

Press Release: 12 July 2007: For immediate use.



*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES GET THE CHANCE TO
SHAPE NEW DIPLOMA**

SkillsActive today launched their consultation with universities and colleges around the development of the new diploma in sport and leisure.

Over 25 institutions from all over England attended the event at the SkillsActive office in London. University and college involvement in the design of the content and level of the diploma is vital if the new qualification is to enable young people to enter further or higher education from 2010 when the sport and leisure diploma is launched.

Sue Hook, SkillsActive's programme manager for 14-19 qualifications reform believes that getting education establishments on board is one of the major factors in securing the success of the diploma. She said;

“SkillsActive welcomes the willingness of colleges and universities to engage with the consultation process. Education institutions need to see the value of the diplomas as viable equivalents to GCSE's, apprenticeships, the international baccalaureate and A-levels. The new diplomas also need to be seen as respected currency in deciding who gets university places.”

A further web-based consultation will be launched following today's highly successful meeting to gain views from a wider range of education providers. A university and college advisory group is currently being established and they are also represented on the SkillsActive diploma steering group to ensure the consultation process involves all stakeholders.

For more information on the sport and leisure diploma please visit www.skillsactive.com/sldiploma or contact Sue Hook at sue.hook@skillsactive.com or call 020 7632 2000.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The new diploma is an employer-led qualification that combines practical skills and technical understanding. Employers are leading their development through the Sector Skills Councils. There will be 14 diplomas to run in parallel with apprenticeships, GCSE's, A levels and the international baccalaureate. Students will be entitled to study any diploma by 2013.
2. A diploma is available at three levels – level 1 diplomas will cater for those not yet ready to take GCSE's; level 2 will sit alongside GCSE's; and level 3 will match A levels and offer an alternative pathway to university or college.
3. The sport and leisure diploma will be available from September 2010. SkillsActive are currently consulting with various consortia (employers, schools and training providers) about how the diploma will be made up and what employers require of the new qualification.
4. SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the sport and fitness, playwork, the outdoors and caravan industries – known as the active leisure and learning sector.
5. SSCs are UK-wide, employer-led organisations that aim to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector. Twenty five SSCs make up the Skills for Business Network. The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) underpins the network and is responsible for funding, supporting and monitoring the SSCs.
6. SkillsActive's Sector Skills Agreement defines the sector's skills needs and forms an agreement between employers, government and funding partners to shape the workforce for the next ten years. Priorities identified as a result of the SSA process are: improve the quality and range of services; improve recruitment and retention; professionalise and upskill the existing workforce; match supply to demand; redirect funding for training; increase sector investment in our people.
7. SkillsActive is *Shaping Skills for the Future*, through...
 - PEOPLE...
...ensuring all people in the sector are appropriately trained and qualified.
 - PRODUCTIVITY...
...ensuring better performance through the professional development of the sector.
 - PROVISION...

...ensuring the sector has accessible, relevant and funded training across the UK.

- PROMOTION...

...ensuring the contributions of the sector are recognised at a governmental level.

8. For more information about SkillsActive, please visit our website @ www.skillsactive.com