



UK Business Support - Standards and Accreditation 2010

UK government and all of the business support sector including all the small business membership organisations have since 1996 agreed, revised and improved a suite of SFEDI National Occupational Standards for all small business support roles ensuring that:

- Potential or existing business owners receive the very best business support available
- Funders of business support services appoint the very best business support practitioners to deliver their service
- Business support practitioners are given every opportunity to continually develop their skills, knowledge and experience and to achieve national recognition where appropriate (in line with other professional industries).

SFEDI are recognised by government as the Standard Setting Body for National Occupational Standards (NOS) in Enterprise and Business Support.

What do the SFEDI National Occupational Standards cover?

The recently revised, nationally agreed suite of SFEDI NOS for Business Support 2010 includes:

- Generalist Business Support
- Business Information
- Advice and Brokerage
- Social Enterprise Support
- Resource Efficiency
- Enterprise Training
- Enterprise Coaching
- Business Mentoring
- Skills Advice
- Business Link
- Business Support related standards to include standards for government officials and business service professionals

What does SFEDI Accreditation mean?

All publicly funded business support personnel must be assessed (using the SFEDI Assessment Strategy) against the SFEDI NOS and the certificate, to prove competence, must be provided by an Ofqual approved Awarding Organisation¹. By using SFEDI NOS and adhering to the SFEDI Assessment Strategy all accreditation meets a common (SFEDI) standard of competence. As best practice, SFEDI also recommends that practitioners are able to prove ongoing continuous professional development (CPD) against the most current NOS. It is important that this CPD is validated through membership of a professional institute, by the employing organisation or some other form of external validation.

¹ Apart from SVQs and NVQs in Business Support Occupations and the Premier Adviser qualification in Scotland (all based on SFEDI NOS) all Awarding Organisation certificates in order to be currently valid as a 'licence to practice' for publicly funded business support personnel must be dated from January 1st 2006.