

TESP

The Electrotechnical
Skills Partnership

What to look for when choosing a Training Provider



Introduction

If you have been working in the industry in an unqualified role, or failed to successfully complete your apprenticeship or are looking to enter the industry after a career elsewhere, you are probably looking to gain or formalise your qualifications. You may just be looking for a short course to upgrade your skills. To achieve any of these successfully, you need to work with a good Training Provider who will help you:

- Identify what prior learning, qualifications and/or experience you may have which may be relevant
- Develop a training plan and/or identify the course which reflects your needs
- Review and assess your progress and provide feedback
- Provide or guide you on where to find training to support you with any off-the-job learning and the knowledge elements of the programme

The Training Provider you select should give you clear information on the level of service you can expect to receive and also set out what the expectations on you will be. Details of financial arrangements will also need to be clearly explained.

There are some key factors to help you identify a good Training Provider

As an adult, funding may be available to support your training. Alternatively you and/or your employer may choose to pay for it directly. Whichever route you choose, you need to make sure that you get value for money and a quality service and that the training scheme that you take is recognised and will lead you to a career in the industry.

1. Quality

Many Training Providers are able to access Government Funding for some of their programmes. If they do, they will be subject to inspection by Ofsted. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people, including the services provided for education and skills for learners of all ages.

Ofsted have 4 grades:

1 = Outstanding	3 = Requires improvement
2 = Good	4 = Inadequate.

A good provider should be working at grade 2 or above.

Not all providers are subject to Ofsted inspection if they do not receive Government funding. However it is worthwhile checking on the quality of the training provided. Courses should be externally accredited by awarding organisations such as City and

Guilds or EAL who will ensure that the quality of provision meets their standards. The awarding organisations create the criteria of the qualifications and in order to deliver these the Training Provider must be an approved centre. To become an approved centre the Training Provider must meet and maintain the standards set by the awarding organisation. This includes having suitably qualified staff, company policies, good quality assessment of learners, suitable training facilities and a robust quality assurance process. The awarding organisation regularly checks the Training Provider to ensure they maintain the standards, if they do not maintain it or fall below the accepted level, the awarding organisation will temporarily or permanently remove the training organisations right to deliver the qualification.

2. Success rates

Success rates are a key Government measure of the quality of a provider's programmes. However, even if you do not get Government funding support for your training, it is worth asking for the Training Provider's success rates for the training scheme that you will be following.

3. Recognised qualifications

You will need to achieve qualifications which have been specified and are recognised by the industry. Despite what some providers will say, not all qualifications are appropriate and you will need to establish if the Training Provider you have chosen delivers recognised qualifications which lead to a career in the industry. The Training Provider will list which qualifications they deliver on their website/leaflets.

In the electrotechnical industry, the recognised apprenticeship framework is a level 3 qualification and the two awarding organisations are EAL and City and Guilds. Both Awarding Organisations also offer an 'equivalent to NVQ' qualification for experienced workers and mature candidates as accepted by the JIB for ECS purposes

It is essential that you check that you are on the right scheme which is recognised by the industry. There are unscrupulous training providers who will charge a lot of money for short courses which promise to deliver this, but which fail to do so. Be aware that there are no short cuts to entry to the industry – check out any offers that appear too good to be true because they probably are.

4. Qualified Staff

All the Training Provider's staff who are involved with your training and assessment should hold professional qualifications at the correct level relevant to their job role and the qualification they deliver. They should also have relevant work experience in the industry. This is not always the case in practice and it is worth checking. Some

Training Providers sub-contract the review and assessments to other organisations which means that they will be less able to support you or understand your needs. The Internal Quality Assessor and Trainers and Assessors should update their skills regularly to keep in line with changes to standards and requirements and hold records of continuous professional development.

Ask the Training Provider about the qualifications and experience of its staff.

5. Value for Money

You should expect to receive a high quality service from your Training Provider and this will come at a price. However it is essential you get value for money. It is worthwhile asking the Training Provider and make sure that this is fully explained before you make any decisions.

- Is there any funding or grants available from the Government to support the costs of your training?
- What does the Training Provider pay for?
- What contribution, if any, will you be expected to make towards the cost of training?
- Are there any other costs involved, such as registration fees, travel costs and so on?

6. Financial viability

When considering which Training Provider to use, it is important to take into consideration the longevity and sustainability of the provider. The Provider you decide to work with must be of a good quality and standard that will be able to support you throughout the length of your training.