

# Proceedings of The Institute of Acoustics

## TOWARDS 1992 - AN EDUCATIONAL DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

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This paper aims to look at Education and Training within the Sound Industry; the ways in which we can achieve a national framework of vocational qualifications within our Industry; how this can be achieved in relation to the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and also why we should aim to achieve such a framework by 1992.

Our Industry is both dynamic and diverse. Within it there are many occupational areas, these being represented by different professional organisations such as the I.O.A., S.C.I.P., I.S.C.E., A.P.R.S. and A.E.S. to mention but a few. There is an inter-relationship between all of these organisations, some of which have educational aims and objectives and approve various Education or Training courses, yet there has never been a co-ordinated approach to the subject of Education and Training.

The subject though has been approached by both the public and private sectors of Education. The various representative organisations also provide training programmes, distance learning courses and seminars. Manufacturers provide product training and familiarisation packages for their clients and retail companies are now also providing training courses and seminars. There is a plethora of Certificates and Diplomas, some awarded by nationally approved and recognised Bodies such as B.T.E.C. and C & G, others awarded by the hosting institution.

There is no coherent pattern of Education and Training within our Industry yet there are undoubtedly many interested parties. This lack of cohesion must result in there being many unidentified Education and Training needs. It projects a bad image of our Industry to the young and talented aspirant, who not only has difficulty discovering the organisations offering Education and Training but also cannot receive any real careers advice concerning our Industry from either within the Industry or from the Careers Service. It does not enable there to be any sensible structured programmes of post entry career development nor does it address the steep learning curves we all have to tackle with advances in new technology and their application within our Industry.

The lack of a structured, formal pattern of pre and post entry Education and Training for all aspects of our Industry, from the technical and creative skills needed together with the Organisational and Management skills necessary, can lead to a situation where there is not a market of quality staff, there is a distorted perception of the Industry and the utilisation of new technology will not be achieved to the full. There is also the danger that there will be quantitative rather than qualitative Education and Training. I am sure that as professional sound practitioners we would all desire the latter.

Alternatively effective and efficient methods of Education and Training could enable there to be a stable recruitment pattern, an improvement of standards, better implementation of new technology, a more productive Industry and an

improved public perception.

The present arrangements for vocational qualifications in parts of our Industry are complex and confusing and relationships between them are not understood by employers or those seeking Education and Training, whereas in other parts of our Industry there is a lack of suitable qualifications. This is not a situation which applies to our Industry alone, but other industries have an advantage in that they have developed training boards and organisations such as the Engineering Industry Training Board, the Road Transport Industry Training Board and the Association of British Travel Agents Training Association.

If our Industry's representative organisations together with the Educationalists and Trainers were to form a Lead Industry Body we would be in a strong position to be able to talk with the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, an independent body set up as a result of recommendations in the White Paper "Working Together - Education and Training" published in 1986.

The Council will not itself award qualifications but will work with and through the established examining and awarding bodies and consult with bodies representing the interests of professions, employment, trade unions and employers to:-

1. design and implement a new national framework for vocational qualifications
2. get agreed national standards of occupational competence

The N.C.V.Q. has the following nine specific tasks:-

- \* secure standards of occupational competence and to ensure that vocational qualifications are based upon them.
- \* design and implement a new national framework for vocational qualifications.
- \* approve bodies making accredited awards.
- \* obtain comprehensive coverage of an occupational sector.
- \* secure arrangements for quality assurance.
- \* set up effective liaison with bodies awarding vocational qualifications.
- \* establish a national database for vocational qualifications.
- \* undertake or arrange to be undertaken research and development to discharge these functions.
- \* promote vocational education, training and qualifications.

If our Industry is to have a coherent pattern of Education and Training then the adoption of these nine tasks in association with the N.C.V.Q. seems a logical way forward.

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A Lead Industry Body would need to address itself to the following objectives:-

1. To assess the quality and appropriate content of any existing courses run by the public and private Education sectors.
2. To assess the quality and appropriate content of other courses or seminars within the Industry.
3. To assess the needs for provision of Education and Training in relation to new technology.
4. To assess the needs for provision of Organisational and Management Education and Training.
5. To assess the supply/demand provision of Education and Training both present and future.
6. To develop a database.
7. To assess the level and quality of careers advice.
8. To facilitate a communications network aimed at enabling there to be more organised, structured, flexible, efficient and effective Education and Training provision for our Industry.

To enable this a research survey would need to be undertaken on all aspects of Education and Training within our industry in order that data can be collected and evaluated and then disseminated to our Industry and the N.C.V.Q. Coherent information will enable there to be better understanding of what is currently available leading to an improved situation of nationally agreed vocational qualifications, competences and standards.

However, to achieve this we need a Lead Industry Body, a representative professional body that will set standards, not just for Education and Training within our industry but to set standards and a code of professional ethics for our profession. This Lead Industry Body should be independent and, in relation to the Education and Training issue, should work with government funded institutions. The Visual Industry has for many years addressed itself to the Education and Training issue. With the advent of improved sound in that Industry we could have the initiative snatched from us.

A Lead Industry Body which addressed itself to the issues in our profession would also be in a strong position to take advantage of Europe's free market in 1992. Competition for our manufacturers will be fierce and will lead to spiralling technological innovation. This in itself is an argument for Education and Training but the open door policy of 1992 also applies to qualifications. We have a more highly developed profession than in Europe and by having nationally recognised qualifications these will become international and will have currency abroad.

The N.C.V.Q. offers us the opportunity to address the issue of Education and Training, to consider the future of this profession, to improve practice. To

do anything else would be a dereliction of duty.