



™ INSTITUTE OF ENTERPRISE
AND ENTREPRENEURS

NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION TO ENTERPRISE SUPPORT



POWERED BY

SFEDI® GROUP

Introduction

These standards are intended to help people identify whether they have the abilities, knowledge and experience that can provide a basis for developing the abilities needed in business support professions, such as being a business adviser.

They are intended to assist in career and development decisions for people who are thinking of working towards a future job as a business adviser or in a similar business support role. The standards may therefore be used, for example, as a basis for:

- self-assessment tools to help people identify where there are gaps in their existing skills, knowledge and behaviours that are relevant to business support;
- introductory taster and awareness events.

These standards are **NOT** to be used in the assessment of people as business support professionals or working towards such assessment. In these contexts the full Business Support standards should be used.

The standards frequently use phrases such as “people you are working with”. This can be applied to all kinds of situations, from work colleagues to clients. The latter would be appropriate in a business advice context but this is not required for these introductory standards. The personal behaviours are drawn from IIP Practitioner competencies and refer to a “client” but can also be applied to the people you are working with.

Summary of core competences

<i>New units</i>	<i>Page</i>
1 Build relationships with others	
This is about building a rapport with people, helping others to develop their trust and confidence in you and reviewing the progress of your relationship with them. It involves communicating effectively so you can find out what you need to know, listening, reflecting and getting your point across clearly.	3
2 Use your experience and expertise to help others	
This is about helping others to benefit from your expertise and experience. It involves clarifying what people need, and explaining issues and concepts, making sure you recognise the limits of your expertise and knowledge.	5
3 Evaluate and develop your own performance	
This is about reflecting on and evaluating honestly your own performance, and discovering ways to improve it through skills development. This requires you to work with others to identify your strengths and weaknesses, find out what information and support is available to help you develop a plan covering your personal and professional aspirations, and then put those plans into action.	8
4 Help others to set and realise objectives	
This is about developing a clear picture of the objectives of the person you are working with and making sure those objectives can be achieved. It includes knowing how to set objectives, the potential risks involved, how to manage them, what resources are required, and how to help achieve them.	10
Knowledge and experience unit	
5 Knowledge and experience of a small business and its core functions	
If you aspire to be a good business adviser you need to have, or develop, a broad range of abilities that cover the essential areas of business. This includes finance, marketing,	

sales, and customer service and how they link to and support each other. You will also need to have experience or practical knowledge of the competing demands, pressures, and motivations that face the entrepreneur. These introductory standards require coverage of these areas at an appropriate level, in some instances described as basic. This must be sufficient to provide a basis for subsequent development to meet the requirements of the full Business Support standards. This unit includes:

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- A. Finances
- B. Marketing, sales and customer service
- C. Small business understanding

Key and Core Skills

SFEDI has mapped these standards to key and core skills. Achieving competence against the Progression into Business Support standards will probably require achievement of a combination of level 2 and level 3 Key Skills, and Intermediate level, and Higher Core Skills. (See Key and Core skills signposting document)

Only a small number of specific references to the use of IT have been included in the standards. However in the modern business environment it is expected that anyone providing business support should have at least this level of IT competence and be able to apply it in communication and the management of information.

1 Build relationships with others

Summary

This is about building a rapport with people, helping others to develop their trust and confidence in you and reviewing the progress of your relationship with them. It involves communicating effectively so you can find out what you need to know, listening, reflecting and getting your point across clearly.

What you need to show

You must make sure that your practice meets the following requirements.

- a Learn as much as you can about the people you are working with.
- b Discuss the motivations, objectives and interests of the people you are working with to help develop empathy and rapport.
- c Adapt your style of working to ensure it does not conflict with the people you are working with.
- d Find an appropriate style of discussion and exchange.
- e Listen fully and attentively to what you are being told.
- f Check the accuracy of what has been said.
- g Reflect back on what has been discussed.
- h Make your point in a way that the other person can appreciate and understand.
- i Challenge the answers you are given and get to the source of any misunderstandings.
- j Detect if someone you are working with is anxious about any issue and raise the matter sensitively.
- k Review with people you are working with how they feel the relationship with you is going.
- l Maintain contact and exchange information with each person, in ways that are appropriate and meet their needs.

What you need to know and understand

You need to know, understand and be able to apply each of the following.

Building support relationships

- 1 The benefits of finding out about the people you are working with (for example, to build trust, and so you can tailor your help).
- 2 The personal and professional motivations of the person you are working with.
- 3 The demands on and the responsibilities of the person you are working with.
- 4 How different people like to work.
- 5 How to approach interactions with others in an open minded manner without having preconceptions of the outcome.
- 6 How and when it is appropriate to review progress.

Interpersonal and communication skills

- 7 How to use effective interpersonal and communication skills, including, when appropriate:
 - o listening fully and attentively;
 - o questioning;
 - o checking accuracy;
 - o summarising;
 - o reflecting back;
 - o challenging;
 - o respecting and acknowledging issues;
 - o negotiation;
 - o giving, receiving and passing on constructive feedback;
 - o dealing with difficulties.
- 8 How to identify issues, anxiety or concern (spoken or unspoken) in the people you are working with.
- 9 The benefits and drawbacks of different kinds of communication in different circumstances (for example, face-to-face contact, phone, fax and e-mail).

Personal behaviours

You need to be able to:

- 10 Tailor your approach to align with the client's goals and circumstances. ^{iiP1.2}
- 11 Respect the client's need for information, commitment and confidentiality. ^{iiP1.3}
- 12 Seek the right information to analyse a situation and draw sound conclusions. ^{iiP3.2}
- 13 Have a written style that is clear and has impact. ^{iiP4.1}
- 14 Deliver thoughts in straightforward terms, but maintain listener interest. ^{iiP4.2}

- 15 Listen and respond effectively, and check understanding. ^{iiP4.3}
- 16 Have a rigorous but impartial questioning style. ^{iiP4.4}
- 17 Adapt your personal style to empathise with a whole range of clients. ^{iiP6.1}

18 Build and maintain rapport over sustained periods. ^{liP6.2}

19 Invite a two-way exchange of information and feedback with clients and others. ^{liP6.3}

2 Use your expertise and experience to help others

Summary

This is about helping others to benefit from your expertise and experience. It involves clarifying what people need, and explaining issues and concepts, making sure you recognise the limits of your expertise and knowledge.

What you need to show

You must make sure that your practice meets the following requirements.

- a Encourage the person you are working with to explain clearly what they want to achieve.
- b Identify what is needed and expected from you, and ascertain and explain what you can deliver to support the person you are working with.
- c Use your experience and knowledge in the most appropriate way to help the person you are working with.
- d Explain issues and concepts in your area of expertise in a way that the person you are working with can understand.
- e Identify and recognise when things are going well.
- f Identify when something is not working and take appropriate action.
- g Identify when the help required is outside your area of expertise.

What you need to know and understand

You need to know, understand and be able to apply each of the following.

Communication and interpersonal skills

- 1 How to use effective interpersonal and communication skills.
- 2 The benefits and drawbacks of different kinds of communication (for example, face-to-face contact, phone, fax and e-mail).

Working with others

- 3 How to set clear expectations of what each party hopes to achieve from the support relationship.
- 4 You need to understand and take account of;
 - o the boundaries of the relationship between you and the person you are working with;
 - o the limitations of your role and responsibilities; and
 - o the different ways people like to work.
- 5 How and when it is appropriate to review progress.

Knowledge and experience

- 6 The aspects of your experience that can add quality, relevance and credibility of the advice you offer.
- 7 The limits of your own skills, knowledge and experience.
- 8 How to recognise when the person you are working with needs more specialist:
 - o personal support (for example, if they bring issues into a conversation which have nothing to do with the context of your working relationship); and
 - o professional advice (for example a professional, specialist or someone with more experience than you)
- 9 When and where to get additional sources of support.

Personal behaviours

You need to be able to:

- 10 Tailor your approach to align with the clients' goals and circumstances. ^{liP1.2}
- 11 Respect your client's need for information, commitment and confidentiality. ^{liP1.3}
- 12 Gain respect by operating in a professional and credible manner. ^{liP2.1}
- 13 Engender cooperation by considering the perspective of others. ^{liP2.2}
- 14 Handle disagreements or resistance constructively and fairly. ^{liP2.3}
- 15 Apply knowledge/experience effectively, yet be open to exploring new ideas. ^{liP3.4}
- 16 Listen and respond effectively, and check understanding. ^{liP4.3}
- 17 Have a rigorous but impartial questioning style. ^{liP4.4}

- 18 Adapt your personal style to empathise with a whole range of clients. ^{iiP6.1}
- 19 Build and maintain rapport over sustained periods. ^{iiP6.2}
- 20 Invite a two-way exchange of information and feedback with clients and others. ^{iiP6.3}

21 Remain positive and maintain effort despite setbacks, changes or ambiguities. ^{IP7.3}

3 Evaluate and develop your own performance

Summary

This is about reflecting on and evaluating honestly your own performance, and discovering ways to improve it through skills development. This requires you to work with others to identify your strengths and weaknesses, find out what information and support is available to help you develop a plan covering your personal and professional aspirations, and then put those plans into action.

What you need to show

You must make sure that your practice meets the following requirements.

- a Monitor your performance regularly to make sure that it is as effective as possible.
- b Get regular and useful feedback on your performance.
- c Regularly describe and analyse any improvements that need to be made, either by you or through involving others.
- d Maintain a level of knowledge and understanding that enables you to carry out your role effectively.
- e Change the way you work in line with any relevant or new approaches or recommendations.
- f Use feedback from clients, contacts or colleagues to identify any skills gaps.
- g Develop a personal development plan and update it regularly to include new aims or achievements.

What you need to know and understand

You need to know, understand and be able to apply each of the following.

Communication and interpersonal skills

- 1 How to use effective interpersonal and communication skills.

Personal action planning

- 2 Your own values and career and personal goals and how to relate them to your job role and professional development.
- 3 The importance of assessing your own performance and developing your skills accordingly.
- 4 The most appropriate methods for assessing your own performance.
- 5 Who the best people are to judge your performance and give you constructive feedback (for example, clients, contacts and colleagues).
- 6 What an effective development plan should contain.
- 7 How to update a development plan in line with feedback received or development activities undertaken.

Improving your performance

- 8 The current level of knowledge, understanding and skill required to do your job.
- 9 The sources of information or support that will help or influence the way you do your job, and how to access them.

Personal behaviours

You need to be able to:

- 10 Apply knowledge/experience effectively, yet be open to exploring new ideas. ^{iiP3.4}
- 11 Invite a two-way exchange of information and feedback with others. ^{iiP6.3}
- 12 Strive to add value by achieving results in the best way. ^{iiP7.1}
- 13 Be committed to developing yourself to improve performance. ^{iiP7.2}

4 Help others to set and realise objectives

Summary

This is about developing a clear picture of the objectives of the person you are working with and making sure those objectives can be achieved. It includes knowing how to set objectives, the potential risks involved, how to manage them, what resources are required, and how to help achieve them.

What you need to show

You must make sure that your practice meets the following requirements.

- a Set practical and achievable objectives.
- b Encourage and support the person you are working with to make practical judgements on what is essential, important or preferred and prioritise accordingly.
- c Negotiate a plan of action with people you are working with and not be too prescriptive.
- d Identify obstacles that may hamper progress.
- e Evaluate what the risks and benefits are.
- f Assess strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities.
- g Plan what resources are needed to achieve objectives and secure them.
- h Identify and work with others who can help realise the objectives.
- i Help the people you are working with to secure other relevant sources of support.

What you need to know and understand

You need to know, understand and be able to apply each of the following.

Communication and interpersonal skills

1. How to use effective interpersonal and communication skills.
2. The benefits and drawbacks of different kinds of communication (for example, face to face contact, phone, fax and email).

Analysis and planning

3. What the people you are working with want to achieve.
4. What is involved in achieving the stated objectives (for example, resources, commitment of the other people, skills, knowledge, and information).
5. How to evaluate the potential obstacles to progress (for example, lack of resource or desire from other key stakeholders).
6. Risk assessment techniques.
7. The resources available to meet objectives.
8. How to manage the change that meeting the objectives will bring.
9. The limits of your own skills and knowledge.
10. When and where to get other sources of support.

Personal behaviours

You need to be able to:

11. Respect the client's need for information, commitment and confidentiality. ^{iiP1.3}
12. Think strategically, taking a holistic view of the way forward. ^{iiP3.1}
13. Seek the right information to analyse a situation and draw sound conclusions. ^{iiP3.2}
14. Generate justifiable alternatives to solve a problem or reach an outcome. ^{iiP3.3}
15. Apply knowledge and experience effectively, yet be open to exploring new ideas. ^{iiP3.4}
16. Listen and respond effectively, and check understanding. ^{iiP4.3}
17. Have a rigorous but impartial questioning style. ^{iiP4.4}
18. Effectively link objectives and actions to an overall strategy. ^{iiP5.1}
19. Prioritise and schedule to ensure optimum use of time and resource. ^{iiP5.2}
20. Recognise when plans need to be adapted and act accordingly. ^{iiP5.4}
21. Invite a two-way exchange of information and feedback from others. ^{iiP6.3}
22. Remain positive and maintain effort despite setbacks, changes or ambiguities. ^{iiP7.3}

5 Knowledge and experience of a small business and its core functions

Summary

To be a good business adviser you need to have a broad range of abilities that cover the essential areas of business. This includes finance, marketing, sales, and customer service and how they link to and support each other. You also need to have experience or practical knowledge of the competing demands, pressures, and motivations that face the entrepreneur. These progression standards require coverage of these areas at an appropriate level, in some instances described as basic. This must be sufficient to provide a basis for subsequent progression to meeting the requirements of the full Business Support standards.

Knowledge and experience

You need to have knowledge or experience of each of the following.

A Finances

- i Working out financial requirements (for example forecasting resource requirements).
- ii Sourcing of funding and what is needed to secure that funding.
- iii Planning, monitoring and recording the cash flow in and out of a business, venture, or project.
- iv Opening and managing a bank account.
- v Understanding financial accounts.
- vi Basic accounting terms and practices, and the basic rules regarding business taxation.

B Marketing, sales and customer service

- i Conducting market research (for example to assess market conditions, to estimate potential customer base, and to identify competition).
- ii Understanding the customers needs.
- iii Delivering a good customer service and how you can measure and monitor it.
- iv Understanding terms of business.
- v Basic marketing and sales techniques (for example, advertising, promotion, pricing) and tools (for example, websites, mail shots, direct selling).

C Small business experience

- i The emotional investment entrepreneurs make in their businesses.
- ii The major functions needed in a small business and how they link to and support each other.
- iii What it takes to successfully start and run a small business.
- iv The competing demands and pressures of running a small business (for example, cash management, the personal nature of people management and relying on a small customer base).
- v The diverse capabilities required of entrepreneurs (for example, financial management, business

acumen, and human resource skills).

- vi The need for entrepreneurs to take risks.
- vii The recognition that running a business takes a lot of time, energy and commitment.
- viii When and how to apply the principles of running a small business in practice.

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