

Guidance for Specialist Visits to work-based
learning providers

March 2025

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Introduction

Specialist Visits provide opportunities for Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspectors to engage with a range of work-based learning providers around the nature and quality of the provision for specific professional and technical areas. A Specialist Visit will normally last for one day and involve one inspector. The purpose of the visits is to provide ETI with specialist subject insights of specific professional and technical areas across the sector. To understand, at system level, what is going well for the specialist areas and what are the key challenges the sector may be facing. It is also an opportunity to identify examples of highly effective practice which can be shared more widely.

Findings from Specialist Visits will complement findings from other ETI inspection and evaluation work carried out across the work-based learning sector. In due course, ETI will publish Skills Insights Reports relating to specific professional and technical areas, with a view to affirm effective practice and empower improvement where required.

Work-based Learning Specialist Visits for 2024-25

During 2024-25, work-based learning specialist visits will focus on provision for ApprenticeshipsNI across economically important areas, and will include, in the first instance, level 2 and 3 apprenticeships for construction (carpentry and joinery) and children's care, learning and development (CCLD).

Notification for a Specialist Visit will normally be around ten working days via a telephone call from a member of the ETI Inspection Services Team or the Reporting Inspector carrying out the visit.

The areas of focus for the Specialist Visit will include:

- recruitment trends to meet labour market needs;
- the extent the curriculum is aligned to the current and emerging needs of the economy;
- the nature and range of the learning experiences to prepare learners for progression and employment;
- the standards of the learners' occupational skills and knowledge;
- the proportion of learners completing and achieving their apprenticeship framework and, the proportion of level 2 learners progressing to level 3; and
- identification of highly effective practice which can be shared more widely.

Outline Arrangements for a Specialist Visit

The following is an outline timetable for a typical Specialist Visit. The detailed arrangements for each visit will be confirmed by the Reporting Inspector.

Time	Visit activity
9.15 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ETI inspector(s) arrival and introductions.• Short ETI team meeting, if required.
Around 9.30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short oversight presentation of the apprenticeship provision for the professional and technical area.• A plan of activities for the day agreed.• Clarification of any queries.
10.30 am (onwards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson/session observations.• Scrutiny of relevant documentation and data.• Focus group meetings with learners and staff.• Employer engagement/visits.
Around 4.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief report back to key staff.


Useful links

The following is a link to [ETI support material](#) for work-based learning phase.

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