



CITB ConstructionSkills 'Skills Strategy' 2012- 2017

Consultation (1) 2011

A Note on Skills and Qualifications

Across all UK industries, employees and employers are saying they need skills and knowledge in order to do their jobs more effectively and to make their businesses more profitable.

We have taken note of this development - one that focuses not only on the qualifications people hold but on the skills they develop - not just in their formal training - but throughout their working lives.

For that reason we have elected to call this consultation a "Skills Strategy Consultation" and we envisage creating such a strategy rather than refreshing the Construction Qualifications Strategy (CQS) that we have produced in past years.

Notes on this document and where to send it when you have completed it:

This document covers Scotland specific issues. There are similar, but separate documents for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. At this point in the development process, it asks broad questions around key themes. All responses will be reviewed and used as a basis to draft a new Skills Strategy.

We wish to hear from all areas of the industry, including employers, SMEs, the federations, trade unions, higher and further education institutions, universities, professional institutions and awarding organisations.

Once you have read this document and completed your responses you will need to save it (ignoring any note that says 'read-only') and send it by email to: construction@pyetait.com before 28th October 2011.

Forms can also be sent by post to:

Pye Tait Limited
FREEPOST RRXU-CXZB-ZRRU
Royal House
110 Station Parade
HARROGATE
HG1 1EP

Please note: the consultation organised and lead by CSCS Ltd on Cards Structure consultation is an entirely separate consultation.

[Introduction for respondents ...](#)

Thank you for agreeing to give us your views to inform a Skills Strategy for the industry. Before we start we need to tell you a bit about why the research is going on.

As you may be aware, the overriding aim of ConstructionSkills - the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry (a partnership involving CITB ConstructionSkills, CITB-Northern Ireland and Construction Industry Council) - is to work closely with employers in order to support, enable and undertake informed activities that specifically reduce skills shortages, improve business performance, bring a diverse range of people into the industry, improve learning for apprenticeships, higher and further education and develop professional standards for occupations at all levels. The Construction Industry Training Board has a specific role in improving training and skills by ensuring the training and learning infrastructures across the UK reflect the needs of the industry in terms of quantity, quality and location of training, mode of learning and funding mechanisms. CITB Construction Skills and the SSC, Construction Skills, are working on this consultation together, as it touches remits and areas of work for both. The review relates to the whole construction sector, however, for ease we will simply refer to 'CITB Construction Skills' throughout the document rather than attempt to reference both names.

As you are aware, our industry is one of THE most important in the UK economy. It is critical that CITB ConstructionSkills focuses on the future - the future not only of hundreds of thousands of businesses but a workforce of more than 2 million people, not including those who work in the vital supply chain and related industries with which we work collaboratively, for example engineering construction, facilities management and across the built environment.

We are making plans and stimulating ideas on how to ensure the industry continues to encourage, develop and have access to future generations of capable and competent professional construction employees. For that, we need to know precisely what skills, knowledge and behaviours they need - and what provision will be needed to underpin it all.

You may also know that a number of extremely important reports on skills and education have been published in the last year by CITB ConstructionSkills, the Scottish Government and the UK central (Westminster) Government. These reports have a direct bearing on the environment in which construction education and training will take place in the future. We have listed the most important of these published reports below, so that, if you wish, you can refer to them directly.

In short, CITB ConstructionSkills needs to be clear as to its **strategic aims and objectives** for the skills development of the workforce in order to set out sensible and cost-effective proposals, and to set in train ways of effectively measuring success.

Your responses will help us with the drafting of a new 'Construction Skills Strategy' for 2012-2017.
Consultation closing date: Friday 28th October 2011

And for that we need and welcome your expert input.

Timelines of the consultation and development process

The CITB Construction Skills Strategy is due to be completed early 2012 and there will be several stages:

1. The 'first consultation' is taking place from late August through to early November 2011. And here you can give us your views on the broad questions we have set out in this consultation document which you have downloaded. To do this please read and complete as many questions as you wish in this document, save it and return by email to construction@pyetait.com (or you can post it using the FREEPOST address given on page 1). Or you can use this document to feed back your views via a Federation, a Professional Body meeting or via specific employer regional and national events.
2. Using the feedback from the first consultation we will produce a draft Strategy document, and then there will be a more focussed 'second consultation' based on the direction and shape the Strategy is taking. This consultation will take place during December /January 2012.

This is a widespread and unprejudiced look at skills, training and qualifications in the UK construction industry and we recognise that there will be initiatives and activities about which we, Pye Tait, have no, or limited, knowledge. If there are occasions when it is impossible to directly answer a question due to the fact the situation is different in any given context please explain that in the box provided. All responses will be carefully analysed manually and therefore all responses and comments will be of great value to us.

Other documentation

We mentioned that there are some key reports in the preamble, above. Should you wish to refer to one or more of them, they are as follows:

Links:

1. HSE/CITB ConstructionSkills on Routes to Competence:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr877.pdf>
2. Building a smarter future: towards a sustainable Scottish Solution for the future of higher education: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/82254/0115660.pdf>
3. Refreshed Skills Strategy (2010): Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/326739/0105315.pdf>
4. BESA (2011) *Submission to BIS Committee on the Future of Higher Education*, p.3:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmbis/writev/885/m38.htm>
5. Low Carbon and Green Deal: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs//10-1266-low-carbon-construction-igt-final-report.pdf>

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6. Roe's Review of Post 16 vocational education and training:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/355876/0120235.pdf>
7. ConstructionSkills: Understanding Change, 2010: http://www.cskills.org/uploads/Understanding-Change-Final-Report-Oct_2010_tcm17-26341.pdf

All responses will be received and analysed by Pye Tait Consulting, a research and development consultancy who work strictly to the MRS code of conduct. All responses will be analysed on the basis of organisation type and kept anonymous.

If you do NOT wish your name or your organisation's name to be passed on to CITB Construction Skills please insert a cross here.	
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Firstly, please complete these details below so we have an understanding of your role/work or relationship to the industry and send you information about the next stage if you wish to receive it. Thank for your time and cooperation with this first broad consultation.

1. **Your name:**

Kevin Toner

2. **Your contact details (by providing these we assume you are happy to be contacted either about the next steps or if there is a problem with receiving your form).**

Email: adminsecretaryscotland@ihbc.org.uk
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Phone:

3. **The name of the organisation you work for, *if applicable*:**

IHBC Scotland

4. **Please clarify the main activity of the organisation-** (eg University, building firm specialising in heritage work, etc) this is important as it will help us with seeing where the responses have come from.

The Institute of Historic Building Conservation is the professional body for building conservation practitioners and historic environment experts working in the UK, and the Scottish branch covers Scotland. the Institute exists to establish, develop and maintain the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the built heritage for all.

5. **Could you confirm if you are answering as an individual or on behalf of the organisation mentioned above or perhaps an entirely different organisation by inserting an 'x'.**

I am representing my own views in completing this document	
I am representing the organisation mentioned above	X
I am representing another organisation: Name of organisation: In the capacity of:	

6. **Are you interested in attending events that may take place (October) or being contacted further about the next stage of consultation? If yes, please indicate this here:**

Yes, I am interested in hearing further about the Skills Strategy	X
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A Competence Strategy

The Construction Skills Strategy needs to continue to build upon the reputation of previous Qualification Strategies for being valuable and credible tools to inform not just CITB ConstructionSkills and the sector but all those who interface with it, on how to become and remain a competent worker at any level in the industry.

It will provide strong leadership against the background of fundamental structural and institutional change in the qualifications, education and training arenas, and within the industry itself. This is why we believe a straightforward "qualifications strategy" may not be enough: there needs, instead, to be a comprehensive competence strategy for the construction workforce – not just for entry into the workforces, but for developing people throughout their working lives.

Where we are now ...

Since the previous Construction Qualifications Strategy, the education and training landscape has altered dramatically, not least with the rollout of the Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme including the development of various forms of credit and qualification frameworks across the four nations of the UK and Europe. This has been supplemented with widespread reform of 14-19 learning and Higher Education funding in England and Wales.

Since early 2010, there have been additional significant changes to the landscape. CITB ConstructionSkills has participated in a number of departmental reviews in the UK central government, worked around changes of remit and the closure of a number of public sector bodies, and embraced the increased focus on apprenticeships allied with changes in structure and funding. In Scotland a white paper on education and skills is due to be published by the Scottish Government in September 2011. This will cover funding and education and incorporate the Roe review on post 16 vocational education and training published in August 2011. These

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and other changes have formed an ever-moving backdrop to CITB ConstructionSkills' own research, evaluation, maintenance of national occupational standards (NOS) and qualifications developments.

Key themes for discussion....

Topics or issues have been selected for discussion on the basis that they are either recurring or have been singled out by CITB ConstructionSkills and/or the Westminster or Scottish Government as possibly critical future issues for the industry. These are laid out below along with broad, generic questions:

Introduction for respondents	2
A Competence Strategy.....	5
Where we are now	5
Key themes for discussion.....	6
A.COMPETENCE	6
B.SUPERVISORS & MANAGERS.....	9
C.LOW CARBON AND GREEN DEAL.....	10
D.SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.....	12
E.SUPPLY AND DEMAND	14
 i.Further Education.....	15
 ii.Higher Education	16
F.CAREERS.....	18
G.CONSTRUCTIONSKILLS' ROLE.....	19

Please review the sections below and respond to as many of the individual questions as you wish.

A. COMPETENCE

The working definition of competence that has been used is based on National Occupational Standards and Scottish and National Vocational Qualifications based on these standards. However, there are suggestions that the concept of competence needs careful consideration and review.

The question of **competence** has emerged as an important theme in the recent Pye Tait report (the remit for which was solely site-based workers, supervisors and managers) researched for the HSE and CITB ConstructionSkills¹ ([see link 1](#)). This says that, in

¹ Routes to Competence a summary report for HSE and ConstructionSkills, March 2011

the context of the industry's health and safety performance, the industry's current understanding of competence warrants being extended and enhanced, in other words, a broader conception of competence may now be needed. This would include: 'occupational skills, deep and relevant knowledge and understanding, and ongoing evidence of appropriate behaviours and attitudes'.² The report went on to suggest a need to embrace the even bigger challenge of "continuous improvement" in helping to reduce injuries and fatalities still further, by developing a bespoke "industry-specific" definition of competence that considers formally broadening competence to include human-factors (it called this, as a working title, the "New Competence").

The report revealed a number of serious concerns relating to the use of card schemes as proxies for competence: not the least of these are the facts that formal occupational qualifications are still not essential in most of them, that card-levels do not necessarily relate to the level of work being undertaken on site, that a few cards can still be obtained simply by application and payment of a fee, and that the overall system is complex and confusing for employers and employees alike. It went on to suggest that the plethora of card, certification and passport schemes available in the industry is of doubtful and inconsistent value in helping employers to judge competence.

It was suggested that the construction industry should move to this 'new competence' approach which requires not just occupational (job) competence, but more **robust general health & safety competence** and behavioural/human factors implementation throughout an operative's working life.

The report also stressed:

the importance of site management and supervision for helping to build a competent workforce, an occupational area where qualifications take-up and penetration are found to be notably low,

the need to distinguish between 'primary' evidence of competence in the form of competence-based qualifications, and secondary evidence of qualifications such as industry card and registration schemes,

that few secondary forms of evidence, i.e. cards, certification and passport registration schemes, consistently require primary evidence of competence i.e. formally assessed qualification.

² Pye Tait Consulting (2011), *A Commentary on Routes to Competence in the Construction Sector*. HSE Research Report RR877 (page 29).

As mentioned above, the remit for the report did not include professional qualifications. These are perhaps the ultimate target for many within the industry. In this context, technical competence is coupled with professional conduct and underpinned by academic achievement with a requirement to maintain competence through Continuing Professional Development.

1. What are your experiences in relation to the above on competence: do you broadly agree or disagree with these conclusions within the report above? What needs to be done, if anything, in your view?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England

2. Some industry card and registration schemes have come under significant criticism from employers. The Pye Tait report recommended that the industry establish a single standard for the schemes and possibly even a single registration body. What is your view on this?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England

3. How should vocational education and training qualifications relate to professional qualifications (including continuing professional development) in terms of confirming competence?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England: Qualifications are not a measure of competence, but rather a measure of knowledge and understanding. CPD is an extension of education (hence the US use the term Continuing Education) albeit the UK term is not inferior in that it suggests that to extend on and/or to keep abreast of knowledge is a form of competence in itself, i.e. purely in professional terms at the moment.

As you rightly pointed out earlier, conduct goes hand in hand with competence in the UK architecture discipline, which is regulated by a code of conduct, part of which is a requirement to fulfil a No. of CPD hours (as one of a number of rules). Note here that there is indeed a correlation with the behavioural/people skills that John has called for – 'conduct' is a form of this skill in the professions.

4. 'Occupational regulation' is a subject currently under debate in a number of UK sectors. Some already have voluntary accreditation others have mandatory registration or even licensing. Without getting into the detail what are your broad views on this concept for the construction industry? Is the time right for something akin to the 'Licence to operate' or 'licence to practice' concept?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England

B. SUPERVISORS & MANAGERS

The take up of site-based supervisory and management qualifications remains very low while a number of recent reports have pointed to this "middle" level as being crucial for the mentoring and on-going training of the workforce in skills and knowledge - as well as in the increasingly important behaviours that underpin efficiency and health and safety.

5. In your experience is this an important issue? Or are there other job roles (aside from site supervisors and managers) with greater skills gaps and training issues?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England

6. Would you agree or disagree that site managers and supervisors should play the front-line role in ensuring and maintaining competence?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England:

7. What do you think needs to be done about training for site supervisors and site managers? Should courses, for example Site Management Safety Training Scheme – SMSTS or Site Supervisor Safety Training Scheme – SSSTS, play a part in evidencing their competence?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England: the supervisory side rather than the management side might necessitate an experiential as well as a trained record. The impression from the Glynhill Hotel meeting is that Supervisory work should be experiential whereas management necessitates training.

In relation to John's point at Q1. If SSs and SMs were to bear some accountability for quality outcomes as well as H&S attributes then there might be a greater uptake of skills/qualification seekers in this domain, purely because more on-site

involvement will mean more hours and therefore more pay and therefore ultimately more seeking education in that field.

C. [LOW CARBON AND GREEN DEAL](#)

Looking forward there are likely to be significant changes to the nature of construction skills needs as a result of the low carbon agenda. The UK agenda for **lowering the global carbon footprint and a commitment to sustainable development** and the implications on skills of rapidly advancing technology and the Westminster Government's "Green Deal" is a critical driver. Work across industries is already on-going in relation to the strategic framework set out by the Low Carbon Innovation and Growth Team ([see link 5](#))³. One such objective is the development of new specialist skills to support new technologies in which manufacturer-provided training will also play an important role. A recent report on Home Building Skills 2020 states '*the consensus is that most of today's core skills for home building will be very similar in the future*'. Building awareness of the challenges posed by low/zero carbon is however a necessary underpinning activity.⁴

Key points set out within the strategic framework by the Low Carbon Innovation and Growth Team (IGT) Final Report⁵ suggest that:

The industry must make significant changes to methods to support the regulatory move to zero carbon new-build, and retrofitting of existing buildings;

There will be a move to 'whole-life' assessment of the carbon efficiency of building – that is to say including both embodied and operational carbon intensity;

The introduction of Building Information Modelling (BIM) to improve understanding of how buildings will perform;

Development of new specialist skills will be necessary to support new technologies, in which manufacturer provided training will have an important role;

Improvement of existing skills will be necessary because energy efficient construction (sealed envelope) requires high precision;

Need for a coordinated approach across the entire construction and facilities management areas, requiring close cooperation or even merging of construction related SSCs.

³ IGT (2011) *Low Carbon Construction: Innovation and Growth Team Final Report*

⁴ Home Building Skills Project (2010), *Homes Building Skills 2020 Report and recommendations*, p.7.

⁵ IGT (2011) *Low Carbon Construction: Innovation and Growth Team Final Report*

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The Green Deal is part of the Westminster Government's commitment to improving energy efficiency of domestic and commercial buildings, and is one component of the all-encompassing focus on a low carbon agenda.

The overall structure is very similar to the Competent Person Schemes developed for specific domestic construction activities, such as gas installation and double-glazing installation. Indeed, there is currently now a new Competent Person scheme being developed for the installation of insulation, to ensure that installers have the necessary competence to produce work of appropriate standard.⁶ Recent research for CITB Construction-Skills ([see link 7](#)) suggested that sustainable construction, and the requirement for increased productivity and 'competence', may require:

'A review of competence standards is likely to be needed, in response to the emergence of new or enhanced skills and job roles in the sector'⁷

8. In line with the future skills agenda and sustainability, in your view will the skills be primarily similar to those currently used in the sector, or will there be a need for new skills for such new technologies?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England: The transition to newer skills will be less daunting if manufacturers work together with new technologies to produce integrated products: such as solar slates for traditional building trades, incorporated into roofs as if they were natural slates. Such integrations have begun to become commonplace and already there has been professional CPD set up for these.

9. Following on from that which 'new' skills are likely to be most in demand? For example BIM, Building Envelope specialists, other?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England: emphasis must be placed on the Building Envelope Specialists' understanding of traditional walling to help complete their knowledge. Assessment skills in waste-management as well as Life Cycle Costing should both become commonplace objectives.

10. How would you recommend the 'necessary competence' is demonstrated – is a card or regulation appropriate here? Does such an approach apply to assessors and advisers for the Green Deal?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England, which we fully endorse.

⁶ CITB-ConstructionSkills (2010) *Understanding Future Change in Construction*, p.18.

⁷ CITB-ConstructionSkills (2010) *Understanding Future Change in Construction*, p.36.

D. SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Scottish Government in 'A Lifelong Skills Strategy: 2007' set out ambitions for skills in a lifelong learning context. In 2010 this was refreshed and enhanced so its focus was on the skills required to accelerate economic recovery and to sustain a growing, successful country. 'Towards Ambition 2020: skills, jobs, growth for Scotland' (UKCES), had noted that Scotland's skills base has improved considerably but suggests this has not yet translated into higher productivity and economic growth and more challenges remain.

The 'Skills for Scotland: Accelerating the Recovery and Increasing Sustainable Economic Growth' report published in 2010 ([see link 3](#)) set out opportunities for skills to be developed and how these skills are to be used effectively. Policy commitments were on strengthening the partnership approach to skills.

Willy Roe was appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning to undertake a review of Post 16 Education and Vocational Training in Scotland. The Review has been looking at options for more effective approaches to workforce development and support for the unemployed and young people seeking work for the first time. The Roe Review report that was published in August 2011 ([see link 6](#)) presents recommendations for the Scottish post 16 education and vocational training system around 4 factors: Business growth; technological development and innovation; transparency and value; and collaboration and partnership.

The report leads on economic growth being a key issue for Scotland. The new system being proposed will be learner centred and market driven with a strong emphasis on employer engagement: for example it suggests that increasing the availability of work experience placements and internships is needed to support business leadership and growth. The learner is being put at the heart of an education and training system that will be performance driven. Innovation, international connections and key impacts are all factors that are intended to help position Scotland higher up in a competitive international market. At the same time as looking to influence Scotland's national position a new funding model is intended to ensure greater flexibility and control for learners through 'Personal Development Accounts'; employers and wider communities will have more influence over the education and training offer.

To support a system characterised by innovation and business needs, careers information, advice and guidance in Scotland will be 24/7, and embrace the new innovative technologies available with its online generation of services starting with 'My World of Work'. Underpinning the review is a call for more partnerships and collaboration. The role of employers is crucial, but the review also recommends that Scottish and UK Government should work together for a more unified, coherent and devolved employment and skills system.

Of concern is that analysis shows that for some years to come, Scotland's most critical skill shortage areas are likely to be at skilled technician and associate professional level (intermediate level skills at SVQ levels 3-4; SCQF levels 6-8 equivalent) across many sectors, together with basic skills (numeracy, literacy, ICT user).

In 2009/2010, apprenticeships at SVQ levels 4 and 5 (SCQF levels 8 and 9) in a number of different sectors, including Construction, were developed and approved, ensuring the wider availability of high quality and multi-level apprenticeship frameworks in Scotland.

11. What are your views on post 16 education and training in Scotland from a Construction point of view? Will they meet industry's future needs?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England, which we believe equally applies to Scotland: the commendable 4 year apprenticeship in Scotland should be 'assured' for their durations even where this entails transfer between employers. A huge number of transfers went to Fife Council recently as mentioned at the Glynhill meeting, which we would commend as a benchmark.

12. To what extent, and in which sub-sectors, is the issue about skills shortages for Scotland going to impact on the construction industry?

This will depend on demand: in the ongoing recession and energy crisis it might be the case that construction skills are less in demand compared to refurbishment/retrofit skills.

13. What are your views on the effectiveness and adequacy of the SVQs: are they 1) keeping up with the needs of industry; 2) developing the right levels and types of skills and knowledge into the existing workforce?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England, which we believe equally applies to Scotland: in respect of heritage skills IHBC Scotland would support SVQs alignment with ICOMOS Guidelines, including the forthcoming version on the way from ICOMOS UK. In general we would also support the Federations working with manufacturers with a view to interfacing Construction Skills with any necessary curricula developments that can be incorporated via SQA. Two excellent sources this year (from which SVQ might also take a lead), the 2011 IHBC Yearbook and the RIAS Article "a future for the trades", summarise a number of initiatives that have come into existence out of need, to help tackle the overwhelming heritage skills shortage.

14. To what extent are young people being encouraged into the most appropriate courses for the industry's needs?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England.

Just before question 1, it was appreciated that "...the remit for the report did not include professional qualifications. These are perhaps the ultimate target for many within the industry." This has to be reversed to instil a 'parity of esteem' so that aspiration is distributed evenly across the industry. There is then the further challenge of retaining the continuum to an evenly dispersed workforce, i.e. because of the interest and inclinations towards self-employment, which to a great extent nullifies the advantage of apprenticeships.

15. Most Level 3 SVQ Apprenticeships include a skills test at the end. 1) Do you feel this continues to be a valuable aspect of the Apprenticeship and 2) Is it still important that it is independently assessed by Industry?

IHBC Scotland supports this.

16. Employers often request that better non-technical, softer skills (often called Employability skills or work readiness attitudes and behaviours) are developed in young people. How would you deal with this – is it appropriate for them to be embedded within training or qualifications? Is it feasible to teach them at school?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England. (Q17 of English Survey)

17. If there was one change you could make to construction education and training for young people in Scotland aged 1) up to 16 and 2) post 16 what would it be and why?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q18 of English Survey), which we believe can also apply to Scotland: 'parity of esteem' is crucial to counter the notion that pursuing trade skills are for failures and the 'less intelligent'.

E. SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Feedback from previous CQS and other research reports

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Consultation closing date: Friday 28th October 2011

There has been increasing evidence of employer concern with technical, graduate and professional occupations, where an appropriate **mix of formal education and practical experience** is generally perceived to be important but not always delivered in many degree programmes.

Whilst there may be different perceptions and levels of understanding about academic, vocational and professional qualifications, some employers are also concerned that experienced staff could have acquired the necessary competence through experience, but remain ineligible for professional memberships due to a lack of formal education and training.

There are also questions about the assessment of competence in some specialist areas at HE level; an issue that is particularly relevant for the development of higher level apprenticeships.

There is evidence from previous CQS studies that whilst employers value the main competence-based qualifications, S/NVQs, it is also reported that *'Employers see N/SVQ assessment as not being fit-for-purpose or cost effective in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland'*⁸.

The previous CQS states that employers felt that 'Newly qualified workers are usually far from competent in most trades until a further two to three years work experience.'⁹

i. Further Education

Provision at further education level is the bedrock of the supply of skilled and knowledgeable people for the Construction industry. The selected quotes below indicate some of the main concerns at the moment.

'Demand, however, for apprenticeships remain relatively high, with two thirds of employees agreeing that there are more people who want to become apprentices than there are positions available; the constraint being the lack of placements with firms'.

'It is this lack of placements which has changed the composition of further education training in recent years, with a massive shift in qualifications being undertaken.

'Training content is highly variable between colleges. The content/curriculum of training programmes needs to be more clearly defined'.

⁸ ConstructionSkills (2007) *Construction Qualifications Strategy*

⁹ ConstructionSkills (2007) *ibid*, p. 19

18. How well do you think FE Construction courses meet the needs of the industry in Scotland?

We commend the activities embarked upon by some FE Colleges in Scotland (e.g. Telford, Angus, etc.) in collaboration with local authorities and Historic Scotland, particularly where there are Townscape Heritage Initiatives and Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes in place, e.g. Dalkeith.

19. Do you feel that the work-based element in Modern Apprenticeships needs to be shorter or longer, to include more practical experience, or to incorporate different construction inputs?

Not known

20. A bottleneck for any expansion of the apprenticeship programme appears to be the lack of employer placements. How would you suggest this is resolved?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England.

21. Are there any barriers to Modern Apprenticeships preventing them being more full taken up by industry?

The uncertainty of the economic downturn will be influential.

22. Are there enough apprentices in the right skill areas? For example the highest enrolments to date have consistently been in the wood trades and bricklaying – is this needed for the future?

Getting skills into the CRM (Conservation Repair Maintenance) sector cannot be emphasised enough to help counter the disproportionately higher concentration on new-build construction skills, in order to serve/balance the industry's overall needs. If this imbalance was reversed the industry and society's built environment needs would be better served.

ii. Higher Education

Scottish Education Secretary Michael Russell, in response to the Green Paper ([see link 2](#)) on higher education outlined a package of measures to protect the principles

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of excellence, inclusiveness, collaboration and investment in higher education. He said in a statement to Parliament:

"The Green Paper process and our analysis of the joint Scottish Government and Universities Scotland report allowed us to conclude that free education can and will be protected in Scotland without the need to resort to fees or a graduate contribution.

"We will bring forward a package of measures. This includes plans to raise fees for students from the rest of the UK in line with fee increases down south and to explore the suggestion that we adopt the Irish model which generates income from EU students.

"We will also pursue efficiency savings. Our universities are renowned for their efficiency and are well placed to manage this better than elsewhere in the UK. We believe they can make savings to reinvest in their own competitiveness.

"Of course, education is not and cannot be just about numbers and price tags. It sits at the heart of Scotland's success and always will be. The Green Paper process has let Scotland have its say on higher education. Our plans are to now extend this process to look at our colleges' role in education, building on current work. All stakeholders agree that the time for such proposals has come. We will examine funding, collaboration, creativity and outcomes".

According to recent research at CITB Construction Skills and for the work of the Built Environment Skills Alliance¹⁰ ([see link 4](#)), employers and those now or recently studying in higher education, say change is needed in construction higher education – in terms of its content and its delivery. As potential evidence of this the research noted striking differences between patterns of employer use of higher education in 2007 as compared with early 2011.

Another specific finding notes that fewer employers are sponsoring full-time students from year one of undergraduate degrees. Instead, employers seem to be acquiring graduate talent from placements (particularly in year three of four-year degrees), and/or 'growing their own'; for example from an Apprenticeship. A new graduate without work experience is likely to be highly disadvantaged in the construction jobs market. At the same time work experience as a part of full-time undergraduate degrees continues to decline partly due to HEIs favouring those courses without the added cost of placements.

Previous research and feedback from employers seems to indicate concern that young people may possess an over-optimistic view of the prospects for jobs in the sector when they apply for higher level built environment subjects.

23. Is this situation outlined above familiar to employers in Scotland? If so what would you say needs to be done as a priority about the supply of

¹⁰ BESA represents the wider sector skills councils. ConstructionSkills has channelled much of the strategic work on HE through BESA covering skills needs, recruitment, curriculum, provision and delivery .

higher level recruits to the industry?

We would commend an increase in available internships to help professionals who wish to turn their hand to the heritage sector especially while the new-build construction sector is dormant for the unforeseeable future, mainly because this allows graduates to cross over while being able to finance their objectives, get practical experience, and assures them that they are not taking on further study in vain or even in despair as the case may be due to the uncertainty of prospects.

24. How well are HE courses in terms of content and delivery matched to the changing needs of the industry? How should HE be encouraged to work with the built environment sectors in the future?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q26 of English Survey): we would stress the importance of internships.

25. How can the issue of 'lack of work experience' and subsequent impact on graduates' employment prospects be tackled. What are your views on this?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q27 of English Survey).

One may want to develop continuing education by doing more CPD and getting more involved in extra-curricular activities, so that knowledge and understanding is maintained and developed to improve prospects in the absence of practical work experience.

F. CAREERS

Clearly the supply of adequate numbers of high quality young people into the industry depends to a large extent on the awareness and understanding of it by those young people.

And importantly, promoting and further increasing the diversity of the industry workforce continues to be an important issue for the industry as a whole.

26. What would you suggest is done to improve careers awareness of the industry among school-age and other young people?

School visits to workplaces and vice versa – employers and trades associations / federations' interaction with schools

27. To what extent do you think that teachers and lecturers need greater awareness and understanding of the industry - and, how would you suggest that need is met?

Ditto, but understanding of the different sectors is crucial, e.g. New-build is critical in times of boom but refurbishment is always critical.

28. Is enough information about the prospects for jobs being provided to help 'new entrants' and graduates enter the industry? What else could be done?

This ties questions 26 with 23-24 whereby all stakeholders concerned with careers should all make it a priority to interact, meaning schools, FEs, HEIs, Industry and Professional bodies, and employers, interacting together to review and impart the above necessary information, i.e. as a responsibility and national priority.

29. 'Career changers' – could be an important future resource. Is this an opportunity to ensure supply meets demand? Is this an area of focus for CITB Construction Skills? Does re-skilling need to be made more attainable and attractive?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q32 of English Survey).

30. Increasing the diversity of the industry is a necessary activity when considering the needs of the future. What do you suggest can be done to help encourage this further?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q33 of English Survey): 'parity of esteem' must be instilled in tandem to set aspirations high, so that the industry is not viewed as inferior to others, and so that within the industry itself there is parity of esteem between trade and professional career paths as previously mentioned at Q14.

G. CONSTRUCTIONSKILLS' ROLE

Key roles for CITB ConstructionSkills and Construction Skills include the following:

Skills: maintaining National Occupational Standards; supporting apprenticeships; helping to deliver skills as well as qualifications; guiding the work of awarding bodies; and developing and informing about qualifications and progression pathways.

Curriculum support: support to providers in the form of materials, structured programmes etc that facilitate teacher delivery.

Image: promoting the sector as vibrant and rewarding.

Information: making available accurate and easily understood information about careers.

Demand & Supply: collecting, analysing and publishing accurate supply and demand data and then working to remedy any disparities

Distribution of grant aid

31. What are your views on these roles?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q34 of English Survey).

32. One use being made of the grant distributed by CITB Construction Skills is to contribute towards funding Apprenticeships. Assuming these continue to be partly subsidised by the public purse – is there a case for change?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q35 of English Survey): emphasis on distributing funds fairly and logically between advanced crafts and standard trades, depending on the industry's needs.

33. How can small/medium sized employers be involved in influencing and taking part in school and training provision – is this better undertaken nationally, regionally or locally?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q36 of English Survey).

34. Given these different areas discussed in the consultation document what do you believe the priorities for CITB Construction Skills should be?

See John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q37 of English Survey).

35. Are there any other issues relating to competence, skills and training that have not been mentioned and which you feel are equally or more

important than these?

Further to John Preston's IHBC response for England (Q38 of English Survey): it might be very worth looking into the past to inform the present.

Investigation into the former educational courses of the past would be welcomed (there are hoards of newspaper articles – and year on year accounts in many cases – at the turn of the C20th, which detail curricula; teachers; trades associations; pupil names and Nos.; work starts and employers' names, etc., which can only indicate that there is substantial archival material and evidence on how learning in the traditional trades was best conducted in the past); as would further scrutiny into what the relationships between employers trades and education actually were in the past to learn from these successes with regard to traditional skills, competence and training.

Thank you again for your time and interest.