

FederationOracle

The inside source for all your Federation information

THE WINDS OF CHANGE...

CLAIRE SCOTT



Have been blowing through more than the Federation since our last edition; you can read our Managing Director [Mark's update](#) about the way the winds are blowing, below. When it comes to changes inside FISSS we've got an update on progress with [ACE360 from Richard](#), information from Jamie about FISSS' new product, [The Assessors Guild](#), and an overview of a new initiative for international business development from the Federation's own glamorous globetrotter, [Helen Joannou](#). Plus, the Federation staff have been trying out a new look as Debbie Northam writes about our [Wear It Pink day](#) below, as has the Oracle which you can see from the new style and layout.

What do you think of the Oracle's "make-over"? Please do let us know at oracle@fiss.org.

APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS – THE RIGHT DIRECTION

MARK FROUD



Despite the doom and gloom cast by AELP over the changes to the Technical and Professional (formerly known as Vocational) training system in England we need to recognise that the Government is trying to change behaviours and mind sets. No one I have spoken to in the last 5 years has suggested that what the Government is aiming for is wrong.

Changing approaches takes time. Employers will not respond immediately. Vested interests will seek to slow and disrupt. The course is set and it is our job to try to find ways of making it work.

We are in the implementation phase. Is it going perfectly – No. Has every new service you have introduced gone perfectly – No (unless you are very lucky). Hindsight is wonderful and it is easy to be hypercritical. Is that because we do not like change or because mistakes are being made? We should be less critical and more supportive and speak to Government and not shout vitriol at them. It achieves little, other than to generate a bunker mentality. Nobody wins with this approach.



Standard starts have been slow, but that was always to be expected. By our nature as humans we prefer stability. Neither Training Providers nor established Apprenticeship Employers are keen to be the first, but numbers will grow and the system will bed in.

The key is to try and identify concerns early and retain flexibility. The danger of asking detailed questions is that you get a detailed rule based answer that provides more problems. Asking about the 20% off the job rule is likely to generate an inflexible answer that helps nobody. But we are where we are.

The key now is to tackle the demand side and sell the training message. Even with the Apprenticeship levy, Apprenticeship spend on training is 10% of total training spend in the UK. Skills are good. They are an asset to be invested in, not treated as a cost.

At the Federation, our people create our assets (ACE/ACW/MAO and under development ACE360 and The Assessors Guild). So by extension people are our greatest asset. Does your business think that way?

ACE360 PROGRESS

RICHARD BLOXAM



A new way of working with Apprenticeships is on the horizon. With nearly 200 Standards now available, almost 100 End Point Assessment Organisations and about 30 External Quality Assurance Organisations there are many new processes to be defined.



Connect & collaborate, securely.

ACE360 is an evolution of its predecessor (ACE) that is currently being developed by the Federation to manage both the Gateway and End Point Assessments in the new Standards by allowing the different organisations access to the Apprentice record. This will ensure that data is kept secure and compliant with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation effective May 2018). ACE360 will also provide a bridge between systems to create a centralised record, this will prevent double keying of data and save you time. Having received customer satisfaction rates of 98% and 99% in the past 2 years we are keen to maintain our high standards and will ensure that you will receive the same standard of service from both the new system and the Federation. If you would like to know more about ACE360 please do not hesitate to contact Richard.Bloxam@fiss.org

THE ASSESSORS GUILD AT THE KICK START EVENT

JAMIE SMITH



The Federation is establishing The Assessors Guild, the only dedicated professional body for vocational assessors. The aim of the guild is to develop a recognised professional standard for vocational assessors, code of conduct and approved pathways for continuing professional development. We are currently running a number of workshops throughout 2017 with assessors, training providers and end point assessment organisations (EPAOs) to ensure we deliver the kind of membership organisation that works for the sector when we launch in 2018.



Louise Dolan, Assessors Guild Manager, and myself, Interim Director of Operations at FISSS, attended AELP's Kick Start Assessor event in Manchester on the 11th October and we were encouraged by the response from assessors and training providers who believe the guild can support them in the future. We held a follow on event with organisations involved with End Point Assessments to attend our Consultation Day in London on the 30th November, to further support shaping the Guild and the profession. To find out more about the Assessors Guild and upcoming activities contact louise.dolan@assessorsguild.co.uk

We would like to hear from you, so please register your interest with us at info@assessorsguild.co.uk and we will be in touch.

INTRODUCING THE UK FASHION AND TEXTILE ASSOCIATION

ALISON BUCKNELL



On 1st November, the [UK Fashion and Textile Association \(UKFT\)](http://ukft.org) took over responsibility for the Fashion and Textiles sector in all UK nations. This sector was previously managed by Creative Skillset but they agreed to voluntarily transfer it to UKFT, believing that, going forward, the industry would benefit being managed and represented by a specialist organisation. The Chairman of UKFT Nigel Lugg (seen right) spoke at the launch event last month.



As a Sector Skills Body, UKFT will now be responsible for the review and maintenance of Apprenticeship documents and will work in partnership with relevant industry stakeholders to ensure that they remain fit for purpose of a high quality and reflect the current and future needs of the sector. They will also undertake Apprenticeship certification for SASE frameworks in England, SASW frameworks in Wales and MAs in Scotland.

Adam Mansell (seen right), **CEO of UKFT** said “With industry skills and training being a huge part of UKFT’s commitment to the sector, this is very welcome news. We are proud to take over from Creative Skillset, which has supported the industry since 2010 and we thank them for the achievements made during that time. It is extremely important to ensure the management and certification of Apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications is closely aligned to the needs of the industry.”



Mark Froud, Managing Director, Federation for Industry Sector Skills & Standards (FISSS) stated that “We look forward to working with UKFT; being close to the Employers is critical and they have their trust and respect. UKFT has a strong approach to ensuring that Apprenticeships and training are kept up to date in what is an increasingly fast paced world.”

Likewise, **Seetha Kumar CEO of Creative Skillset** was keen to “thank the employers and professionals who have been involved in developing standards and frameworks for Fashion and Textiles over the past 7 years”. She wished UKFT the very best of luck as they continue the crucial job of supporting Apprenticeship and vocational training in the Fashion and Textiles sector.

UKFT already has an established history of serving the fashion and textiles industry and can help Training Providers and Employers with **Apprenticeship advice, Development of Vocational Work Based Learning qualifications, Training Provider network contacts, and Development of new Apprenticeship Standards (England)**

The transfer of the fashion and textiles sector was officially launched and celebrated with a parliamentary reception on 14th November which was held at the House of Commons, with Damian Collins MP in conjunction with Graduate Fashion Foundation. The event was attended by a host of British designers, including Henry Holland, Holly Fulton, Gareth Pugh and Oliver Spencer, as well as major retailers, manufacturers, MPs and leading industry figures.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARY LAUNCHES UK SKILLS PARTNERSHIP

HELEN JOANNOU*



The Secretary of State for International Trade, Liam Fox, officially announced the launch of the UK Skills Partnership, at a reception to celebrate the success of the UK Education Sector in London on 10th October 2017. The UK Skills Partnership is an initiative

to bring together the key stakeholders in the UK Skills sector to collaborate on international business development and project delivery, by presenting a comprehensive technical and vocational skills offer that is tailored to meet the needs of international partners.



It is envisaged that the consolidation of the UK TVET export proposition will lead to greater long-term opportunities for the UK skills sector, supporting the aim shared by the UK government to position the UK as the TVET partner of choice globally.

FISSS and its international arm, the UK Skills Federation, are founder members of the UK Skills Partnership. For more information, please contact [Helen Joannou](#).

*image for Helen Joannou is from Netflix

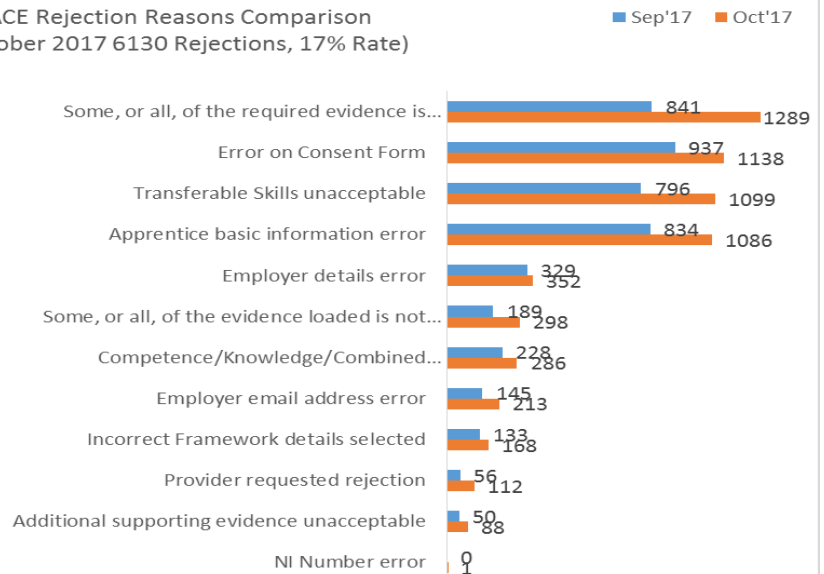
REJECTION RATE REVIEW

YVONNE RYAN



We have all been working hard over recent years to reduce the certification rejection rate and, as a network, achieved great successes with lows of 14% in recent months. Unfortunately, in October, rejections rocketed to over 17% with over 5,500 rejections costing the network and training providers around £22,000 (based on an average of £4 per rejection). We have not had this level since April 2016. Further investigation reveals that the rejection reason of 'Some, or all, of the required evidence is missing or illegible' has increased by 50%, as shown in the chart.

ACE Rejection Reasons Comparison
(October 2017 6130 Rejections, 17% Rate)



We would like to remind you that when using the automated data transfer facility, it is important to remember that where achievement information is not automatically transferred into ACE you still need to upload manual evidence. This manual evidence must be legible and meet the guidelines on the [Acceptable Evidence pages on our website](#). In addition error on consent form, transferable skills unacceptable and Apprentice basic information error also showed a significant increase. We know that this level of rejections should and could be improved on. Online support and guidance resources are available on [ACE](#) but if you are unable to find an answer to your query within these please contact the ACE Support Team, a few minutes of checking prior to submission might save your organisation a rejection.

FISSS WEAR IT PINK!

DEBBIE NORTHAM



The FISSS team took part in the **Wear it Pink** fundraising event in October as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Many of us have been affected by breast cancer so we were keen to do our part, wear something pink, and get involved in some fundraising games and activities. Alison Bucknell won the very prestigious prize (tube of pink smarties) for being the "Best Dressed" having dyed her own hair **Pink!**

As a whole we managed to raise **£640** for this fantastic cause. Seeing some of these folk trying to keep a straight face in meetings was money well spent! While the designated **Wear it Pink** day may have already passed we would encourage you to donate towards tackling the ongoing fight against breast cancer. For more information please visit wearitpink.org



SUPERSTAFF!

THE FEDERATION



Tell us about your colleagues or staff members who go the extra mile; people who are super friendly, who know everything there is to know, or who go above and beyond in the name of their job. If you've got SuperStaff, we want to hear about them! **Send us your stories at oracle@fiss.org** and the Top **Workplace Heroes** will be mentioned in the next newsletter!