

Customer Service Certification Body Survey Executive Summary

Overall Research Findings

November 2013 by David Payne, Insight Research & Evaluation

1. Introduction

The Federation for Industry Sector Skills and Standards (The Federation) is responsible for the certification of Apprenticeships in England and is continually seeking to improve the quality and consistency of the certification claim process. As part of this on-going improvement process, The Federation sought views from ACE (Apprenticeship Certificates England) users during October 2013 on the service and support received from individual Certification Bodies (CBs) – SSCs/SSBs – that check and process apprenticeship claims.

A 30% response rate was achieved for the survey, resulting in a total of 1,372 on-line surveys being completed. It is estimated that the survey captured views from organisations that processed at least 53% of certifications undertaken during the past year. Performance results in the overall report are anonymous but each of the 25 CBs who administer ACE claims have received an individual confidential report detailing the scores for their CB, and how the CB ranks compared to the other 24 CBs in the survey.

2. Main findings

The training providers who use ACE have a high level of (self-assessed) capability in the use of the on-line system. They are also very clear about the respective roles of The Federation and individual CBs in the administration of apprenticeship claims. These outcomes reflect well on both parties in ensuring that a relatively new system for certifying apprenticeships in England is understood and that a very high proportion of training providers feel confident in their ability to use the system.

Notwithstanding these overall outcomes there are a number of sector areas where there were some improvements that could be made to improve capabilities in the use of the ACE system and also to clarify the respective roles of The Federation and individual CBs.

The survey results represent a high benchmark and reflect a good standard in the overall level of service provided by CBs. All achieved above 'average' overall performance outcomes, but the best performing sector areas provided excellent levels of service. The overall high standard of customer service and support evidenced through the survey represents a very creditable outcome for The Federation and all CBs involved in processing apprenticeship claims.

The survey results contained in the full report show some variation in performance between individual CBs in relation to some assessment criteria. This survey will be used as a basis for further improvement in the overall service.

3. Capability in the use of the Apprenticeship Certificates England (ACE) system

88% of all training providers felt that their capability in the use of the ACE system to complete apprenticeship claims was either good or excellent.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	30%	58%	11%	1%	0%	88%	100%

4. Clarity about the respective roles of The Federation and individual Certification Bodies in relation to the administration of apprenticeship claims

Some 90% of survey respondents thought that they were clear about the respective roles of The Federation and individual CBs in relation to the administration of apprenticeship claims.

Certification Body	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
All respondents	90%	6%	5%	100%

5. Rating of individual Certification Bodies

Survey respondents were asked to rate each CB on a number of criteria relating to the quality and consistency of the certification claim process.

5.1. Speed of response to issues raised by users

76% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 54%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	25%	51%	18%	4%	2%	76%	100%

5.2. Quality of support and advice provided

77% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 43%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	24%	53%	17%	5%	1%	77%	100%

5.3. Attitude of staff

82% of all survey respondents rated CBs' staff as having a good or excellent attitude. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 40%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	30%	52%	14%	3%	1%	82%	100%

5.4. Clarity of rejection reasons and action required

73% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 40%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	23%	51%	19%	6%	2%	73%	100%

5.5. Justification provided on the rejection reasons

72% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 42%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	21%	51%	20%	6%	2%	72%	100%

5.6 The extent to which all rejection reasons are captured first time around

72% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 43%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	21%	51%	19%	7%	2%	72%	100%

5.7. Speed of despatching printed certificates

74% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 49%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	27%	47%	17%	7%	3%	74%	100%

5.8. Overall quality of communication

78% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 47%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	23%	55%	16%	5%	2%	78%	100%

6. Overall performance rating

Survey respondents were asked to give a rating on the overall performance. The precise question asked was:

“Thinking of all the work carried out by (name of Certification Body) in terms of their customer service, support and guidance throughout the certification process, how would you rate their overall performance?”

78% of all survey respondents rated CBs as good or excellent. The proportion of respondents rating individual CBs as good or excellent varied from 100% to 46%.

Certification Body	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	% Excellent or Good	Total
All respondents	23%	55%	17%	4%	1%	78%	100%