

Welcome to the School FEAST Network



The establishment of the School FEAST Network is a landmark in the skilling and motivation of an essential workforce. Ensuring that everyone who works in schools has the skills and knowledge to provide good food during school hours, is essential to the long term health and welfare of our children and young people. The School FEAST network will ensure that today's caterers and cooks will gain the skills they need and that the quality and motivation of future generations of providers will be maintained.

School FEAST brand

What's in a name?

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills and Jamie Oliver originally called these centres Regional Training Kitchens. The Trust adopted the name Regional Training Centres to illustrate that, whilst kitchens would be central to the training programme, other areas of training would also be covered. This interim approach was agreed at an event in January.

However, all partners agreed that there was a need for a new name to accurately reflect the purpose of the centres. Building on this and further feedback received the Trust has chosen School FEAST (Food Excellence And Skills Training) to be the new name.

This name encapsulates the essence of what these organisations will strive to deliver, whilst maintaining reference to their target audience, those providing food in schools. The name will help create a common identity for the different organisational structures (individual and partnerships) that will emerge through the business planning process.



Background

In September 2006, the former Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Alan Johnson, announced The Five Point Plan, a package of measures to improve school food and tackle childhood obesity.

This package included a £2 million Capital Funding Grant to establish a network of Regional Training Kitchens/Centres to act as centres of excellence. These kitchens/centres would provide a readily accessible supply of high quality training and ensure that the school workforce is motivated and encouraged to take up the training offered.

The School Food Trust was commissioned, by the Department for Education and Skills, to lead in the implementation of this proposal.

Since October 2006, the School Food Trust has:

- convened a Training and Qualification Steering Group of strategic partners to develop minimum criteria for School FEAST. The Steering Group developed the 'Core Offer' of training or qualifications each School FEAST centre and partnership has to provide;

- held a meeting of key delivery partners in January 2007 where the criteria for these centres was agreed;

- worked closely with partners to ensure that the School FEAST network has the greatest possible positive impact on the quality of provision and take-up of training by the school food workforce;

- established a pathfinder regional training centre at the Royal Agricultural College to test the criteria in a realistic setting and to advise on aspects of the business planning process;

- established links between the work of the School FEAST programme and People 1st, the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality and Catering, and

- developed the Business Plan process. The process enabled interested organisations to become a School FEAST centre or partnership.

What are the benefits of training?

The school meals service has undergone significant changes in recent years.

In 2006, the Government introduced the food-based standards aimed at improving the quality of school meals. The nutrient standards will be introduced into primary schools in September 2008, followed in September 2009, into secondary schools. These will require schools, local authorities or catering providers to ensure that an average school lunch – calculated across a one to four week menu cycle – meets specific standards for energy and contains minimum level of 13 nutrients, including iron, calcium and zinc.

Many school meals are now cooked from scratch using a wide range of ingredients. School cooks around the country have risen to the challenge and the standard of school food is really improving but all those who are working to improve school meals have had to, and must continue to, develop their skills and knowledge.

The School FEAST network aims to support employers of the school food workforce to access training and qualifications. Each School FEAST centre or partnership is required to offer a comprehensive package of training and qualifications tailored to suit your staff. This package provides a range of training methods, from hands-on cooking lessons to formal qualifications at NVQ Level 2 and beyond.

The right training for the right person

Making sure that the right type of training is matched to the right person is essential.

All School FEAST centres and partnerships are required to complete a pre-training assessment on all those considering a course or formal qualification. They will need to work with you to identify your needs, and those of your staff, which they will then match to the most appropriate training or qualification.

To support this process People 1st, the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality and Catering, produced a report about the types of training most suitable for the school food workforce. The document details the range of qualifications and training available. In addition, the Training and Development Agency has produced a Career Development Framework specifically to guide and support members of the school food workforce through their training programme. Visit www.tda.gov.uk for more information.

What training is right for me?

Matching the right training to the right person is essential. Although each person's role may vary, tasks and responsibilities are often the same, or very similar. The following 'learner profiles' match the type of job to the general tasks and responsibilities included within that role.

Learner Profile: Catering Manager

Task and responsibilities include:

- Menu planning
- Food costing and accounts including budgeting, staff wages and timesheets
- Stock control
- Counting cash and accounting, handling bank takings (which may involve dealing with the finance department)
- Customer liaison
- Attending PTA/Governor meetings as required
- Responsibility for Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP)
- First aid
- Purchasing, negotiating contracts, dealing with suppliers
- Health and safety
- Recruitment and staff appraisal
- Monitoring of nutritional guidelines.

Training opportunities:

- Intermediate/advanced hygiene certificate
 - Basic IT
 - Nutrition awareness up to NVQ Level 3
 - First aid
- Introduction to management (eg NEBSM).

Learner Profile: Head Cook/Chef

Tasks and responsibilities include:

- Food preparation
- Cooking and serving
- Organising, directing and implementing resources
- Financial control and administration of quality control
- Staffing/personnel and customer liaison.

Training opportunities:

- Food safety to Level 2
- Health and safety
- Healthy eating
- Customer focus
- The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)
- Professional cookery NVQ Level 2/3
- Manual handling

Career development opportunities:

- Nutrition/healthy eating
- Management/supervisory
- Resource management
- Customer care
- Higher level of craft skills

Learner Profile: Assistant Cook

Tasks and responsibilities include:

- Responsible to the catering manager when assisting with food preparation
- Cooking, serving and general cleaning duties
- Handling cash when required
- Completing necessary records, stock-taking, deliveries and delivery notes
- Deputising during the catering manager's absence.

Training opportunities:

- NVQ Level 3 or equivalent
- Food safety to Level 2
- Health and safety
- Healthy eating
- Customer focus
- Supervisory management
- Menu planning
- Preparing meals for dining centres
- Ordering food
- Computer skills
- Customer care
- Cashless systems
- Nutrition and healthy eating

Learner Profile: Kitchen Assistant

Tasks and responsibilities include:

- Sandwich provision
- Salad making
- Setting up and cleaning dining room
- Washing up, serving customers, cleaning kitchen and stores
- Preparing and cooking food
- Serving on tills
- Rotating kitchen tasks to become proficient at all jobs

Training opportunities:

- Basic hygiene certificate (required)
- Serving and transporting meals
- Food safety
- Health and safety
- Customer care

Learner Profile: Bursar

In some schools the bursar has a management role towards the catering staff.

Tasks and responsibilities include:

- Producing staff contracts, job descriptions and appraisals
- Having the final decision about training
- Keeping abreast of legislation on food provision
- Keeping kitchen staff informed of legislation and ensuring that staff follow national nutritional guidelines.

Training opportunities:

- Management
- Member of the Bursars' Association
- Contract/financial knowledge
- Hygiene
- Health and safety

What training is available through the School FEAST Network?

Each School FEAST centre and partnership is required to ensure all learners have access to a 'Core Offer' of qualifications. These are listed below. The 'Core Offer' has been developed by the School Food Trust and its partners; People 1st, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Training and Development Agency, the Food Standards Agency, the Learning and Skills Council and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Whilst every centre and partnership must offer the entire Core Offer, it represents only a small proportion of the qualifications available to the school food workforce and should develop, in response to the pre-training assessment and in partnership with employers, an individualised learning programme that meets the needs of the learner.

It is the responsibility of each centre and partnership to ensure the quality of the delivery and provision of all qualifications and training that they offer.

To find out more about any additional training opportunities you should visit the provider section.

Level 1 VRQ – Award in Providing a Healthier School Meals Service

Designed specifically for all those involved in the preparation and service of school meals, this course will boost your confidence and improve your ability to deliver healthier school meals. You will learn:

- how to provide a range of healthier schools meals, and
- why healthy meals are important to the development and health of children and young people.
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You will need to produce a portfolio (which will take about six hours to complete) and this will be used to assess your skills and knowledge.



SWiS (Support Work in Schools)

SWiS qualifications are suitable for all school support staff, whether you work in or outside the classroom. They are flexible – so you can take them when you are ready, as well as tailored to meet specific development needs.

You can access SWiS at two levels: Level 2 for an award and certificate or Level 3 for an award, certificate and diploma.

Level 2 has been designed to build on existing skills and experience while Level 3 is aimed at staff with a higher level of responsibility and/or independence in their workplace. This level will also appeal to anyone who is new to working in a school environment, but who already holds qualifications or expertise in a particular area, such as catering.

The SWiS programme provides a stepping stone to specialist qualifications like National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). To find out more visit www.tda.gov.uk/SWiS

Level 2 NVQ in Professional Cookery

This qualification has been designed for individuals with no formal qualifications in catering. Whether you are employed or looking for work in this field, Level 2 NVQ in Professional Cookery is a nationally recognised qualification. The course takes about two years and involves five mandatory units in the first year followed by seven option units in the second year. Assessments are made through observation and a portfolio of evidence. Some oral testing will also be used to assess competence.

Level 2 NVQ in Food Processing and Cooking

This qualification is aimed at people who work in leisure and tourism, catering, hotel and hospitality. It must be completed within your place of work. As well as receiving the relevant information and materials you will be allocated an assessor for personal tutorial support (arranged at your convenience). There is a personal assessment element to this course, which is achieved through observation and discussion. You might feel happier pursuing a more informal course or qualification. Individual School FEAST centres and partnerships may offer this option too as another route to helping people gain more experience.

What are the time & money commitments?

Taking any form of training, qualification and course requires commitment in both time and money. Before undertaking any form of training, you and your employer must be satisfied that you will both be achieving something.

If you are interested in developing your skills and knowledge you will need to speak to your employer. It is critical your employer knows what training interests you and what you hope to get out of it. They may already have access to a training package that meets your needs or can help you consider what training you require, how you can access it and how it will fit into your working day.

Ensuring the training on offer meets your needs

Whatever course or qualification is decided upon there will be implications for the employer both in terms of cost and the amount of time staff will need to take out of their working day.

All School FEAST centres and partnerships are required to consider a range of flexible delivery methods. These could include e-learning, evening and weekend courses and on-site training, which meet the needs of employers and their staff.

The School FEAST Code of Practice

What is required of each centre and partnership?

All School FEAST centres and partnerships, by accepting membership to the network have signed up to a Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice describes the principles that underpin the operation and development of the School FEAST network to deliver the desired added value. Signing up to this Code of Practice confirms the School FEAST centre or partnership will:

- strive to continually improve its services to achieve the highest levels of quality and value by self assessment and by encouraging external inspection;
- have a long term commitment to understanding and meeting the training needs of those who are involved in catering services and the development of food policy through active engagement with employers;
- provide training in innovative and flexible ways to ensure maximum take up. Provide each learner with a training plan tailored to suit the individual's needs and job role.;
- deliver appropriate aspects of the Every Child Matters Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, as part of an individual's learning plan, in a manner that is suitable to their role within the school workforce (see: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk);
- support continued learning and inspire the ongoing development of the school food workforce;
- keep learners, employers and other stakeholders aware of and advised on the training provided by the School FEAST centre or partnership;
- build a recognised School FEAST national network through the common use of the brand;
- share good practice and learning in the delivery of school food workforce training through active involvement in the School FEAST network, and
- keep the Trust updated with progress, challenges and future activities at monthly intervals during the set-up phase and at quarterly intervals thereafter.

Information taken from <http://www.schoolfeast.co.uk> February 2008

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