

Case Study: Development of National Occupational Standards in the UK



Background

People 1st International champions the benefits of workforce learning and development based on competences / National Occupational Standards (NOS). As a Sector Skills Council, we have developed and maintained NOS for the hospitality, retail, travel and aviation sectors across the UK.

NOS describe the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to undertake a particular task or job to a nationally recognised level of competence. They focus on what the person needs to be able to do, as well as what they must know and understand to work effectively. They cover the key activities undertaken within the occupation in question under all the circumstances the job holder is likely to encounter. NOS themselves are not intended as a vocational curriculum but are used to influence the content and development of qualifications and training courses in many ways.

Solutions

People 1st International has worked on over 40 projects to develop and maintain NOS in the UK for the hospitality, retail, travel and aviation sectors. We have approached this development through a robust consultation process with employers and other stakeholders across each of the UK devolved nations, (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). This work is guided by the NOS Quality Criteria that identifies the actions, requirements and robustness all standards setting organisations must abide by across the UK.

In our projects to develop or review NOS, we have worked closely with all of the relevant approval bodies to identify and confirm the range, scope and level of approval data to be submitted, agree any necessary delivery output milestones and the process for how final submissions are to be made. This upfront engagement with the approval bodies, in conjunction with the broader consultation process undertaken, has allowed for nation specific requirements to be considered, culminating in a set of NOS that are suitable and approved for use across the UK.

Our experience in NOS development and review has been refined over many years of working with employers. The quality process we have applied to our NOS projects incorporates the following steps:

1. UK wide external project board set up at the start of the project to agree scope, timeline and activities
2. Initial desk research / analysis of the sector commences followed by a more detailed functional analysis
3. Specialist working groups set up to review current suite of NOS and to review feedback gathered from initial research / analysis
4. Updating of existing / development of new NOS
5. External project board sign off 'proposed' updates / changes to NOS
6. UK wide electronic consultation and consultation events held in each nation to review 'proposed' updates / changes to NOS
7. Results of consultation collated
8. External project board consider consultation responses and sign off on final NOS changes for submission
9. Submission of NOS to approvals bodies

Impact

The NOS we have developed on behalf of the hospitality, retail, travel and aviation sectors have provided tools to help individuals, organisations and training providers to improve performance. They have since been used to carry out a wide range of activities, including:



Workforce design, management, succession planning and quality improvement



Recruitment, selection and induction



Training and education design, assessment and accreditation



Manage performance, increase productivity, identify and fill skills gaps



Personal, career and team development

About People 1st International

Our team of expert international consultants support countries with a true thirst for professional development, who are passionate about helping young people, challenging social and gender exclusion, addressing the barriers to work and supporting continuous professional development of the existing workforce.

To discover how we can support you with labour market intelligence, technical vocational education and training strategies and practical skills solutions, get in touch at info@people1st.co.uk or visit www.people1st.co.uk.

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