is our learning and assessment planning?	<p>The results from initial assessment and discussion with the employer are used to inform a learning plan (LP) for each learner. LPs are completed by assessors with the learners. Individual additional support for learning is identified and this is recorded on the LP and sessions for additional support as well as regular support are planned in. Dates about peak work activity and shift patterns from employers are used to inform assessment plans for apprentices. Support that we have used in the past includes using coloured paper to support learners with dyslexia and utilising 1-1 support opportunities for learners with anxiety. Our adapted learning plan documentation allows us to plan effectively and the sessions we do to take time to sit down with learners on a 121 to do this are a very good use of time for the apprentices, and survey feedback from apprentices indicates they value this time and support.</p>		Green
Equality groups	1.1.4: How well have we designed and prepared our provision specifically to meet the	<p>Our processes for designing and planning delivery are set out within the other themes for this QI. We effectively tailor and individualise the planned learning for everyone. As set out in the rest of this QI, we are very good at identifying where adjustments are required for different individuals, particularly those who require delivery and assessment adaptation through our diagnostic approach and 121 sessions. All staff have access to the SDS Equality Guides and Resources, and this is accessed to support learner needs when required. Using these resources, staff have been able to identify local</p>		Green

	needs of different equality groups?	support agencies and have received advice from the local adult literacies network on how best to support learners with dyslexia and dyspraxia. Staff feedback that the SDS Equality resources are easy to use and provide them with valuable information and contacts to provide support for learners. Links with adult literacies have meant that we have been able to support individual learners with dyslexia to successfully complete their programme. Assistive software is available for learners while in centre if required. The software that we have in place has been utilised by a small number of learners, and this has supported them to successfully complete specific assignments.		
Transferable skills (core, meta, employability and career management skills)	1.1.5: How well have we designed and prepared to deliver transferable skills?	Core Skills for the Engineering MA is delivered by a subcontractor as part of year 1 of the qualification. Core Skills for Business and Administration learners is delivered internally. Core Skills for Business and Administration are fully contextualised, and where possible we try to embed the assessment of the Core Skills into the delivery and assessment of the units. Learners find that being able to relate the Core Skills to their job role means that they make more sense to them, and they understand how to apply them better. Learners are able to progress quickly through these units.	Core skills delivery by our subcontractor is not adequately contextualised. Ensure this is added to subcontractor meeting agendas as a standing item.	Amber
Employer involvement	1.1.6: How effectively have we utilised the employer voice to inform the design and preparation of delivery?	As set out above in 1.1. we always have an initial engagement with individual employers where we can identify the business and therefore identify gaps for training for each individual. The initial engagement with employers in our apprenticeship programme works well. This allows us to identify the appropriate ""optional units"" in our apprenticeships and to plan individual schedules of delivery and assessment according to employer needs. We complete an annual survey with our employers to find out whether they are happy with the provision, and whether there is anything that they would change. We have been able to change things in response to employer feedback. Some employers fed back that they would like more flexibility in the timings of assessor meetings, as their staff work shifts. We have been able to vary the times that the assessor meets with the learners to cover unsociable hours. Employers are grateful of this change and learners who work these shifts are making faster progress. We use our excellent employer relationships to identify gaps in provision in order to offer frameworks which address local demand. Employers feed back that this has helped them to recruit to hard to fill vacancies, and once recruited, staff are more likely to stay in the roles.		Green
Resources	1.2.1: How well do we plan resources to support effective delivery of	Business and Administration Learners complete their VQ using electronic portfolio and our Engineering Learners use the EAL paper-based portfolio. The electronic portfolios include all of the information that Learners need to complete the qualification including resources, framework documents and unit breakdowns making it easy to access for learners. Use of the EAL portfolio ensures that it is always the most up to date version and meets with the current industry standards. We use social media in a number of ways to support learner progress. For example, we have qualification / programme specific WhatsApp groups for peer support; and our assessors use Facebook Messenger	Expand our electronic portfolio system to cover the Engineering framework to ensure consistency for all apprentices.	Amber

	work-based learning?	to keep in contact with learners. We also use our Facebook and Twitter pages to share useful information with learners and employers. Learners are able to contact and support each other with aspects of their programme and have fed back that this helps them to feel that they are part of a group of learners even when they are in the workplace. Social media has proved to be a useful tool for our assessors / tutors to maintain regular contact with the learners, and this means that we have sometimes been able to support learners to sustain their MA through social media contact. We sub-contract our SVQ2 and core skills elements of our Engineering MA delivery to Glasgow Training College. The resources and equipment made available by the college for our Engineering MA's are modern and meet with current industry standards ensuring apprentices are learning on up-to-date equipment.		
Learner progress	1.3.1: How effective are our approaches to setting learner goals and monitoring learner progress?	In our apprenticeships, assessors discuss upcoming work tasks with the apprentice's supervisor and plan staged learner targets in line with this. We use a progress log document which can help us to track "at a glance" how well an individual is progressing in relation to their original LP. Our LP and assessment plan paperwork (including learner BRAG status log) works well to allow apprenticeship assessors to review early set targets and revise according to each individual's pace of learning. It also makes it clear when someone is falling behind from the original planned milestones set. Formal Reviews for all apprentices are carried out every 13 weeks, although assessors consider individual learner support requirements, and this dictates the frequency of interim meetings with learners. We use the SDS review documentation to record formal review discussions for MA but have developed more tailored review sheets to support the reviews between the 13-week reviews. We ask MA supervisors to participate in the reviews and maintain a log of where this has not happened. Assessors contact supervisors when they have not participated in a review to allow them to feed in at a later point where necessary. The review meetings are used well to reflect on achievement of previous targets and to set clear, realistic goals to be completed before the next review. Employers appreciate the opportunity to take part in the review process and find it useful to give feedback and receive updates on learner progress. Combining the flexible approach with the formal review process ensures that apprentices are clear about their targets, remain motivated and make planned progress in line with these targets. Keeping a log of when supervisors haven't taken part allows us to flag this with senior staff.	Engage employers earlier in the review process to ensure apprentice progress is not affected.	Amber
Quality assurance of practice leading to improvement	1.3.2: How well do we review our delivery to ensure its	We have quarterly meetings which all assessment and coaching staff attend. Meetings usually cover learner and programme progress, what's working well in delivery and assessment (sharing practice), standardisation across assessors for assessment practice, partnership working, what needs fixed and appropriate continuous improvement actions. Covering all of these points at our regular meetings and recording it really helps		Green

and enhancement of services	standard and quality?	<p>us to focus and be able to track improvements in delivery. We have implemented a number of ideas across the service from staff reflection, such as the use of a job matching tool to ensure that the learner and employer select the units that best fit the job role. If we have had an EV visit, the report will be discussed during the quarterly meetings, and we will action any recommendations that are highlighted in the report. EV visits and reports are almost always very positive. We have used EV recommendations to make improvements to our assessment approaches. For example, we have improved our holistic assessment methods in relation to the business and administration MA. We have used the overall Education Scotland report into the Engineering sector as a research document and have adopted some of the identified good practice in this. We now ensure that learners have an identified mentor in the workplace, and that the mentor is effective in supporting the learner. To monitor this, we have regular meetings with the mentor. We carry out peer observations on direct delivery sessions, assessments and reviews. The Internal Verifier also carries out observations of all delivery and assessment staff at least once per year. Peer observations work well as they encourage staff to identify and share effective practice. This approach, along with the Internal Verifier observations helps to ensure consistency of quality in all of our delivery and assessment approaches. This also helps us to identify any gaps in our provision, and to source appropriate CPD to ensure that all staff have the right skills to deliver high quality provision.</p>		
Effectiveness of partnerships to support transitions and/or progression	1.4.1: How well do we work with partners to support transition and/or progression of learners?	<p>Managers are members of the local DYW Forum and use this as a means of networking for the MA programme. Attendance at these provides us with information on what is happening in the local employment network and helps us to ensure that our programme meets local stakeholder needs. An Employer database is maintained which facilitates ongoing marketing and communications. We send out marketing letters to employers to inform them of the programmes that we offer and the places that we have left. Engineering employers respond well to this type of communication, with most of our Engineering MA starts being recruited through this channel. We have established partnerships with agencies who provide specific support for learners who have barriers to learning. We are able to consult with these partners and get advice on the best way to support individual learners. Our partnership with System X is particularly effective in supporting learners who require assistive technology for dyslexia as they offer a package of the technology as well as support in using it for our team.</p>	Extend the range of partners we work with in order to provide adequate support for learners with more complex needs.	Amber
Management of sub-contractors	1.4.2: How effective are we at managing our sub-contracted delivery?	<p>Glasgow Training College deliver SVQ Level 2 and core skills for our Engineering apprentices. Learner feedback on the SVQ element is very positive. Learning facilities are high quality, modern and industry standard which ensures that practical work carried out in college is relevant to the learner's workplace. A Service Level Agreement is in place which documents our expectations of the college, which includes scheduling of training, attendance, monitoring, achievement, health & safety. etc. The Service Level Agreement works well with regard to the contractual expectations of the</p>	Core skills delivery by our subcontractor is not adequately contextualised. Ensure this is added to subcontractor meeting agendas as a standing item.	Red

		subcontractor, and they fulfil all of the requirements of them in this area. We have formal meetings with the subcontractor three times per year. Meetings between the Lead Assessor and Senior Engineering Lecturer take place in November, February and May each year with a set agenda to review candidate progress, subcontractor performance, and discuss any additional needs. Any actions arising from this are documented and reviewed at subsequent meetings. The regularity of the meetings ensures that communication with the subcontractor is open and honest. This also ensures that any issues are discussed and resolved quickly. This also allows them to be part of our self-evaluation activity. Our sub-contractor's staff are invited to attend CPD opportunities that we have sourced. Most CPD events are well attended by our subcontractor, and this helps to ensure a consistent approach across our own delivery and our subcontracted provision.		
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Leadership & Quality Culture

Title	Full Question	Describe and Evaluate what you do	What do you want to enhance?	Grade
Diverse recruitment to support youth /employment	2.1.1: How well does our SDS contracted provision support the Scottish Government's Young Person's Guarantee initiative?	Senior Assessor takes the lead for DYW and meets with the Chair of the local DYW group to discuss how our training provision could contribute to their plan. Close links have been established with the local DYW group which has fed into our staff training strategy. We have a targeted recruitment plan that involves employers as part of the local DYW forum to encourage females in to Engineering and males in to Business & Administration. Admin staff keep a record of our starts and break these down by E&D group. As a result of our targeted recruitment, we have noted an increase in applications and starts from males in our Business and Administration MA's. We are linking with local schools and also work with external equality partners to try to increase the numbers of starts from SDS E&D key target groups. We have been successful in increasing recruitment of BME learners to our MA programme. All of our learners for our MA Engineering programme are identified and recruited by the employers, pending feedback from us on the aptitude diagnostic testing. Employers refer learners to us to complete the aptitude testing and initial assessment after following their own recruitment practices. Standing team meeting agenda item to discuss existing partner engagement and identify new opportunities for partnership working. We assign a small partner portfolio to each member of staff, and this includes the individual taking responsibility for attendance at appropriate forums and cascading information back to the team. All staff are tasked with relaying any new potential partner organisations to the team for consideration. We have very good partner relationships and partner feedback indicates that they prefer to have one point of contact in the organisation.	Improve the gender imbalance on both frameworks. Attend local school career events to promote the MA programme and update our website/social media to contain examples of diversity.	Amber
Future focussed strategy	2.1.2: How well do we consider our	The senior assessor considers LMI and RSA information as well as output from employer engagement to inform our bid for an SDS contract. Analysis shows that: - predicted jobs growth of 10% / 11% in Engineering / Business Admin respectively over the next 6 years.		Green

underpinned by LMI	own ecosystem in developing and delivering our work-based learning strategy?	<p>The Skills Investment Plan for Engineering (Aug14) enabled us to use in discussions with employers regarding the benefits of employing an M.A. v graduates. Reviewing the SIP for engineering, the RSA for the areas we operate in coupled with reviewing SDS asks in their ITT documentation has encouraged us to consider expansion in the engineering and Business Admin areas. It has also helped us to consider how we fit in with the bigger industry "asks". We participate in the Engineering Skills Group and through SEMTA have been involved in developing new MA frameworks. We take a proactive approach to understanding the industry skills requirements for Engineering and as a result we are contributing to the improvement of learning associated with this sector. We survey employers, learners, sub-contractors and partners and use the feedback to inform improvements in programme delivery. Analysis is carried out annually as part of the staff training day and findings are shared with all staff. Feedback from our strategic partners is used effectively by us to make changes to our programme content. Following feedback from our sub-contractor we established that learners on the MA Engineering programme had not received sufficient information about the structure of the college element of learning. We undertook a review of our induction process and have included a specific session on "What to Expect at College".</p>		
Management and support of staff	2.2.1: How effective are we at managing our staff to deliver SDS funded provision?	<p>Quarterly meetings are held with the sub-contractor to discuss all contract arrangements and performance. We have developed a strong working relationship with our sub-contractor and any areas of concern regarding staffing are addressed promptly. Staff have individual KPI's which are set at the beginning of each operational year in line with SDS contractual requirements. As set out in 1.3.3 we have a peer review system of staff to ensure quality of their delivery Monthly and annual staff reviews take place where staff targets are discussed along with training and development needs. Plans are put in place to address any requirements. Feedback through the staff appraisal process is that they feel well supported and appreciate the open-door policy in place. We have a robust staff induction process and handbook in place and as part of this the Senior Assessor delivers coaching on the SDS contract delivery requirements. We review the induction process and the handbook on an annual basis to ensure amendments to the SDS contract rules are updated. Staff feedback on the induction process is positive, and they feel well prepared for undertaking the role. We have good staff retention rates which allows us to have consistency of service for employers and learners. We have an effective Business Continuity Plan which covers all areas of business, including staff, succession planning and premises. We have a bank of qualified staff we can call on should the need arise. This plan is held centrally for staff to access, and we have some examples of using bank staff to cover short term absence with no negative impact of the learners. All delivery staff are qualified, experienced and occupationally competent in the various areas of the training services. Staff structure and individual roles are subject to on-going review and refinement in line with operational demands and requirements.</p>		Green

		The range of staff qualifications and experience means that we are able as a business to be responsive to employer and learner demand.		
Staff development	2.3.1: How effective is our staff development to support successful delivery of SDS funded provision?	Training needs analysis carried out annually informed by annual staff review interviews and monthly one to one meetings. Senior Assessor uses TNA to ensure any skills gaps are identified and addressed promptly. We use Equate Scotland to deliver CPD sessions to staff on equality and diversity. As part of our staff development budget staff can source external courses and seek funding to attend. Staff are able to suggest and source external courses, and feedback that this gives them a sense of ownership of their own development. Staff are encouraged to attend events to maintain their knowledge and they utilise these to ensure their industry knowledge and network are current. There is a staff training strategy which includes an annual refresh of E&D training. A staff training /CPD day took place in December where DYW staff presented policies and strategies. As part of this, we identified how our approach contributes to the DYW objectives for our Engineering programme, including the requirement to promote the programme more widely to female candidates. Staff have also undertaken unconscious bias training, and their feedback is positive. We have now adopted this as part of the induction process for all new staff. As a result of this, we have seen more diverse groups applying for our programmes.		Green
Effective self-evaluation and continuous improvement	2.4.1: How effective are our approaches towards self-assessment and continuous improvement?	Until this year self-assessment has been completed by the Senior Assessor. For this cycle, we have dedicated time to ensure all SDS delivery staff are involved in the process. We have anecdotal feedback from staff that they appreciate being involved in evaluation discussions and this has resulted in a more rounded continuous improvement plan. We involve learners, employers and partners (for example local JCP) to seek their views on our delivery. We hold focus groups using a trained facilitator to support us in this. This has enabled our employers to gain an assurance that we are committed to continuous improvement activity. We have been able to implement a number of improvement actions as a result of this feedback. A staff away day is held annually to focus on continuous improvement. This ensures that all staff are able to contribute their views and an action plan is created from the findings. Progress against the action plan is a standing item at our monthly operational meetings and this helps us to focus on items that need to be progressed or reviewed.		Green
Innovation and Change	2.4.2: How well do we seek innovation and ideas to enhance our provision?	Our Senior Assessor attends awarding body and sector skills council events and communicates any relevant changes or good practices during team meetings. Findings are discussed at team meetings and any changes introduced are reviewed quarterly to ensure they are working. Our commitment to attending awarding body and sector skills council events means that we are able to ensure that all of our assessment processes are up to date and reflect the most recent recommendations.		Green

Outcomes and Impact

Title	Full Question	Describe and Evaluate what you do	What do you want to enhance?	Grade
Achievement and analysis of SDS Key Performance Indicators	3.1.1: How well are we performing and analysing our performance in relation to SDS key requirements?	We have only been delivering the Business and Administration MA for 2 years, so are only able to show trends over this period. However, for the last 2 years, our achievement rates for Business and Administration have been above the national benchmark of 75%, and the proportion achieving has improved year on year. There has been a downward trend in the percentage of Engineering learners who have successfully completed their qualification, and for the current contract year, this is 67%. This has been below the national benchmark of 75% for the last two years. The Covid pandemic had an impact with a number of apprentices being made redundant. However, early indications show more employers actively recruiting and we expect a positive impact on achievement rates this year.	Increase achievement rate on the MA framework for 67% to at least 75% in order to meet the SDS benchmark.	Amber
SDS Diverse recruitment	3.1.2: How well are we improving the representation of specific equality groups in our SDS funded provision?	In 2020 we started to keep a record of learners in relation to the key equality groups and have identified the following trends: > The participation rate of individuals from a BME background has remained static over a three-year period and is above the national average. > The participation rate of disabled apprentices has steadily improved over the last three years and is well above the national average. > The participation rate from care experienced individuals has remained static over a three-year period but remains slightly above the national average. > The Engineering programme has been predominantly male over the last three years and the Business Administration framework predominantly female.	> Increase female participation rate on the Engineering programme by 2% in 2023-24 > Increase the male participation rate on the Business Administration programme by 5% in 2023-24	Amber
Awarding Body and Industry Body Requirements	3.1.3: How well are we meeting the requirements of Awarding Bodies and Industry Bodies?	Over a three-year period, we have reduced the number of recommendations from 3 in 2019-20 to 0 in 2021-22. Over the same period, we also had 2 examples of good practice identified. There have been no holds on any qualifications over the last three years.		Green
Systematic gathering, analysis, and use of employer and stakeholder perception data	3.2.1: How satisfied are employers and stakeholders with our service and relationship?	We send an annual satisfaction survey to employers electronically, and over 90% complete it. In the last year, we have set an internal KPI of 90% of employers reporting that they are satisfied with the programme delivery. Employer satisfaction has improved steadily over a 3-year period and in 2021-22 we exceeded this KPI. Although overall employer satisfaction with the MA programme has improved each year for the last 3 years, we have identified that employer satisfaction for the Engineering MA programme is below our internal KPI of 90% and was 82% in 2021-22.	Increase the level of employer satisfaction from 82% to at least 90% in 2023-24.	Amber
Systematic gathering,	3.2.2: How satisfied are	We send all apprentices an annual satisfaction survey with an internal target that 75% will complete it. In 2021-22 we set an internal KPI of 90% of apprentices reporting that	In 2021-22 only 50% of apprentices completed the	Amber

analysis, and use of learner perception data	learners with our provision?	they are satisfied with the programme delivery. The results are very positive with a steady increase in apprentice satisfaction and last year 92% reported they were satisfied with the programme.	survey so we aim to increase the engagement level in 2023-24.	
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