



# Getting started

Education  
Ready™

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## Contents

<b>1. About IEBE</b>	4	<b>7. Assessment process</b>	9
<b>2. Criteria focused on improvement &amp; impact</b>	5	Completing the self-assessment	
<b>3. Business benefits</b>	6	Initial contact	
<b>4. Introduction</b>	7	Verifying the self-assessment	
The Award		Outcome and the report	
Governance		Rigour and transparency	
Assessor remit		Changing regulations	
Assessment format		<b>8. Frequently asked questions</b>	12
Data protection		<b>9. Annex</b>	14
<b>5. Application to accreditation in 5 steps</b>	8	Rigorous & transparent assessment process	
<b>6. Application process</b>	9		
Application form			
Fees and charges			

## Demonstrate your excellence in working with schools

**Education Ready™** is *the* standard against which to assess and recognise the quality of businesses' involvement in developing young people's employability. It identifies the core attributes that businesses need in order to offer effective support to young people, and help them prepare for a productive and fulfilling adult life.

Strong connections between education and business are especially important when they demonstrate the paths that lead to a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. Being **Education Ready™** demonstrates that a business has everything in place it needs to work effectively with schools, so that young people receive realistic, engaging, safe and effective work experiences.

Activities which offer realistic opportunities for young people to identify their individual abilities will ensure that, in future, businesses are able to draw upon a pool of informed and skilled people who have benefitted from well thought-out education business activities at a key stage in their educational development. It is essential that all activities are of high quality so that young people can experience the realities of work and develop the employability skills vital to their own future, and to the economy as a whole.

**Education Ready's™** rigorous accreditation process involves self-assessment - backed up by supporting evidence - and verification by an external assessor, leading, if successful, to the nationally recognised Award.

## About IEBE

The Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE) is the professional body for education business practice. Launched in June 2009, it is the first organisation of its type in the world.

'Education business practice' is the term we use to describe the work of practitioners in schools, colleges, businesses, specialist learning providers and brokers who organise, support or participate in education business activities focused on young people's learning.

Our aim is to improve the employability and life chances of young people by ensuring that they have access to high quality education business opportunities, mediated by professionals working to the highest possible standards.

We do this by **setting and safeguarding the standards** for all types of employment-related learning up to the age of 19:

- **Quality-assuring organisations** that provide education business activities, through our tailored quality standards;
- **Accrediting individual practitioners**, providing them with development opportunities and facilitating best practice exchange.

Working with leading experts, we have created our unique **IEBE Platform for Excellence™** comprising organisational quality awards, professional accreditation, IEBE Masterclasses, qualifications and opportunities for best practice.

The **IEBE Platform for Excellence™** will have an enormous impact on the quality and professionalism of how schools and businesses work together. Its products and services which comprise the Platform are delivered through **IEBE Approved™** providers - a range of organisations who share our vision, goals and values.

**Education Ready™** is IEBE's quality assurance product aimed at businesses who wish to improve the way they work with schools to improve young people's employability. It complements its sister standard - **Business Ready™** - aimed at schools who wish to improve the way they work with businesses.

## Criteria focused on improvement & impact

To become **Education Ready™** businesses are assessed against 8 Criteria:

<b>ER1</b>	Works directly or through third parties on activities that strengthen education business practice
<b>ER2</b>	Activities reflect employment realities and help prepare young people for working life
<b>ER3</b>	Involvement is based upon a clear sense of the benefits to the business and its employees
<b>ER4</b>	Adopts objectives and targets, supported by an appropriate budget and driven by a senior manager
<b>ER5</b>	Activities are quality-assured and follow statutory requirements for health and safety, and safeguarding
<b>ER6</b>	Monitors and evaluates its involvement in developing young people's employability and uses the findings to improve the quality of its activities
<b>ER7</b>	Ensures employees are properly equipped and trained, providing support when necessary and reviewing their involvement as part of continuing professional development
<b>ER8</b>	Informed about education and economic policy developments, so that its activities remain relevant

## Business benefits

Being **Education Ready™** means businesses are...

<b>Proactive</b> and able to make stronger connections between the needs of their employees, their business and schools	✓
<b>Inspirational</b> in their approach to creating education business programmes, projects and practice	✓
<b>Responsible</b> in providing realistic, safe and practical learning experiences	✓
<b>Relevant</b> and responsive to students' needs and so have greater on their learning and achievement	✓
<b>Committed</b> to embedding quality and improvement in to everything they do to support schools	✓

# Introduction

This document is designed to help businesses prepare for assessment against the eight Criteria that make up the **Education Ready™** quality standard. It describes the assessment process, supports the completion of the self-assessment and describes the kinds of evidence that may be relevant.

Self-assessment is a vital component of any rigorous quality process, although accreditation ultimately depends on the judgement of the external assessor. The underlying intention of the process is to assess the quality of businesses' work with schools, and to recognise how, through the transfer of relevant knowledge and development of skills and attitudes, this work enhances the employability and life chances of young people.

IEBE has responsibility for overall administration of the application, assessment process, verification, reporting, and accreditation processes of **Education Ready™**. The assessment process has been reviewed by the awarding organisation OCR to reflect good practice in assessment methods.

## The Award

The **Education Ready™** Award embraces the:

- Quality standard
- Assessment Criteria
- Accreditation process
- Reporting & certification

There are eight Criteria, all of which have to be met for a business to gain the Award and the certificate confirms compliance with all the Criteria. Once accreditation has been achieved, a business has access to marketing materials to help promote their new status.

## Governance arrangements

**Education Ready™** has been developed in conjunction with the quality sub-group of the IEBE Council, which comprises representatives of education, business, and specialist learning providers. This group will continue to oversee the operation of the assessment process and will arbitrate when complaints or appeals are received. The group has responsibility for the probity and performance of the assessment process, but legal liability resides with IEBE.

## Assessor remit

All **Education Ready™** assessors are trained to use the standard and come from a range of backgrounds linked to business and/or education. One assessor is assigned to each assessment.

## Assessment format

The supporting administrative processes and paperwork are designed to be as simple as possible, whilst at the same ensuring the probity of the overall assessment. Self-assessment outcomes and supporting evidence sent to IEBE are stored securely.

## Data protection

Data protection and confidentiality of all information are given the highest priority within the process.

## Application to accreditation in 5 steps



<sup>1</sup>Subject to a successful assessment.



## Application process

### Application form

The application form for **Education Ready™** is available with this document. Businesses are asked to supply contact information, data about what they do and where they are based, and information about the ways they work with schools.

### Fees and charges

Information on fees and charges is available from your **IEBE Approved™** provider.

## Assessment process

### Completing the self-assessment

The self-assessment covers in detail the requirements for fulfilling the eight Criteria. In the self-assessment businesses are requested to provide evidence on how its:

- Aims for working with schools are addressed and its activities managed;
- Activities are informed by current education and economic policy developments;
- Activities meet relevant health, safety and safeguarding regulations;
- Practices are improved through regular review and evaluation;
- Employees who are involved have the relevant knowledge, skills and expertise;
- Commitment to effective education business activities is demonstrated.

In addition to asking businesses to assess themselves against each of the Criteria, the self-assessment form asks for a brief narrative to justify those decisions. Accurate assessment depends upon the professionalism, expertise, experience and common sense approach of assessors, internal and external. Ultimately, self-assessors will ask themselves: "Do we actually meet this criterion and do we have the evidence to support that judgement?" External assessors will ask themselves: "Has the organisation offered sufficient evidence, both written and oral, to support its self-assessment?"

More detailed evidence requirements, as well as the process for submitting evidence are provided by IEBE on receipt of the registration fee and the business has agreed to the terms and conditions for the assessment.

## Initial contact

On receipt of the self-assessment form and the supporting evidence, IEBE will identify an assessor and copy the documents to him/her. Within two weeks, IEBE will contact the person identified in the application form and agree a mutually convenient time for a phone conversation, called the 'Assessment Verification', during which the assessor will seek to verify the business's self-assessment. Assessment Verification can take place within two weeks after the initial contact.

## Verifying the self-assessment

Having received the documentation, the assessor will study the evidence provided and, based on that, compile a list of questions, to verify the self-assessment. The questions will be shared with the business no later than one week before Assessment Verification. Exceptionally, prior to Assessment Verification, the assessor may request further information. Assessment Verification should last around one hour and the lead contact can involve other members of the business's staff if he/she wishes.

## Outcome and the report

Having considered all the evidence, the assessor produces the draft report within 48 hours of Assessment Verification and conveys the outcome<sup>2</sup> and a brief rationale to the business:

- Distinction
- Merit
- Pass
- Standard not met

The final report also sets out the business's strengths and any recommendations for development, commenting briefly on each criterion.

The report is sent to the business within two weeks of Assessment Verification, together with the Award certificate (if awarded).

Once accreditation is confirmed, the business gains access to the nationally recognised **Education Ready™** logo. Accreditation against the quality standard runs from the date of Assessment Verification.

<sup>2</sup> More information on the report outcomes is provided in 'Education Ready™: Self-assessment form & guidance'.

## Standard not met

Businesses that have areas of performance identified in the final report which do not meet the required standard may wish to continue to develop them, and submit for reassessment. If this is the case, the business informs IEBE and then is classified as 'Working Towards'. The business should present itself for reassessment no earlier than three and no later than six months from Assessment Verification. During this period the business is not accredited.

Appeals<sup>3</sup> against decisions following external assessment may be made to IEBE for consideration by the quality sub-group of the IEBE Council.

## Rigour and transparency

All assessment is underpinned by a rigorous and transparent quality assurance process that includes the following elements:

- Statement of principles; and,
- Code of conduct for assessors.

These elements are designed to ensure that the Award maintains a high level of credibility among businesses and their stakeholders. Full details are given in an Annex.

## Changing regulations

IEBE monitors all new national requirements and regulations in order to update the assessment process. Assessors receive additional training as required and businesses awaiting assessment will be informed of any new requirements or changes within the assessment process.

<sup>3</sup> Information on the appeals process is provided in 'Education Ready™: Self-assessment form & guidance'.

## Frequently asked questions

### Q. Why has IEBE developed Education Ready™?

- A. IEBE is the professional body that sets and safeguards the standards of education business practice. Our desire is for all practitioners and organisations involved in developing young people's employability to operate to the highest professional standards. We have developed **Education Ready™** as a way for businesses to improve the quality and impact of their education programmes, projects and practice.

### Q. What's involved?

- A. Following the simple application process, businesses undertake a self-assessment of their approach to, and provision of, education business activities with schools against eight Criteria, and provide supporting evidence. This is then assessed by one of IEBE's independent external assessors.

### Q. What sort of business is it for?

- A. Any business who wishes to improve how they work with schools to improve young people's learning and employability.

### Q. What sort of activities can be included?

- A. There are no restrictions placed on the types of education business activities, though typically businesses will provide evidence of: supporting local and national education strategies and policies, work experience and mentoring programmes, enterprise projects, professional development placements for teachers, industry visits and careers support.

### Q. What sort of evidence is required?

- A. Evidence would be drawn from formal documents, such as strategies, policies and plans, and also from statements and testimonials from employees and partners.

### Q. How long does it take for a business to become Education Ready™?

- A. If the business has all the evidence required and can satisfy the external assessor that they meet the Criteria, the process can take as little as 13 weeks to complete. However, a business has up to 12 months to submit their self-assessment.

### Q. What if a business has multiple locations?

- A. While the Award is made at local level, joint applications from multiple sites of the same business can be accommodated. Enquire at [educationready@iebe.org.uk](mailto:educationready@iebe.org.uk).

### Q. What happens if a business doesn't meet the standard?

- A. If a business fails to meet the requirements of one or more Criteria, it may apply to be reassessed against those Criteria no sooner than three and no later than six months from the date of the external assessment.

## Q. Is more help available to help businesses reach the standard?

A. **IEBE Approved™** providers can help with all aspects of the application and assessment process. Additional charges may be levied for these services.

## Have another question?

Contact your local **IEBE Approved™** provider or email [educationready@iebe.org.uk](mailto:educationready@iebe.org.uk).

# Annex

## Rigorous and transparent assessment process

### A. The principles of assessment are that it will:

1. Scrutinise evidence and make judgements objectively against the **Education Ready™** quality standard;
2. Focus on the benefits to young people and to businesses where relevant;
3. Encourage rigorous self-assessment by the business assessed;
4. Make use as far as possible of the existing documentation and systems of the business assessed and avoid unnecessary demands;
5. Observe the strict business and personal confidentiality of all businesses and employees assessed;
6. Report clearly and fairly on the basis of secure evidence;
7. Be designed to promote and support improvement, through the recommendations made in reports;
8. Respond fairly to complaints, carry out evaluation of the effectiveness of assessment and seek continually to improve it.

### B. Code of conduct for assessors

Assessors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work. They are required to:

1. Evaluate objectively, be impartial, with no sectoral bias, and have no connection with the business being assessed which could undermine their objectivity;
2. Report honestly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable;
3. Carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they contact with courtesy and sensitivity;
4. Do all they can to minimise the stress on those involved in the assessment process;
5. Offer no financial or legal advice, as this will invalidate indemnity insurance;
6. Communicate judgements clearly and frankly;
7. Respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work;
8. Carry out the assessment process in a well informed and well prepared manner;
9. Adhere to agreed times and deadlines.

Employees in businesses being assessed are expected to be courteous and helpful to assessors as they carry out their work.

NB: Trained assessors are not permitted to offer independent consultancy support direct to businesses being assessed for **Education Ready™**.