

26 February 2024

## Memorandum of Understanding

Between

**The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education**

And

**WorldSkills UK**

### Introduction

1. This MoU supports effective co-operation and working arrangements between the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and WorldSkills UK. The MoU confirms the commitment of both organisations to secure quality for students, apprentices, and employers in England through their work together.
2. Throughout this MoU, IfATE and WorldSkills UK shall be collectively referred to as 'we', with the expressions 'our' and 'us' being used accordingly.
3. This MoU is not intended to cover every detailed aspect of the working relationship between us. It is a statement of principles that will guide relations to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to enable us to work together to more effectively carry out the work of each party and to avoid duplication of effort.
4. This MoU may be supported by further and more detailed operational agreements, particularly in relation to the sharing of information.

### Status of the Memorandum of Understanding

5. This MoU is not legally binding. It is a working document that sets out the expectations of the parties in working together to more effectively carry out the respective work of each party. The MoU will be subject to review in the light of operational practice.

6. This MoU should be considered in the context of IfATE's functions as set out in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (ASCLA 2009) (as amended).

### **Roles of IfATE and WorldSkills UK**

7. IfATE is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Education and established in April 2017 by ASCLA 2009. IfATE's statutory duties and functions are set out in ASCLA 2009<sup>1</sup>. IfATE is responsible for keeping under review education and training within its remit. Through basing apprenticeships and technical education qualifications on occupational standards designed by employers, IfATE seeks to raise the standards of skills in England. IfATE develops and maintains quality criteria for the approval of occupational standards and apprenticeship assessment plans, and supports the development and approval of these with employer groups. IfATE also publishes approved occupational standards and apprenticeship assessment plans, and IfATE must secure that evaluations are carried out of the quality of apprenticeship assessments. Beyond apprenticeships, IfATE specifies categories of technical educational qualifications, including T Levels and Higher Technical Qualifications, and approves (and withdraws approval) of those in specified categories as appropriate.
8. WorldSkills UK is a four nations partnership between education, industry and UK governments. It aims to act as a catalyst for: raising standards, through international benchmarking and professional development, championing future skills, through analysis of rapidly changing economic demand and empowering young people, from all backgrounds, through competitions-based training and careers advocacy. It works to help the UK become a 'skills economy', boosting the prestige of technical and professional education by embedding world-class training standards across the UK to help drive investment, jobs and economic

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<sup>1</sup> ASCLA 2009 has been amended by the Enterprise Act 2016, the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 and the Skills & Post-16 Education Act 2022, each of which conferred further duties and functions on IfATE in relation to apprenticeships and technical education qualifications in England.

growth. It is a member of WorldSkills, a global movement of over 80 countries. The insights it gains from training as part of this global network enables it to embed world-class training standards across the UK to help drive investment, jobs and economic growth.

### **Matters of common interest**

9. Whilst respecting our distinctive roles and responsibilities, WorldSkills UK and IfATE agree that there is an opportunity to collaborate on a number of activities that will mutually benefit each organisation's strategic aims. The purpose of the collaborative working is to combine IfATE's functions as set out in clause 7 above and WorldSkills UK's role as set out in clause 8.
10. The parties will work together on several key objectives (see appendix 1) that will be ongoing and central to the collaborative efforts outlined in this MoU. These objectives include joint projects, research initiatives, or shared resources. Both parties will commit to regularly review and assess the progress of the objectives, ensuring that the collaboration remains dynamic and responsive to evolving needs.
11. Benefits likely to be realised include:
  - 11.1. increased simplification across the education and skills system
  - 11.2. efficient processes, data and relevant intelligence sharing between IfATE and WorldSkills UK
  - 11.3. enhanced quality qualifications for students, apprentices, and employers

### **Implementing the MoU**

12. To support on-going good working relationships between us, we will aim to:
  - acknowledge each other's different responsibilities, accountability structures and IfATE's legislative framework
  - develop and maintain a common understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities

- respect and acknowledge each other's expertise, valuing the advice provided
- where appropriate, provide information to each other to aid the discharge of our respective responsibilities
- identify what degree of co-operation would be appropriate in any given circumstance, collaborating from the outset if possible, and recognising that this will differ according to the specifics of the case
- take advantage of the opportunities for co-ordinated scheduling of activities where appropriate
- notify each other in a timely and appropriate way where there is a likelihood of announcements and developments which may impact on each other's key areas of work; and, where these matters are confidential, we will respect that confidentiality
- proactively seek solutions to avoid or mitigate the effects of any disagreement that may impact on the delivery of either organisation
- inform stakeholders about our relationship including publishing a copy of this Memorandum of Understanding on our respective websites

13. Against this background we will aim to establish appropriate arrangements in order to meet our respective objectives including, but not limited to the following:

- undertake at least one meeting per quarter between the Chief Executive of WorldSkills UK and the Chief Operating Officer of IfATE
- where appropriate and jointly agreed, establish and implement governance and/or joint monitoring arrangements to facilitate oversight, discussion, and implementation of programmes of work affecting both organisations
- to inform one another as soon as possible on relevant developments within our areas of responsibility, sharing medium-term plans, short-term publication grids, and, where possible, providing advance sight of relevant reports, press releases, speeches or policies
- So that the value of our collaboration is visible and felt by students, apprentices, and employers, when it is appropriate to do so we will take the opportunity to communicate jointly on matters of mutual interest

- share information about programmes of work that would be of interest to the other, where possible, in advance of that work starting

14. Both organisations will develop, agree and, as appropriate, document joint ways of working which reflect the agreements in this MoU.

15. On a day-to-day basis, colleagues across the two organisations will endeavour to resolve matters of policy or operational disagreement at working level. Where necessary, matters should be escalated for resolution to the Accountable Officer.

### **Key Roles and responsibilities**

16. Workstream groups will be set up to agree the purpose, scope and activity of the workstream and undertake the work identified, as directed by the objectives in Appendix 1. Each workstream group will be led by identified individuals from each organisation, with a named lead person and a named supporting person from each organisation. The workstreams groups will meet according to the frequency required by the workstream leaders.

17. The lead and supporting individuals on each workstream will have the following roles:

**(a) Lead:** the party that has principal responsibility for undertaking the particular task, and that will be authorised to determine how to undertake the task. The lead must consult with the other party in advance if they are identified as having a role to assure the relevant activity;

**(b) Supporting:** the party that will defer to the lead on a particular task, but will have the opportunity to review and provide input to the lead before they take a final decision on any activity. All assurance must be provided in a timely manner. Any derogations raised must be limited to raising issues that relate to specific needs that have not been adequately addressed by the lead and/or concerns regarding compliance with paragraphs 12 and 13.

## **Exchange of Information**

18. Where appropriate and at all times operating in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, applicable data protection legislation and any and all other legislation and contractual agreements, we will aim to share information we already hold with the other party where this is in the public interest.

## **Amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding**

19. If the MoU needs to be amended or altered, proposals should be made via meetings between strategic contacts. All changes need to be signed off by the Chief Executive Officer of IfATE and the Chief Executive of WorldSkills UK, or their delegated representatives within each organisation.

## **Term and Termination**

20. This MoU shall commence on the date of signature by all parties, and shall continue, with any revisions, unless it is terminated in accordance with clause [21]

21. This MoU may be terminated by way of mutual agreement or at any time by either organisation by giving at least one month's notice in writing to the other party.

22. Should the MoU be terminated, alternative arrangements will be confirmed to facilitate any on-going collaboration between the parties.

## **Contacts**

23. Senior and operational contacts will be agreed between both parties, from time to time and in accordance with relevant roles, responsibilities, and areas of work.

24. Accountable officers

- For IfATE, Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer Coupland
- For WorldSkills UK, Chief Executive, Ben Blackledge

**Signed:**

**For IfATE**



**Jennifer Coupland, Chief Executive  
Officer**

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**For WorldSkills UK**



**Ben Blackledge, Chief Executive**

**Date: 13 March 2024**

## **Appendix 1 – Key objectives 2024/25**

### **1. Share opportunities for WorldSkills UK's and IfATE's apprentice networks to get involved in each organisation's programmes including:**

- a. WorldSkills UK annual competition programme
- b. IfATE's Apprentice Panel (focusing on particular skills gaps)

### **2. Support the development of robust and internationally competitive apprenticeship standards, by:**

- a. Pilot an approach where proposals for updating standards and developing new occupational standards can be referred to WorldSkills UK's Training Manager network
- b. WorldSkills UK CEO to join IfATE's Approval Committee for initial 12-month period (in an advisory capacity)

### **3. Share opportunities for WorldSkills UK's and IfATE's employer networks to get involved in each organisation's programmes including:**

- a. Sharing opportunities to become a WorldSkills UK competition organising partner
- b. Sharing opportunities to join an IfATE Trailblazer or Route Panel

### **4. Supporting the development and dissemination of thought leadership projects that share international best practice and help develop policy on future skills, by:**

- a. Joining roundtable discussions, speaking at report launches, sharing reports with networks
- b. Supporting IfATE's projects on skills innovation and AI.
- c. Regular meetings (2 x per annum) between WorldSkills UK policy and strategy teams to explore shared interests