

Enterprise and Learning Committee

EL(3) 17-08 (p8) : 12 June 2008

Committee inquiry into the economic contribution of higher education

Purpose

The National Assembly for Wales' Enterprise and Learning Committee is undertaking an inquiry into the economic contribution of higher education in Wales.

Background

The IMI (Institute of the Motor Industry) became the new Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Retail Automotive Sector in September 2007.

Coinciding with this date, they were required by the Sector Skill Development Agency (SSDA)* to begin development of a Sector Qualifications Strategy (SQS) for the sector.

It became apparent that engagement with Higher Education (HE) and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) up to this point had not been at the level we would have anticipated or expected. The IMI took the decision that, through the development of the SQS, we would start afresh with our engagement with HE and HEIs in Wales. To this end, working through our National Manager for Wales, we have begun discussions with HEIs in Wales to discuss current and future provision.

Summary / Recommendations

Through the development of the SQS Action Plan for Wales[#] we hope to gain agreement from individual HEIs to work with us in the development of Foundation Degrees for the sector. We believe we need to focus on two areas for development; management and leadership and motorsport. The draft Action Plan (yet to be agreed with stakeholders) states:

The HEFCW report, Study of the role of Foundation Degrees in Wales¹, identified the automotive sector as one that would benefit from the development of Foundation Degrees in Wales. The development of Foundation Degrees will help begin to extend the level and range of management and leadership skills within the sector and thus help change the

* Now the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

The Retail Automotive Sector Qualifications Strategy v1.0 - Action Plan for Wales v0.1

¹ Study of the roles of Foundation Degrees in Wales, a report to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (SQW, March 2007)

culture of management and leadership and the level of skills so needed by the sector.

In addition the development of a motorsport Foundation Degree will further help Wales maintain and develop its contribution to this sector..

Working with HEIs and bringing them together with employers in Wales will be our first step to ensure fit-for-purpose Foundation Degrees for the sector. From this position we will then work with stakeholders to ensure that Foundation Degrees are solidly based on NOS (National Occupational Standards) and that these reflect the needs of the sector.

This Action Plan will be discussed, amended if necessary, and agreed with stakeholders in Wales before being submitted to the UKCES by 21 July 2008.

We look forward to developing our relationships with HEIs in Wales as this will enable us to achieve the aims and objectives, detailed in our SQS, for the benefit of all those working in the sector in Wales. Achieving this will also result in the sector making an improved contribution to the skills development agenda and economy of Wales.