

THE SWISS-SOUTH AFRICAN CO-OPERATIVE INITIATIVE

SSACI

**Evaluation of the SSACI WBE ICASS Project:
Pilot of NC(V) level 4 business programmes in the Western Cape in
2012**

Prepared by: Gonda Coetzee

November 2012

Contents

Executive summary	<i>i</i>
List of tables	<i>iv</i>
List of figures	<i>iv</i>
List of appendices	<i>iv</i>
List of acronyms	<i>v</i>
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the WBE ICASS Project	1
1.2 Piloting WBE as an assess component of NC(V) business studies programmes	1
1.3 Key project phases	2
1.4 The evaluation of the WBE ICASS Project	3
2. Preparation for and placement with host employers	6
2.1 Student WBE placement with host employers	6
2.2 Challenges with placement	9
2.3 Preparation of students and employers for WBE	10
3. The value of WBE for students, colleges and employers	13
3.1 Value for students	13
3.2 Value for college	17
3.3 Value for employers	18
3.4 Challenges: ways that the experience could have been enhanced	19
4. The implementation of the task books	22
4.1 The content and design of the task book	22
4.2 The task book as an overall guide to the WBE	23
4.3 The structure of the task book and the completion of activities	24
4.4 The link between the task book and the curriculum	35
4.5 Challenges with the implementation of the task books	36
5. Assessment of the task books	38
5.1 The task book as ICASS practical task 2	38
5.2 The assessment process of the task book in each college	40
5.3 Other challenges with the assessment of the task books	43
6. Post placement processes	44
6.1 Debriefing students on return to the college	44
6.2 Communication with employers post the placement	45
7. Considerations for the 2013 roll out of WBE	47
7.1 Dealing with students that do not get a WBE placement	47
7.2 Moving forward: the task book assessed as ICASS practical task 2	49
7.3 The format of the task book: generic versus specific activities	50
7.4 The DHET perspective in the debate of generic versus specific task books	56
8. Conclusions and recommendations	58

Executive summary

The main objective of the SSACI WBE ICASS Project was to develop a model for providing WBE for college students that can be incorporated into core curricula through the assessment system. The project piloted the use of business studies task books as a guide to the WBE in four Western Cape Colleges. The task books were linked to the vocational subjects of all business studies programmes and each was assessed as ICASS practical task 2. The evaluation found that **including WBE as an assessed part of the NC(V) enhanced the value of WBE for students** rather than compromising it. Key reasons for the project's success include:

- The project was undoubtedly of high value for the students. Students were positive about the experience, gained confidence, were able to make useful connections between the workplace and what they were learning at the college and overall felt more employable upon completing the WBE based on the business studies task books.
- The assessment dimension enhanced the student's experience of the workplace through specific activities providing a guide for students as well as employers. The project contributed to the improved quality of the ICASS practical task and ultimately the NC(V).
- Linking WBE to an ICASS task meant that lecturers were more involved in WBE processes, which ensures WBE is incorporated into the college system and has important implications for the sustainability of WBE.
- There is evidence that a formalised WBE system can effectively enhance employer-college partnerships.

This executive summary now highlights other key findings and recommendations of the evaluation.

A key **implementation success** of the project was **that WBE student placement figures were high** in all the colleges that piloted the WBE business studies task books.

- While a model of students finding their own placement worked fairly well in the Western Cape pilot, colleges should take responsibility for student placement. Structured approaches by the colleges to maintaining relationships with host employers are required for the continued sustainability of WBE. These processes are important if the assessed WBE task books are to be used across colleges in other provinces; particularly rural areas where the number of host employers may be limited.

Overall it is found that both **student and employer preparation** by the college can be improved.

- Student preparation for WBE and the use of the task book was not adequate across all colleges. Academic staff should conduct a structured WBE task book orientation aimed at both students and college staff early in the year. A success of the WBE ICASS project is that students independently request information on and experience in specific tasks from employers; hence students must be well prepared by the college to conduct their own employer briefing during the placement.
- The preparation of the employers shows a mixed picture. Employers not being prepared for the placement had a negative impact on students gaining meaningful workplace exposure and limited opportunities for the college to build industry partnerships. All employers should be briefed by college staff at least one or two months prior to the placement.

An **implementation weakness** in the pilot was the **lack of formalised post placement processes**.

- Structured student debriefing sessions should be conducted by college staff to facilitate links with the curriculum as well as record lessons learned.
- The lack of formal debriefing sessions with employers could lead to lost opportunities for future placement. Thanking employers and receiving feedback should be part of formal WBE functions.

In the pilot **academic staff** were **responsible for the implementation of the WBE** as part of the ICASS; this contributed to the students' positive experiences of the workplace and ability to make connections with the college curriculum. The increased **involvement of NC(V) lecturers** in the WBE process is a key success of the project.

- For implementation successes to be maintained WBE should remain the responsibility of academic staff. Work placement staff should assist with sourcing host employers and maintaining continued relationships with the employers. Clear roles and responsibilities in relation to WBE needs to be established.

A core finding is that the **WBE task book was successfully implemented and enhanced the student's workplace experience** through providing guidance to the student and employer during the work placement. The overall structure and content of the task book worked well for students and employers. The activities in the task book related directly to the different vocational subjects and students were able to make links between the WBE

and theory. Students were able to complete the majority of activities in the task books. A few minor revisions to certain activities are recommended.

The **WBE task books were successfully assessed as ICASS practical task 2** for business studies programmes in the pilot; assessment was found to be fair, valid and reliable. The task book as a formally assessed component of the NC(V) **enhanced the students' experiences of WBE** through providing structure and an incentive to complete the task books, which were completed to a high standard. Overall assessment provided credibility to the WBE project.

- It is recommended that the task books remain an assessed component of the business studies programmes in the Western Cape and after further piloting be expanded to other colleges in the country. Constraints were experienced with the use of the assessment rubric and redevelopment is required.

Overall the SSACI WBE ICASS project has been successful and should be expanded through the national college sector. Looking toward future roll outs (and 2013 in particular) the evaluation explored how the WBE task books should be implemented and which task book model should be implemented. This report presents three models of implementation which are varying combinations of generic activities and subject specific activities. Subject specific activities are the most amenable to the ICASS requirements. Three recommendations are offered:

- The first, the subject specific task books should be implemented in all colleges in the Western Cape in 2013.
- The second, a national pilot of the business studies subject specific task book should be implemented in a few colleges in each province; including colleges in rural areas in 2013. A second evaluation should consider the national roll out of business studies task books across all national colleges.
- Finally, the subject specific task books cannot be implemented in engineering programmes. A model that uses the generic task book counting for a smaller percentage of the ICASS mark is recommended.

List of tables

- Table 1: Number of students placed per business studies programme in each college
- Table 2: Number of students placed at host employers
- Table 3: Employer comments on preparation by college staff
- Table 4: Staff reports on the value of the WBE with the task book for students
- Table 5: Student reports on the value of the WBE with the task book
- Table 6: Students who secured part-time, full time employment and internships
- Table 7: Employer reports on the value of the WBE for their own organisation
- Table 8: WBE activities included in the business programme task books
- Table 9: Staff comments on the design and structure of the book
- Table 10: Employer comments on the design and structure of the book
- Table 11: Table: ICASS task for vocational subjects
- Table 12: Table: Mark allocation for task book activities
- Table 13: Method of assessment of the task book in each college
- Table 14: Student debriefing sessions at each of the colleges
- Table 15: Employers' accounts of post placement processes

List of figures

- Figure 1: Percentage OA students able to complete task book activities
- Figure 2: Percentage FEA students able to complete task book activities
- Figure 3: Percentage management students able to complete task book activities
- Figure 4: Percentage marketing students able to complete task book activities

List of appendices

- Appendix 1: List of interviewees
- Appendix 2: Documents reviewed in the evaluation
- Appendix 3: Terms of reference evaluation questions
- Appendix 4: Summary of task book activities per business studies programme
- Appendix 5: Detailed recommendations on business studies task book revisions

List of acronyms

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HoD	Head of Department
ICASS	Internal continuous assessment
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
OA	Office Administration
FEA	Finance, economics and account
SSACI	Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative
Umalusi	The statutory organization which sets and monitors standards for general and further education and training in South Africa
WBE	Workplace-based experience

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the WBE ICASS Project

The WBE ICASS Project falls within SSACI's broader FET College Support Project which began in 2008 and has been delivered in partnership with the DHET, provincial education departments and colleges. This project aims to make students more employable through providing workplace experience for students and lecturers and thereby facilitating greater alignment between college curricula and the needs of employers. A key focus of the project has been to develop and implement a model for providing WBE as a component of NC(V) programmes within the academic delivery system of colleges.

The FET College Support Project initially focused on engineering programmes and WBE was provided as an optional extra rather than a compulsory or assessed component. A set of log books (later called task books) were developed for engineering programmes, which students complete during the work placement. The task books were developed to provide structure to students' workplace learning and experience, as well as to enable students to link this to their curriculum. These task books have been successfully used across national FET colleges since 2008. This is evidenced in the 2010 evaluation¹ of the FET College Support Project. The evaluation found the WBE curriculum and delivery model developed and piloted in the engineering programmes to be largely effective. While this was so, college delivery of WBE was poorly staffed and resourced and lecturers were minimally involved. This meant that there was little integration between what students were learning in workplaces and what lecturers were teaching at college. The 2010 evaluation findings are supported by research² that indicates that curriculum innovations like providing WBE are often difficult to sustain unless they are an integrated, and possibly assessed part of the curriculum. The WBE ICASS Project was established to develop a mechanism to accomplish this integration into the curriculum.

1.2 Piloting WBE as an assessed component of NC(V) business studies programmes in the Western Cape

SACCI and the WCED FET Colleges Directorate (with the support of the DHET) piloted the delivery of WBE as an integrated and assessed part of the NC(V) level 4 business

¹ Swiss-South African Co-operation Initiative (SSACI). FET Colleges Project: *Final evaluation report*. Singizi Consulting. December 2010.

² Kerka, S.(1999). *New Directions for Cooperative Education*. ERIC Digest No. 209. ERIC Clearing House on Adult Career and Vocational Education. Columbus OH.

programmes in the Western Cape - the WBE ICASS Project. The rationale of the project was that business programme task books could be developed, linked to the level 4 ICASS³, and thus count toward the student's final year mark. The curriculum integration and assessment strategy piloted in the project was as follows:

- every NC(V) level 4 business student would complete a WBE placement,
- the WBE placement would be five to ten days long,
- each student would complete the WBE task book for their programme,
- the WBE placement and task book would count as ICASS practical task 2.

The colleges that participated in the pilot were:

- College of Cape Town,
- False Bay College,
- Northlink College, and
- West Coast College.

1.3 Key project phases

The first step in the project required the re-development of the task books previously used in engineering. WBE task books were developed for the four business programmes: Office Administration (OA); Finance, Economics and Accounting (FEA), Marketing and Management. This was done with the direct involvement of the WCED curriculum planner for business programmes and lecturers and programme heads at the College of Cape Town and False Bay College.

Key project phases followed:

- SSACI provided training for academic staff at each pilot college on the task books and how to assess the books.
- Colleges oversaw the placement of students and briefing of students and employers on the requirements of the programme and task books. The placement primarily took place in the June-July holidays.
- The students completed their task books once they returned to college and these were then marked by their lecturers.
- An evaluation was conducted.

³ The ICASS guidelines and how the task book was linked to ICASS practical task 2 are discussed in section 5 of this report.

It is noted that two project review meetings were held (attended by college staff involved in the pilot, WCED representatives, SSACI representatives as well as the evaluator).

1.4 The evaluation of the WBE ICASS Project

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- 1) The evaluation will determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the WBE assessment approach piloted for NC(V) business programmes.
- 2) The evaluation will establish how each pilot college addressed the problem, from an ICASS practical 2 task point of view, of some students in a group not completing a WBE placement and thus a WBE task book that could be assessed.
- 3) The main purpose in placing students in workplaces is to give them meaningful workplace exposure and experience and make them more employable. An objective of the evaluation is to explore whether the goal was compromised through incorporating the task books into the ICASS and thereby possibly shifting the focus away from a WBE focus to an assessment one.
- 4) On the basis of the evaluation findings, make broad recommendations on how the WBE assessment approach and business task books might be
 - a. Improved in the national roll out of WBE as a component of business programmes
 - b. Applied to other college programmes: non-engineering and engineering

While the goal of the ICASS project has been to find a way to incorporate student WBE into the NC(V) assessment system, a key concern is that in doing this the value of WBE for students, employers and colleges should not be compromised. This is a central issue that is explored in the evaluation.

Evaluation methodology

This evaluation followed a qualitative methodological approach.

Focus groups and interviews

Focus groups were conducted with business studies **academic staff** (including lecturers, programmes heads and one college academic head). One deputy campus manager and two work placement officers were part of the focus groups. In total **19** college staff were interviewed across the four colleges piloting the project.

Focus groups were conducted with **business studies students** from all four colleges. Students from the four business programmes⁴ made up the sample. In total **52** students were interviewed.

A sample of managers and supervisors from seven **host employers** were interviewed. Host employers from each college were visited. Colleges identified employers that would be key informants. The sample included different types of employers – three large companies, 1 medium company, 1 private education provider and 2 small entrepreneurs.

Individual interviews were conducted with:

- the SSACI project manager,
- the WCED Deputy Chief Education Specialist: Business Studies (referred to as the WCED representative in this report) , and
- a DHET Chief Education Specialist (referred to as the DHET representative in this report).

Appendix 1 list interviewees.

Questionnaire

In addition to focus group interviews students completed a questionnaire on whether they were able to complete activities in the task book.

Attendance at project review meetings

The evaluator attended two project review meetings.

Document review

A number of documents were reviewed; these are listed in appendix 2.

Evaluation findings and recommendations

The report now turns to a discussion of findings. The findings are organised around a set of key questions detailed in the SSACI terms of reference for this evaluation (attached as appendix 3).

Findings are presented as follows:

- Preparation for and placement with host employers.

⁴ Office Administration (OA); Finance, Economics and Accounting (FEA), Marketing and Management.

- The value of WBE for students, colleges and employers.
- The implementation of the task books.
- Assessment of the task books.
- Post placement processes: feedback and debriefing.
- Considerations for the 2013 roll out of WBE.

The report closes with a set of recommendations on how roll out of the WBE task books can be improved in 2013. The recommendations present three models of how the WBE assessed task books can be implemented in NC(V) business studies programmes both nationally and in the Western Cape, as well as more broadly in engineering and other non-engineering programmes.

2. Preparation for and placement with host employers

A **key question** of this evaluation is to review what worked well and what did not work well in the implementation of the SSACI WBE ICASS project. The following section of this report documents and evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of the student placement process (i.e. sourcing host employers) as well as the preparation phase of the project; this includes the preparation of both employers and students.

2.1 Student WBE placement with host employers

Placement figures

The pilot group of colleges (except Northlink College) planned for 100% placement of students with host employers and while this target was not fully achieved in all cases, high placement figures are reported across all business programmes. This is depicted in the table below.

Table 1: Number of students placed per business studies programme in each college

College of Cape Town					
Office administration (OA)		Finance, economics and accounting (FEA)	Management	Marketing	
Gugulethu campus	100%	93%	90%	87%	
Crawford campus	98%				
		Crawford Campus	City Campus	City Campus	
False Bay College*					
Office administration		Finance, economics and accounting			
100%		99%			
Northlink College					
Office administration					
Pilot of 10 students at a single employer					
West Coast College					
Office administration				Management	
100%				100%	

* **Note:** These figures refer to Fish Hoek Campus; False Bay College did not implement the business studies task books at the Khayelitsha campus where the NC(V) is offered.

The majority of students from the College of Cape Town, False Bay College and West Coast College were placed in the June – July placement period and high (80% and above) placement figures were reported in the first project review meeting held in August. Students who were not placed during the June holiday were assisted by colleges. These students were either placed at the central administrative offices of the colleges or through ‘once a

week placements' at a range of employers (for example Saturday work). This resulted in the increased placement figures as shown above.

Northlink College⁵ piloted 10 Office Administration students from the Parow campus at a large insurance company, sourced by the WCED representative. The evaluation only considered this pilot group although 22 of 56 FEA students from the Protea campus were sent on WBE using the task books.

Placement process: sourcing employers

Staff reports of the placement process

All colleges (except Northlink College) followed the model of placing responsibility for finding a host employer on the student. The lecturers report that finding places for all students is a massive task for which they do not have time considering other academic commitments. It is reported that placing responsibility on the students encourages them to take initiative and prepares them for job seeking once they have completed the NC(V). Also, according to one placement officer this model allows the student to find an employer near where they stay. Staff did, however, assist students who were not able to find a host employer.

Northlink College will follow the model of students finding their own placement in the 2013 roll out. The college has relationships with a few large employers but the programme manager at the Parow campus reports that he will keep these employers as an incentive for academically strong and / or dedicated students.

Work placement staff were not directly involved in placing students for WBE and report communicating possible placement opportunities to lecturers who then took the process forward. The work placement officer at West Coast College did assist students with placements due to the distance between the college and potential employers.

Once the employers were sourced, and employer confirmation letters were received from students, lecturers and /or programme heads confirmed the placement via email or the telephone. One office administration lecturer at one college did not contact employers directly reporting that the employer confirmation letter was sufficient evidence of placement.

⁵ In this report when reference is made to Northlink College it is the pilot group that is being referred to.

The WCED representative explains that finding employers was not easy, as the project was rushed through as a pilot; ‘we just jumped everywhere and found places – it was chaotic but it worked.’”

Students’ reports of the placement process

The majority of students across all programmes (in all colleges) report finding their own placement; often through family contacts, which reportedly made the task easier. There were two reported cases of students working for family; this was not ideal.

There is a mixed picture of how students experienced finding employers. Some found employers easily. Approximately a third of students describe the process of sourcing employers as stressful. Students report that the college should provide more assistance in sourcing employers; they felt that at minimum contact details should be provided by the college. It is noted that a few students (approximately 15 to 20% of the sample) disagreed and felt that students should take the initiative as preparation for next year “when you are on your own”.

The limited time to find placement was difficult and all students report needing approximately three months notice to find a host employer.

Host employers sampled

The following seven host employers were sampled as part of this evaluation, each hosted the following number of students over a 5 to 10 day period:

Table 2: Number of students placed at host employers

Large (Global) manufacturing company	Large insurance company
Hosted 3 students for 10 days (1 student returned for an additional 5 days voluntarily)	Hosted 10 students (split into two groups of 5 students for 5 days each)
Large data storage company	Medium sized security company
Hosted 10 students for 10 days	Hosted 1 student for 5 days
Retail franchise (single store)	Private education provider
Hosted 1 student for 10 days	Hosted 2 students for 10 days (not at the same time)
Small owner-run laundry	
Hosted 1 student for 5 days	

Five out of the seven employers verified that they were approached by students with the request for a WBE placement⁶. Employers report that being approached by the student is

⁶ Note the large insurance company was sourced by the WCED and the large data storage company was sourced by the placement officer from one of the colleges.

fine and in fact shows that the student is taking initiative. One employer (the small retailer) reports that he was very happy with the student and by the end of the placement was even letting her handle cash but that it needs to be considered that the employer is going “on faith” as they cannot follow “normal recruitment processes” and he questioned whether this could impact on students finding placements. The suggestion was to provide the employer with a short CV of the student. It is noted that a short student profile is included in the task book in part 4 but it appears that not all employers were aware of this and other documents in part 4.

Employer withdrawal

A minority of students had an employer withdraw at the last minute (sometimes on the first day of the placement); this was reported by both staff and students. In about two to three cases students report that this occurred because the employers were not aware of the task book prior to the arrival of the students and withdrew stating the book was too much work. Another reason for employer withdrawal was the late arrival of students. One large employer reports that students arrived up to three days late for the placement and were therefore refused; the result in this case was that only 10 out of 15 planned students were given the opportunity.

2.2 Challenges with placement

- While the placement figures for 2012 are high, colleges are aware that meeting **WBE targets for 2013** will be a significant challenge. The DHET has stipulated WBE targets for colleges in 2013, in order to realize the aims set out in the Green Paper on Post Schooling. These targets refer to level 2, 3 and 4 NC(V) students as well as students on NATED programmes; which translates into a high number of students per college. As illustration, False Bay college reports needing to place 2000 students across all programmes in 2013. All colleges interviewed expected increased enrolments of level 4 NC(V) students. This will mean that even if employers from the pilot agree to host students again there will be insufficient employers.
- With the pressure to place large numbers of students there is the danger that students can be placed with **unsuitable employers**; as discussed in section 3 on the challenges that diminish the value of the WBE. The WCED representative reports that in order to ensure that students get relevant and meaningful exposure to the workplace, colleges need to **quality assure companies** and at present no such systems are in place.

- While the model of students finding their own placement worked fairly well in the pilot, the **college taking more responsibility** and providing structured support to students in sourcing host employers could alleviate the difficulty described by some students in sourcing employers and address the concern about the suitability of the employers.

2.3 Preparation of students and employers for WBE

Preparing the students

The preparation of students was rushed due to college staff receiving the task books late (as part of the pilot). In all four colleges the students were prepared just before placement and in one or two cases on the day before going out to the employer or on the last day of exams. Preparation involved the lecturers or programme heads going through the books and explaining what was required in each activity. The degree to which this was formalized varied from programme to programme (and from college to college). How thoroughly the book is reviewed seems to depend on the individual lecturer. As part of preparation for WBE, two colleges report informally briefing students on their code of conduct in the workplace (including how to dress and punctuality). All staff interviewed are aware that the 'last minute' preparation of students is not ideal and intend starting preparation processes early in the year in future and including some simulated work.

There is a mixed picture across colleges of how well prepared students felt prior to the WBE. Some students report understanding the book and what was expected while others report not being fully prepared and only really understanding the books when in the workplace. This demonstrates that part of the strength of the task book is that it can be a stand alone guide to the student. The marketing and management students of the College of Cape Town were given the books in time to conduct research on the host employer and report this greatly assisted them. The pilot group of students at Northlink College felt very well prepared for the WBE placement. The Northlink College programme head developed a one page document detailing clearly what the students are expected to do in the different phases of the WBE process – prior to the WBE, when in the workplace and when back at the college. Students report this was of great benefit as it is easy to get confused about what needs to be done at the college and what needs to be done in the workplace.

Preparing the employers

The College of Cape Town, False Bay College and West Coast College discussed the requirements of the WBE and task books with employers over the telephone or via email. As noted above one lecturer did not contact employers unless requested to do so. In addition, West Coast College went to the Atlantis office of the Cape Town Municipality and briefed staff overseeing students. The programme head of Northlink College visited the large insurance company and briefed the senior managers on the process. A constraint raised by all colleges (and especially West Coast College with its dispersed campuses) was the distances between employers and the colleges; which limits the staff's ability to visit employers.

An overall finding is that employers should be briefed in good time prior to the commencement of the WBE; this was reported by employers and college staff. While it is necessary to orientate the employer to the task book the primary reason for advanced preparation concerns the scheduling of work. All employers interviewed described understanding the book and its relevance to the workplace without needing too much explanation from the college. However, employers did feel that if they had seen the task books earlier they would have understood what was expected of students and hence been able to schedule more work as well as work that directly links to the tasks in the book.

Table 3: Employer comments on preparation by staff

Large (Global) manufacturing company
The company has experience in hosting engineering students from FET colleges and universities - this was the first time they were hosting business studies students.
The senior industrial relations specialist liaised with the college. The HR officer responsible for students reports that the college did not communicate with her and she was unaware of the task book until the second week of the placement (although the receptionist working closely with the students was aware of the book). While the students did work in other departments briefly, the HR officer felt that the students could have been given exposure to more departments if she had had advanced warning to schedule their work – at least 3 weeks.
Large insurance company
The HR officer responsible for the students during their placement was only told by her senior manager about the students the day before their arrival, which meant that the students did not have enough work on the first day. The HR officer reports that the students were eager and whizzed through the work; with better planning the company could set aside more work for students. The office gets very busy and if not well organized the students may not have anyone assigning them tasks.
The HR officer reports that the planning issues were both a company and college responsibility. The college briefed the executive managers at the company and this briefing was not communicated to the staff working directly with students.
It was suggested that a college representative should offer a 30 minute briefing to both senior managers and the supervisor / mentor who will work with the students. This briefing should take place at the company premises.
Large data storage company
The HR officer responsible for the students reports that “preparation on the side of the college was bad.”
The company agreed to host 15 level 4 office administration students but only ten arrived on the agreed day. Three students arrived three days later and were turned away as they had not been part of the induction

(focusing on health and safety issues) offered by the company.

The company was not given input into the WBE process or the task books; "The college told me they will start that day and end that day".

The lack of planning and communication from the college was further demonstrated by the level 3 student excursion to the company from four campuses. The students came by the busload (on one day there were 70 students). Lecturers did not attend with students, there was only a student representative who could not control the students. Students were loud, unruly, disorganized and did not listen to the student representative. This was difficult for the company to manage as they work in an environment with machines and forklifts etc. One campus group arrived with a busload of students without informing the company – the managing director was reportedly very upset about this as directors were visiting the company that day.

Medium sized security company

The college spoke to the owner telephonically. The bookkeeper and PA responsible for the student were not briefed.

Retail franchise (single store)

The owner of the company reports that the college sent numerous emails and did some checks on the student during the placement. He reports that the college had prepared the student well, that she knew her theory and picked up practical tasks quickly.

The owner reports that the student approached him a week or two before the placement which did place pressure on him. As an entrepreneur he is very busy and does require advanced warning to be able to manage his and his staff's time.

Private education provider

The deputy director of the school reports that she did communicate telephonically with the lecturer prior to the arrival of the two students. The process was briefly explained and the logic of the placement was clear. The deputy reports that the college prepared the students well, they knew exactly what they had to accomplish while in the workplace and what was needed for the task book activities.

Small owner-run laundry

The owner- manager reports that 'someone from the college' did contact her telephonically and explained the process and that the student would need to complete the task book. She filled in a 'consent letter'.

In addition the HR departments at the three large organisations explain that they work with confidential information, which can limit the student's exposure. Creative ways of dealing with this problem can be found (for example getting students to file items in another department as opposed to employee records) if there is sufficient planning time.

In sum, employer preparation for WBE is an area that needs improvement.

3. The value of WBE for students, colleges and employers

A **key question** of this evaluation is to investigate the value of the WBE for students, colleges and employers; with a specific focus on whether the assessed WBE task book enhanced or compromised the value of WBE. This question is addressed here and in section 5 on assessment.

3.1 Value for students

Staff reports of the value of WBE for students

All staff from all colleges report that the WBE with the guidance of the task books was very valuable to students and in most cases students enjoyed the experience and came back from the workplace more mature, confident and motivated. Staff report that students are able to describe in detail what they learnt and are able to make links between what they learnt in the workplace and the college curriculum. Three colleges (the College of Cape Town, Northlink College and West Coast College) rate the success of this WBE project more highly than previous job shadow programmes at the colleges and attribute the success to the structure provided by the task book. As one lecturer from West Coast College puts it; “we have been doing workplace exposure but never had a resource for students – it was just sight seeing what the job is about.” Below is a sample of benefits for students described by academic staff:

Table 4: Staff reports on the value of the WBE with the task book for students

College of Cape Town	False Bay College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall the students did enjoy it, you can see when they come back, they are different, more mature. Some students have learnt about their career and want to change studies. A few students got permanent jobs for next year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We did a report back with each group and you must just look at those faces – the spark in their faces. After that [the placement with a host employer] their behaviour changed as well; they now know that this is the workplace – I need to dress, I need to get up early ... We heard interesting stories from students. I can see with the mark difference – student comments earlier in the year was one sentence now the comments I am getting are four sentences. It is very important overall.
Northlink College	West Coast College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I never had a complaint that they were late or not there or anything. It was a shock to some of them to see what happens in real life but they were happy. They were tired because from 8am to 5pm is a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They grow up, they get to be more professional and see ethically what needs to be done. Students were very excited when they came back, showed photos, spoke to individual staff and it was spoken about in the classroom.

<p>long time and working is not nice but they were very positive about the experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The experience builds confidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They understand better. For example, office practice is all about practice and what has to be done in an office ... they can't understand what I am saying but when they go out there they can see what you mean by sitting in an office and taking minutes. We don't have a sim here; there they are given time to use the machines.
--	---

Another benefit mentioned by staff across colleges is that the students can use the experience and the task book (especially the employer evaluation in the task book) as part of their job searching strategies when the certificate is complete. Lecturers in two colleges have already seen a few student CVs detailing the WBE experience.

Of course staff comment that not all students derived the same benefit and there naturally were students who lacked motivation and did not fully apply themselves in the WBE and the task book, but they refer to these students as the “odd bad apple”.

Student reports of the value WBE

The benefits described by staff were observed by the researcher in the student focus groups where students spoke very animatedly about their experiences in the workplace.

All students (even those that had some difficulties during the placement) report that overall the experience is a valuable part of the certificate that will assist them to get jobs. In addition, students describe enjoying the feeling of working ‘hands on’ and claim that they learnt more in the workplace than they do in college practicals or simulation. Below is a sample of quotes from student interviews:

Table 5: Student reports on the value of the WBE with the task book

College of Cape Town	False Bay College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People do not want to hire someone that does not have experience with this; at least we have experience. That was very useful. I felt more confident in my ability to enter the workplace. I was even offered a fulltime job to be a librarian but can't as still studying but will apply next year. You get the feel of being a real worker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was very beneficial and I would like the college to continue this. I went home and explained to my parents and how enthusiastic I was. It felt lekker [really nice].. I learnt how to answer the phone properly and checked surveys. It was good for me as work for this company now – just do surveys as required and can still study.
Northlink College	West Coast College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I learnt much more through the process of being in the workplace. My chances of getting employment are increased as I got a letter from the employer saying we were there. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like doing theory is totally different from doing the practical so having that experience and being exposed to that practical you gain self confidence you learn about how to handle situations and you actually feel you are working there - you are not just job shadowing you are working there. It was a wake up call actually.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am confident and more comfortable to speak to strangers on a phone. I learnt how to meet deadlines, how to manage time and how to limit time wasters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had my own idea about the corporate world and what it is all about - everyone is stuck up in the power suits and when I got there it was so relaxed. When I leave here this year I am going to be more relaxed that there is going to be someone to open their doors to me not just look at me and say, "no, get out"; someone is actually going to welcome me.
---	---

In addition, during the focus group interviews students were able to describe specific skills gained during the WBE such as:

- answering the phone and directing calls,
- sending emails,
- scanning documents,
- filing,
- data capturing,
- working with clients,
- both internal and external communication,
- taking minutes,
- conducting an interview,
- working with office equipment,
- time management skills,
- working with accounting software,
- developing spreadsheets,
- working with petty cash,
- understanding procurement policy,
- and the list goes on.

Students across all programmes describe understanding theoretical concepts that they were struggling with prior to the WBE. The researcher heard statements such as; "it was a light bulb moment", "so that is what that meant" or "finally I understand that ratio". There were instances where a few finance, economics and accounting students did not engage consistently in financial aspects of the business and rather did office tasks such as answering the phone or data capturing. Despite this they describe learning a great deal in the workplace.

Students report developing confidence, learning about working with people and the realities of the work environment, such as office politics. A number of students were surprised by being treated as part of the working team and at the respect they were shown in the workplace. This is a departure from the college environment where they still receive clear direction and are frequently referred to as 'kids' by the lecturers.

Students report learning what it is means to work and describe the placement period as hard with long hours and the constant pressure to be punctual.

Students report learning about the standard of work required in the workplace and describe at times needing to re-do work more than once until their supervisor was satisfied.

Students who were kept busy from the start of the placement comment that while it was very stressful at the time in retrospect they learnt a great deal from being put under pressure and doing real work. For example, two West Coast College Students were at the Department of Justice and describe working under pressure to prepare the court role for court everyday while having to do other tasks such filling and dealing with the public.

Students who were rotated to different departments at large host employers described learning more (this is agreed by staff and employers) than those students being placed in a single department. The size and nature of the employer does appear to play a role in the student's overall experience of the workplace; this is discussed in more detail the challenges below.

It is reported by staff and students that there were a few students who were offered permanent jobs or internships for next year. The following was verified with students in the sample group as well as staff (there could be a few more cases):

Table 6: Students who secured part-time, full time employment and internships

College of Cape Town	False Bay College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 FEA and 1 OA student was offered part-time employment. • 1 OA student was offered full-time employment. • 1 OA student was offered a full-time position available immediately but will reapply once studies completed. • 1 management student was offered internship at a large insurance company. • 1 marketing student was offered internship at a large media company. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 FEA student was offered part time employment (as continues studies in 2013).
Northlink College	West Coast College
None reported due to small pilot at one employer only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 student was offered full-time employment (programme unknown).

These employment figures are small but none the less are a positive spin-off from the project.

Employer reports of the value for students

All seven employers interviewed report that students benefitted from the placement and they could see evidence of the students gaining experience and confidence, particularly toward the end of the placement.

3.2 Value for college

Staff and students at the college report that the WBE project can be a marketing tool for the college and the NC(V) in particular. This view is supported by the DHET representative:

One of the aims of the books / WBE is to make industry aware of the NC(V). It is a new qualification that needs to get known and industry is sceptical of FET colleges – they do not have a good name in industry. The aim would be to connect industry with a specific college.

All students interviewed describe being aware of the college's reputation at all times and being 'ambassadors' for the college. However, staff report that while as much guidance as possible can be given to students there is always the possibility that a few students will slip up. In the words of one placement officer; "We did get comments from employers that some students messed up, came late and should never be sent again."

Six out of the seven employers interviewed report that the students were able to fulfil basic office⁷ duties while in the workplace and would be employable in an entry level position. The HR officer at the large insurance company reports "I had no prior knowledge of the NC(V) but is a good standard based on the students we had."

College staff report that through the process links were made with employers where there were no prior partnerships; "we are building stakeholders". A few colleges report receiving information on employment posts from employers; for example the College of Cape receives information of posts advertised from Groote Schuur Hospital on a regular basis.

A few staff also feel that as more students gain employment (an intended outcome of the WBE process) the reputation of the NC(V) will improve and may result in increased student enrolment.

Overall staff report that the most significant benefit of the project is that colleges now have a structured tool to use in the workplace, which could not have been developed with current capacity at the colleges.

⁷ The bookkeeper at the security company reports the FEA student could complete office tasks well but needed to develop a better understanding of some financial principles.

3.3 Value for employers

Six out of the seven host employers sampled in this evaluation report that there was benefit for their organisations as the students were eager to work and assisted with numerous tasks. Below is a sample of employer descriptions of the value of the process for their organisations.

Table 7: Employer reports on the value of the WBE for their own organisation

Large (Global) manufacturing company
"The students helped the company a lot". The one student was in the leather department and "She did real work and became the PA to the leather department supervisors". Other students also assisted with filing backlogs and filed in when the receptionist was off for a day.
Large insurance company
The insurance company reports the senior manager deliberately arranged for the students to come at the busiest time for the department and the students greatly assisted; "The students did a great job and was not just us assisting – the students helped us. They were very eager and helped with all sorts of tasks."
Large data storage company
The students were described as neat and had nice personalities but the interviewee reports that she felt she was doing the students a favour as they could not perform on the level required by the company. "For example in the working environment staff need to capture 60 words per minute and students were not there yet. Also filing managers felt they took too much time showing the students how to file."
Medium sized security company
The workplace mentor felt that the process was beneficial to the company as "Our staff while explaining to her [the student] were refreshed themselves as they had to think about the answers." The bookkeeper feels that the project is very valuable overall but she needed to spend a great deal of time teaching the student financial principles.
Retail franchise (single store)
The retailer reports that they were advertising for an assistant and took the student on a temporary basis to fill the position – "She was very hard working and got jobs done ... she even developed a small promo special". The interviewee was careful to note that the success was due to the calibre of the individual student and may not necessarily be the case in future.
Private education provider
The deputy director describes the students as confident and able to assist with filling and other administration tasks; "they relieved me of a few things."
Small owner-run laundry
The owner manager explains that the student "dealt with customers and was good at it; she is a people's person." The manager reports she enjoyed having the student as it relieved some pressure; "there was someone to take my place, I could watch and relax".

All employers spoke about their social responsibility to the development of students and colleges in their area; "This is a good project and the company tries to assist the local community ...with the unemployment being so high we are proud of students who are at college". While social responsibility is a formalized policy in the case of larger organisations, this was also felt at a personal level, with interviewees commenting; "I wish someone had done this for my son when he was studying" and "When I started work I needed someone to help me, these poor kids need help."

3.4 Challenges: ways that the experience could be enhanced

Various challenges were raised (and ways to improve the roll out suggested) but these did not significantly impact on the overall value derived from the WBE experience.

The following challenges are reported by staff and students.

- The value of the WBE for students varied depending on the **kind of employer** visited. Students placed in industry and other private sector organisations report gaining a range of different experiences when compared with students placed at schools, police stations, clinics and some government departments who report either just observing or completing repetitive tasks, such as filling and at times answering the phone. There are exceptions, for example, as stated above the students at the Department of Justice were very busy. Also, there were a few students placed at schools who filled the position of school secretary and were kept very busy with school related tasks. The students complained that they could not focus on the task book activities and the principal did not understand all the requirements of the book, yet at the same time they learnt a lot by been given responsibility to fulfil a 'real' position. Confidentiality issues in banks and police stations can make them unsuitable employers.
- The value derived seems to depend on **how busy the student** is kept during the placement. In other words, students who were given real tasks to do throughout the placement seem to describe the most benefit. There does not appear to be a definitive formula of the type of employer that keeps the students most engaged. Large organisations can expose students to a range of activities especially if the students are allowed to rotate; if students remain in one department the learning could be slightly reduced but again it depends how busy the department is. A few students at larger organisations report many confidentiality issues limited their exposure to all aspects of business. Smaller organisations, such as sole proprietors or small entrepreneurs, may not have the same variation of tasks as the large employers, yet students at smaller employers describe being busy and doing hands-on tasks from the start of the placement and students clearly enjoyed being given responsibility.
- A related finding is that while being kept busy is a pivotal factor in learning from the experience; staff and students report that students can be used as '**free labour**' meaning that they have no time to focus on the task book at all.

- Some students' experiences could have been enhanced if they travelled to businesses outside their **immediate community**; in other words if they were not limited to schools, non-governmental organisations and clinics but also if they were placed at organisations that 'operate' in English and not just their home language. Students did not source employers outside their area as they were covering their own **transport costs**. Travel was raised as a significant constraint in all the student focus groups.
- Another factor that impacts on the students' experiences is whether they are provided with a **workplace mentor** during the placement period; a clear pattern of how (and whether) mentors are assigned to students is not discernable. Larger organisations with formal processes are likely to be able to assign the students to one staff member and this was evident in the three large companies, and one medium sized company, sampled in this evaluation. In the large organisations - the data capture company, the insurance company and the manufacturing company - the HR department oversaw the students. In some of these companies (the data storage company and the insurance company) daily end-of-day briefings were conducted with students. In smaller companies owner-managers frequently describe being busy and attempting to guide students but that students are quickly expected to just "run with it".
- **The timing of the placement** was raised as a possible constraint by a minority of students interviewed as they report returning to the college needing to finish some activities in the task books before starting exams. The fact that the placement takes place during the holiday does not seem to be a constraint. All students interviewed at the College of Cape Town, Northlink College and West Coast College report that it meant they did not have college pressure to deal with while on the placement and in fact it gave them something to do in the holiday as opposed to just "sitting around at home". About half the students interviewed at False Bay College feel that it is "unfair" that the WBE is in the holiday. Academic staff report that with the pressure to get through the curriculum (and the fact that fundamental lecturers will not allow students off) it is not feasible to dedicate two weeks of teaching time to WBE. A few academic staff at False Bay College report that it would be possible to devote a week to WBE; the first week of the second term.
- A related finding is that the **time of month** could influence the students experience; for example some employers are busy at the end of the month and college staff are not sure if students are optimally mentored during "over busy periods."

- The **duration of the placement**. The College of Cape Town placed students for 10 days, False bay College placed students for five days, Northlink College placed students for 5 days and West Coast College placed students for 10 days. There is consensus amongst students, college staff and employers that two to three working weeks is ideal as students start feeling comfortable, making progress and gain confidence by the end of the first week. The HR officer at the insurance company reports students “become more skilled the longer they stay – as time passed I stopped checking and students started completing tasks more independently”. As discussed below, in order to assist all students find placement a model of allowing students to go one Saturday a month is suggested. However, the majority view is that a block of WBE is optimal as the same HR officer explains; “if they do it as a block they keep momentum and learn this is a business week”.
- Another factor that impacts the overall WBE experience is **the number of students sent to one employer**. Not all employers (even large companies) can accommodate a group of students at a time; see the table 2 for the number of students placed at the host employers sampled. Groups of students were placed at the larger organisations, yet two of the three organisations said that smaller numbers would have been better. The data storage company reports that they can handle 10 students at a time (but as reported below will not engage in WBE next year); the insurance company had students in groups of five but report that next year they would prefer only two students at a time to ensure there is sufficient work for the students; the manufacturing company will take on two students as opposed to three. Small companies will not be able to take on more than one student. Colleges report that the ideal is to have groups of students at a single employer as this not only increases placement figures but enables the lecturers to visit the students as well as build relationships with employers.
- In this roll out of WBE **staff were not always able to visit students** as the employers were scattered across wide areas. The suggestion was made that a requirement be set that staff visit and report on 10% of students placed. This will allow staff to monitor students, gain exposure themselves and improve employer relationships. Lecturers will need a transport budget set aside to enable these visits.

4. The implementation of the task books

A key question in the evaluation is what worked well and what did not work so well in the implementation of the task books. This section of the report evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of the task books piloted for NC(V) business programmes.

Overall, the task books were successfully implemented. A review of a sample⁸ of completed task books, as well as academic staff comments on books, indicate that the books were well completed and many were of a very high standard. It is evident that students took great pride in completing the books.

4.1 The content and design of the task book

The task book is made up of three generic activities and four vocational subject specific activities⁹. The subject specific activities vary according to the business programme – a separate book was developed for OA, FEA, management and marketing.

Table 8: WBE activities included in the business programme task books

Activity 1: Overview of the workplace (generic)	The first 3 activities are generic for all college programmes – engineering and business. These are designed to give students a general orientation to the workplace and careers in their field of study.
Activity 2: Health and safety aspects (generic)	
Activity 3: Appreciate your career path (generic)	
Activity 4: Subject-specific activity (vocational subject 1)	Activities 4 to 7 are subject-specific. One activity per vocational and one for the optional subject is included.
Activity 5: Subject-specific activity (vocational subject 2)	
Activity 6: Subject-specific activity (vocational subject 3)	
Activity 7: Subject-specific activity (optional subject)	

Refer to appendix 4 for programme specific activities. In addition to the seven WBE activities to be completed by a student, there was also a one page workplace induction checklist and a daily log and journal. A number of administrative documents are also included in the task book.

⁸ The researcher reviewed the following task books at each college: College of Cape Town 2 OA, 2 FEA, 2 management and 2 marketing; False Bay College - 2 OA and 2 FEA; Northlink College - 4 OA; West Coast College - 2 management and 2 OA.

⁹ The task books described in this report are based on the generic WBE task book approach developed by SSACI for NC(V) programmes. Central to the approach is a set of four generic activities that students complete during their WBE. Because of their generic nature, these activities can be completed in any field of work or workplace. The three generic activities included in the business task books piloted in the ICASS project originate from SSACI's standard NC(V) WBE generic task book. This generic task book also includes a fourth activity which requires students to complete a report on a workplace task. This fourth activity is included in Model 1 proposed on page 54 of this report.

4.2 The task book as an overall guide to the WBE

All students interviewed comment that the book served as a **guide** and assisted them to gain experience and clarified expectations of what needs to be accomplished, for both themselves and employers.

Academic staff and all host employers agree that the task books served as a guide and claim that the books encouraged students to take **initiative**¹⁰ by forcing students to approach the employer and ask questions in order to get activities done. Students similarly report that employers were busy and after a day they soon realized that they would not get the activities done unless they asked for documents, appointments and so on. Students describe needing to be creative in order to get the attention of the workplace mentor (usually a supervisor or manager) - one student reports scheduling herself into the manager's diary with the words "book signing time". Others describe creative ways to complete activity 3 (interview someone to appreciate your career path) – one student conducted the interview while driving with her manager in the car; another reports asking one or two questions each day at tea time.

Host employers in particular commented on the usefulness of the book in **directing** students; below is a sample of employer comments:

- *"The fact that students take responsibility worked – students came asking for things to be signed or to find certain things."*
- *"The task book steers them in the right directions at all times."*
- *"The book meant students knew what they had to accomplish, we can't hold their hands."*
- *"The strength of the books is that it asked the students to reflect on their own learning and it provides structure – without it they may just sit around."*

At two of the organisations the managers did not go through the books in detail (until the end of the placement) but comment that the students asked a lot of "good questions" and they only later realised that the questions were coming from the task books.

Another benefit of the task book is that in cases where students were not kept busy by the employer they were able to use the task books as a **guide their observations**. In the words of one lecturer "instead of sitting bored they knew what to look out for". Ideally the student should engage directly in the activities but this is not always possible. As illustration, one management student from West Coast College was placed in the local welfare department and reports going on education road shows at schools and engaging in

¹⁰ Staff report that the student's personality does play a role and there are a few students that lack confidence and did struggle to ask employers for assistance (even with the use of the task book).

other welfare tasks that were not directly linked to the task book - yet she describes trying to make links with the task book and on days where she had nothing to do, she worked on the book.

4.3 The structure¹¹ of the task book and the completion of activities

How each college implemented the task book

The College of Cape Town broke the book into an employer guide, a parent guide and a student guide. These guides contained the information from parts 1, 3 and 4 of the task book, with the College's code of conduct attached. The student task book only consisted of part 2 of the task book; basically activities 1 to 7 and the daily journal¹². The rationale was that a great deal of information is contained in the task books, which can overwhelm students and possibly make it difficult for students to find the activities. Separating some of the administration forms out (such as employer confirmation letters, employer evaluations, indemnity forms etc) meant that it was possible to track that the documents were returned and to file them centrally. This worked well and saved the college having to photocopy documents that they require, such as employer information, indemnity forms and so on. The SSACI project manager reports that this is ideal but only works in colleges with strong administrative capacity as in previous roll outs of the books forms were misplaced or not filed.

False Bay College, Northlink College and West Coast College used the task books bound as designed by SSACI with no changes except College branding on the cover page; some campuses added a student's photograph as the cover. These colleges report that they will use the book in the same format in 2013 (with the revised assessment rubric included).

Staff reports on the structure of the task book and completion of activities

All academic staff interviewed felt the task book was well structured and students were able to complete the activities. Staff comment that there were minor difficulties with the completion of certain activities; these are discussed below together with student comments. Below is a sample of College staff comments on the task books.

¹¹ Structure in this section refers to the overall design and layout of the task book and excludes the assessment rubric - discussed separately below.

¹² Gugulethu campus kept the journal separate but will include with activities in 2013 roll out

Table 9: Staff comments on the design and structure of the book

College of Cape Town	False Bay College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-and-large the book was well structured and worked well. • The students can complete the activities as the activities are aligned to their curriculum. • Everyone (the students) were happy with the activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I must say to do this for the first time it worked out quite well, better than I expected. It will only get better too. I am very happy with it. • Book is fine as it is, don't change much – just put rubric where more easy to find.” • The book conceptually is a very good idea.
Northlink College	West Coast College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completion is not a problem - it is easy. • One of the best things I have seen in education in all my years, really because we have had so many systems pressed down my throat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressed with books but there are too many places where the people at workplace had to sign.

Staff from three of the colleges report that the book provides **more structure than** some of the **practicals offered** in colleges, which are described as lacking substance in many instances and closer to theoretical exercises than practice. Staff from two of the colleges claim that the task book makes it easier for them as lecturers to conduct practicals. The WCED representative agrees that the ICASS practical task 2 is a problem, especially in colleges that do not have simulated enterprises. The representative claims that the SSACI task book has served to **standardise and improve the practical 2** across colleges and avoids a situation where a practical can consist of merely “handing over a piece of paper and mailing it.” With the task book the ICASS practical task 2 is “just better quality.” In fact, the WCED representative would like to use the task book to standardise the ICASS practical task 1. The suggestion is that the task book is used as a research tool for practical 1; in other words the students research the company earlier in the year using the book and this counts toward the ICASS mark. This was briefly mentioned at the final project review meeting but the Colleges did not respond.

College staff report that the task book successfully serves the dual purpose of **enhancing the WBE and completing the ICASS practical task 2**, claiming that where students did go on work shadow prior to the SSACI project they either had no college documents or only a questionnaire. As the programme head at Northlink College states; “There is an instrument that works”. Another programme head at the College of Cape Town explains “we now have a structured tool that we can use, that can assist the lecturer - something that is well thought through. We can't go to 40 plus employers – here we have the proof”.

Although clearly satisfied with the task books the WCED representative suggested a few design improvements:

- The English in the “book is too high for a second language” student and can be simplified.
- Some of the questions need to be short and specific.
- The inclusion of animated pictures (for example speech bubbles) would make the book more fun. She provides examples of an office practice textbook that resulted in high pass rates for a group of dyslexic students.

Interestingly when employers were asked if such improvements were necessary they felt that the book should look like ‘work’ and the type of documents that the student will be exposed during the placement. The suggestion from employers is that the book remain in its current format. The SSACI project manager agrees claiming that the logic of the task book is to expose final year students to the realities of the work before they enter the workplace. She explains that where adjustment to the book is needed for remedial purposes this should be a college function.

Employer reports on the structure of the task book and completion of activities.

Employers interviewed (with the exception of one small business owner who reportedly only glanced at the book) stated the task books were balanced, relevant and represented what is routinely done in business (particular in the case of office administration). In addition, the books were described as user friendly. Below is a sample of employer comments on the task books:

Table 10: Employer comments on the design and structure of the book

Large (Global) manufacturing company*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task book was easy to complete. • The task book was practically aligned – what companies do practically. For example a management student was taken for a tour and when the supervisor started explaining about the safety features of machines the student became excited and said he already has his answer to question 1.
Large insurance company
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students were able to do the majority of the task in the book. • Different companies are so varied but the book is generic enough to complete that they (the students) do not all need to be in the same workplace.
Large data storage company
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a very good book – it is a good idea that gives them exposure. The book focuses on what to do in a business and topics are relevant ... There is nothing wrong with the task books. They are well structured and the wording of the task books is easy to understand, easy English. The problem is that the lecturers did not prepare the students to use the task books.
Medium sized security company
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task book is a useful document, very relevant and set out well.
Retail franchise (single store)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The items in the in the book are relevant to a retail store.
Private education provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task book keeps students on their toes as they have to submit it.

Small owner-run laundry

- Not able to comment.

* The HR officer was unaware of the book until the last week of the placement; the receptionist who worked closely with the students worked with the book and directed the student where to get signatures.

A concern expressed by college lecturers and the DHET representative was that perhaps employers would experience it as onerous to sign off all the activities in the task book. Yet all employers interviewed comment that it does not take long to sign the activities and they understand why the requirement is in place; although they did feel that it is the student's responsibility to request what is needed. The manner in which employers checked activities and signed the book varied across organisations and, as stated above, the process does appear more structured in the larger organisations. It is evident that where a mentor is assigned there is greater chance of the student receiving a structured experience and getting the book signed.

The signing process did place pressure on smaller companies with less employees. For example, the owner of the retail store comments that the book took considerable time for which he was not paid but it was worth the sacrifice as the standard of the student's work was good; if this was not the case he doubts it would be worth his time.

Students confirm that some employers engaged well with the books and others not. A small percentage of students interviewed (across all colleges) report difficulty in getting all activities signed.

Student reports on the structure of the task book and the completion of activities

The following section of the report provides detailed findings on whether students were able to complete the activities. This section should be read by the person/team responsible for revising the task book as well as academic staff who will prepare students in future roll outs of the task book.

The majority of students¹³ comment that the book in its "current format is doable" and they were able to complete the activities.

There were difficulties with the completion of some activities as depicted in the graphs below. These difficulties were not uniformly experienced by all students. Where activities could not be completed it was due to three reasons:

¹³ It is noted that in any population of students there will be some who struggle complete academic tasks and so it is likely that there will be some poorly completed books.

- **Documentation** (such as financial statements) could not be obtained from the employer, usually for confidentiality reasons.
- The question was not fully understood by the student indicating that the **wording** of the particular activity needs to be clarified (this only occurred in one or two activities).
- The student could **not get exposure to the task** during the placement due to the nature of the employer or the employer not currently engaging in the particular type of activity.

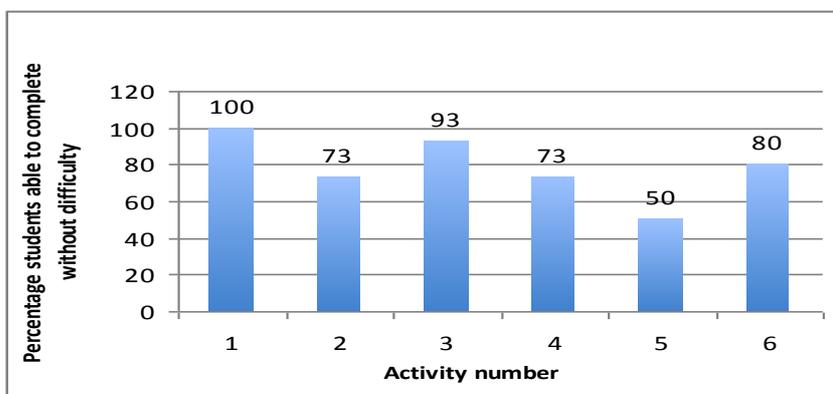
As part of this evaluation students were asked to complete a short questionnaire on whether they were able to complete the activities in the task book. Students rated the difficulty of completing each activity on a 4-point rating scale¹⁴. Difficulty is defined as the practical constraints, if any, in completing the activity. The findings are presented per programme (i.e. combines the findings across colleges for the particular programme) in the graphs below. Note the optional subject activities (activity 7.1 – 7.4) are not included in the graphs as students completed different activities; however student comments on the optional activities are noted.

Students were asked to provide reasons for the rating. These reasons together with the focus groups comments and staff reports are provided after each graph

A key finding is that students across different programmes were able to complete the generic activities (1-3) without difficulty.

Completion of office administration task book

Figure 1: Percentage OA students able to complete task book activities



¹⁴ Rating scale: 1 – not difficult at all, 2 – some difficulty but able to complete, 3 difficult to complete, 4 – could not complete

A total of 30 OA students (from all four colleges) participated in the evaluation. The OA students were able to complete all activities without difficulty except activity 5 (plan and prioritise tasks) where only half the students could complete the task. The majority of students (and even college staff) interpreted this activity to mean that they had to schedule the diary of a manager or supervisor and report this was not possible. The HR officer at the large insurance company made the same interpretation and said that a senior manager would not be comfortable with students working with his diary and she rather arranged for the 10 students to schedule interview appointments for possible candidates. The activity in fact does not require students to work with someone's diary; it requires a student to assess the work needing completion in a department and then develop a schedule (or a to-do list). Rewording to clarify the purpose of the activity is required.

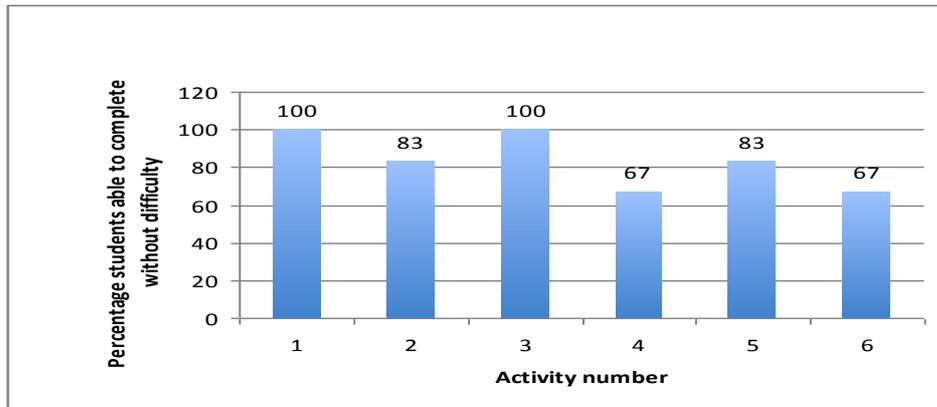
Just over 70% of the students completed activity 2 (health and safety aspects) indicating completion is not a problem; where students could not complete it was for the same reasons discussed under the marketing programme graph below.

Although 70% of the OA students rated the activity 4 (ensure customer satisfaction) possible to complete; in the focus group interviews students gave a slightly different report. Some students claim that smaller companies, some government departments and schools do not have formalized customer service policies in place, which made it difficult to complete all the questions in the activity. The main difficulty, however, appears to be in understanding the activity - students report the instructions were not clear and that they needed more specific guidelines. In particular, question 5 of the activity confused students. According to one education specialist when marking the activity it became clear that students struggled with question 5 and many student answers did not make sense. She claims this is due to repeated reference to the checklist and the inclusion of too many sub-questions in 5.2 and 5.3.

Note: the 'ensure customer satisfaction' activity was an option for marketing students, who make similar comments.

Completion of finance, economics and accounting task book

Figure 2: Percentage FEA students able to complete task book activities



A total of 6 FEA students (from the College of Cape Town and False Bay College) participated in the evaluation. This is a small sample but it is noted that lecturers make similar reports to students. The FEA students were able to complete the generic activities 1-3 as well as activity 5 (analyse and interpret income statement and balance sheet). Students experienced some difficulty completing activity 4 (complete an income statement) and activity 6 (investigate the need for and challenges faced providing a product and service).

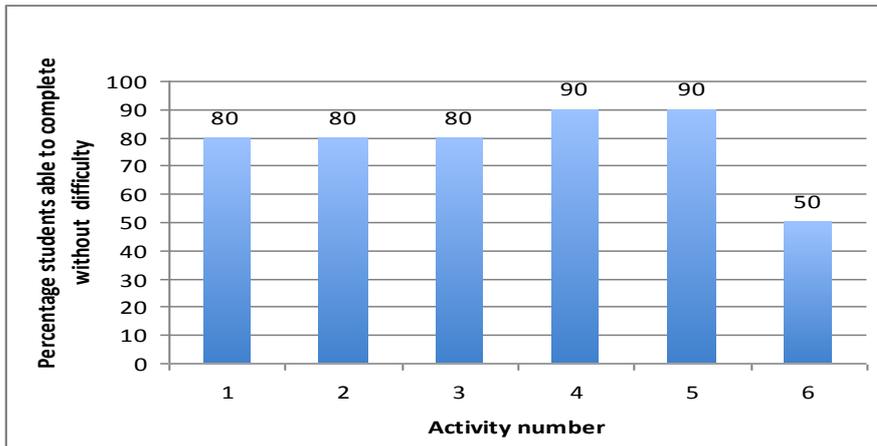
Obtaining financial statements required for the completion of activity 4 in the FEA task books (and optional activity 7.4 in the OA task book) was consistently raised as a difficulty by students and college staff; due to employer reluctance to share confidential information. Yet, college staff and employers describe 'creative ways' to get around the problem. In some cases, employers assisted students to design the statements based on estimates. College lecturers advised students to make informed guesses based on what they saw around them – estimating the value based on the number of employees, the amount of computers and so on. Employers also report that it is not a problem to provide historical financial statements.

Students and staff agree that the finance specific activities in the textbook are necessary - the solution is not to rework the activities but rather to make the alternative methods of obtaining data explicit to students in the task book; perhaps through providing brief examples.

In relation to activity 6 students either did not provide an answer for the rating or report not understanding the question.

Completion of management task books

Figure 3: Percentage management students able to complete task book activities

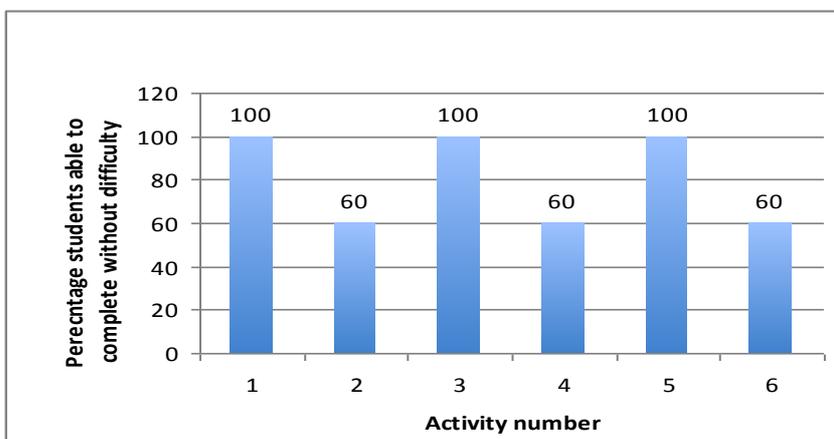


Note: activity 4 and 5 were combined as one task.

A total of 10 management students (from the College of Cape Town and West Coast College) participated in the evaluation. Management students were able to complete generic activities and activity 4 and 5 (team work) without difficulty. Only half the students could complete activity 6 (develop a budget) for the same reasons described above in relation to financial statements, where they report employer reluctance in providing budgets.

Completion of marketing task books

Figure 4: Percentage marketing students able to complete task book activities



A total of 6 marketing students (from the College of Cape Town) participated in the evaluation. This is a small sample from one college only, which may limit the validity of the findings. However, the findings do not significantly differ from the experiences of students on the other programmes. The activities experienced as difficult by marketing students are activities 2, 4 and 6. The completion of activity 2 (health and safety) appears to be connected with the nature and size of the host employer. Students placed in large organisations (and manufacturing companies in particular) were able to complete the activity easily as these policies are formalized; for example at the large data storage company the students were given a healthy and safety induction on arrival. Students placed in smaller organisations or more 'office orientated' companies were not always able to complete the activity as policies were not consistently in place. This accounts for the marketing students' difficulties as well as the smaller percentage of students from other programmes (for example 30% of OA students report difficulty). A few innovative examples were provided by students in the focus groups of how they dealt with companies not having health and safety policies. As an illustration, one student prepared and presented a presentation on health and safety to a group of supervisors at a food manufacturing company.

The reasons why 40% of the marketing students were not being able to easily complete activity 4 (plan and priorities tasks) are the same those provided by OA students.

A fair number (40%) of marketing students could not complete activity 6 (prepare an organogram presentation in PowerPoint). This is something of an anomaly as lecturers report it is an easy task and students who did the activity as an option in other programmes did not experience difficulty. In fact, one office practice lecturer claims that developing one organogram is too easy and more should be added to this activity to award the student a mark for the subject; for example developing and capturing data in spreadsheets.

Activities linked to optional subjects

Students from different programmes complete a number of optional subjects in addition to the core vocational subjects; these options were included in the WBE process as appendices to the 'core' task book. These optional subjects can be viewed in appendix 4. It is noted that optional subjects in some programmes are core subjects in other programmes (for example activity 4 – complete an income statement and balance sheet – is a core subject in FEA but an optional subject in OA). Overall staff and students report that more detailed guidelines can be provided in the optional activities task books.

In addition to the findings in relation to optional subject activities discussed above some students experienced difficulty with completing the 'develop a project plan' activity (OA task book: activity 7- option 2 / FEA task book: activity 7- option 1 / Management task book: activity 7- option 1). However, this is not a uniform picture as other students report engaging in interesting projects.

The students who experienced difficulty report not being in a company undertaking a current project and hence struggled to complete the activity - these students completed the activity when back at the college under the guidance of their lecturers. It is noted that the activity in fact does not require students do be present during the project. Question 2 explains that the student should identify an activity that could be implemented through a project. This was not clear to students and the question should be re-written for clarity and possible examples given. Some of the students comment that the instructions in are not clear.

Academic staff report that completing a project plan when returning to the college takes considerable time. A suggestion made by some staff was that the project management activity be completed in the colleges as a small practical before the students go into the workplace. Others disagreed as there were students who completed the activity very well and benefitted from doing the activity as part of the WBE.

The daily activity log and journal

All staff interviewed report that the daily activity log was essential in order to assess what the student did in the placement, to guide the student and employer on what should be achieved and very importantly to encourage the student to reflect on his/her own learning (the lack of reflection is reported by academic staff as a weakness in many vocational programmes). Staff claim that the daily log is the core of the WBE and as discussed below should be weighted higher in the assessment rubric.

Overall students agree with staff that the daily log did assist them to manage their time and fulfil different duties, yet a number of students felt that the tasks they completed in the workplace did not neatly fit into the activity table and suggested that the table should be left blank for students to fill-in, as opposed to detailing specific activities (such as answering the phone, attending a meeting etc.). College staff and the WCED representative disagree arguing that the listed activities serve as verification that the students engaged in the subject related activities. In addition students comment that the hours they completed in the daily activities did not always add up to the minimum hours stated for the WBE period when

converted to the 'activity table summary for the full WBE period'. This was a source of stress for some students and some even report 'making up hours' to meet the requirement.

A review of a sample of completed books by the researcher indicates that students filled in a number of activities per day and while the 'exact' activity requirement may not have been met by every student; the students clearly benefited from the structure provided by the log. Also, students added detailed and insightful comments to the instruction '*Add any comments about your day and what you did, experienced or learned*'; confirming the staff's opinion that the daily activity log supports learning.

Similar to employer comments on the task book in previous SSACI research¹⁵; the employers report that the daily log worked well and that it was possible for students to get the experience. The completion of the daily log was handled differently by different employers – some checked and signed everyday, while others let the student complete the daily log and only signed at the end. The situation where students and employers complete and sign the daily log retrospectively is not ideal.

The task book as a reflection tool

Students who were not able to complete some task book activities while in the workplace returned to the college and completed the activities through reflecting on what they learnt (sometimes in discussion with lecturers). Reflection of this nature is an important form of learning. The constraint is that if the exercise is not completed in the workplace there will not be a signature. WCED is firm that signatures are required for verification if WBE is going to be assessed. In accord with some academic staff, the SSACI project manager feels that the most important thing is that the students have applied thought to completing the activities – perhaps in this case the college staff lecturer can sign in place of the employer and indicate that the student completed a 'reflection on experience' exercise.

¹⁵ SSACI report on logbook revision (engineering)

4.4 The link between the task book and the curriculum

A significant finding is that there is a link between the task book and the curriculum for each business studies programme.

The WCED representative claims that task books are “120% linked” to the various business studies programme curricula. The representative claims that the theoretical component (the subject guidelines) of each subject was analysed or mapped in terms of what can be practiced in a simulated business environment in the college. This mapping was provided to the SSACI project manager in the design phase of the project in order to establish what students would “be able to do practically in a company”.

As discussed in the value of the WBE section above, staff at all four colleges see links between the task book activities and the curriculum. This is well illustrated by one programme head’s comments; ‘We ticked off every single thing on p.10 (the knowledge and skills checklist) because they have covered everything. We have a 100% match as far as I am concerned’. It is noted that a minority of lecturers feel that the task books relate to level 3 and could be at a slightly higher level.

Students describe seeing linkages between the task books and what they learned in class and were excited when seeing evidence of ‘theory’ in the workplace; examples (such as the ‘light bulb moment’) are provided the discussion of the value of WBE above.

It is important to note, however, that a link between the task book and the curriculum does not automatically guarantee that learning will be integrated back into the classroom on the student’s return from WBE. Students and staff describe informal conversations about what students learned in the workplace and in some instances reference was made to workplace experience during classroom discussions. This integration, however, can be strengthened through more formalized post placement processes and ensuring lecturers are involved in these processes.

A lesson learned in this roll out is that lecturers should be involved in the early stages of the WBE process and not just with assessment. A few programme heads report that as this was a pilot they managed the process but in future will place more responsibility on lecturers so that they are aware from the start what aspects of the task book relate to their specific subject. It is reasoned that this will encourage lecturers to make direct reference to workplace experience before and after student placement. As a programme head at False

Bay College explains “lecturers referring to aspects of the student’s experience would be the most important thing for the learning process and should be used as part of their teaching”. The increased involvement of lecturers due to the assessment of the book is discussed below.

4.5 Challenges with the implementation of the task books

- Where students were **not well prepared by staff** they struggled to use the task books. For example one group of management students at one college report not being adequately briefed and they returned to the college needing to complete a number of activities (or questions within activities).
- A related finding is that some students did **not receive the books in time**, which meant that they were still trying to understand the book when already at the workplace.
- About half the college staff interviewed commented that there is **a lot for students to understand** and remember in the books and debated possible ways to streamline it. For example including a more concise (possibly graphic) introduction, reducing some pages and adding simpler language at times. These are not substantive changes and do not challenge the overall logic and structure of book.
- In **smaller organisations** students could **not always get guidance** about the tasks from the manager / owner due to the demands of business. In addition students report that some smaller employers were not aware of what was needed in the task book, suggesting the importance of the student being well prepared prior to placement.
- Some students placed in schools struggled with some activities and questioned whether the task books are generic enough to be used in **all types of employers** (industry as well as schools, government departments, clinics and NGOs). Staff tended to feel that the books are suitable across all organizational types.
- A significant number of students report **completing** aspects of the book **after the WBE**. This in itself is not a constraint if time is allowed for completion on their return to college. However, the aim should be for the student to complete most of the book in the workplace.

- A review of task books indicates that the **curriculum knowledge and skills checklists** are the least well completed part of the task books. This was found in previous research conducted by the SSACI project manager on the initial design and implementation of the engineering task books.

5. Assessment of the task books

Two key questions of this evaluation are how the implementation of the assessment worked and whether the inclusion of the assessment component enhanced or compromised the value of the WBE. This section of the report evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of the WBE assessment approach piloted for NC(V) business programmes.

5.1 The task book as ICASS practical task 2

The task book was incorporated into the assessment system as part of the internal continuous assessment (ICASS) of vocational subjects. The DHET¹⁶ defines the ICASS for the vocational subjects of the NC(V) qualifications as follows:

To be resulted for vocational subjects, the marks of three components are necessary:

- ICASS
- ISAT (*Integrated Summative Assessment Task*)
- Examination

The ICASS component is therefore one of the three compulsory components of assessment in the resulting process. If any one or more of the three compulsory components is not fulfilled, the student will receive an incomplete subject result.

The ICASS consists of five compulsory instruments as shown in the table below.

Table 11: ICASS tasks for vocational subjects

Task	Timeframe	Type of assessment activity	Time and proposed mark allocation	Scope of assessment	% contribution to the year mark
				Do not confuse the weightings of topics in the Subject Guidelines with the % contribution of the year mark	
1	Term 1	Test	Topics completed in term 1	10	
2	Term 1	Practical Assessment/ Assignment	One or more of the topics completed as an	25	

¹⁶ Revised guidelines for the implementation of internal continuous assessment (ICASS) in the NC(V) qualifications at FET Colleges published by the DHET February 2012.

			assignment	
3	Term 2	Practical Assessment/ Assignment	One or more of the topics completed as an assignment	25
4	Term 2	Test*	Topics completed in term 1 and term 2	10
5	Term 3	Internal examination*	Topics completed to date.	30
				100

* **Note:** the test and external examination can be swapped.

The SSACI WBE ICASS project linked the WBE student task book to **ICASS practical task 2** (in consultation with the WCED); in other words the completion of the WBE counted for 25% of the total ICASS year mark. The decision to link the task book to ICASS practical task 2 was taken in November 2011 when the WCED representative informed the SSACI project manager that the generic versions of SSACI's WBE business tasks books could be used as ICASS practical 2 for the four vocational subjects. It was then decided that the task books would be piloted 'as is' with the inclusion of an assessment component to align them with the ICASS.

However, after engaging with college representatives in February 2012 on implementing the task books, it was decided that to adequately comply with the requirements of the ICASS, the task books would need to be tied more closely to the vocational subjects. The books were then redesigned to include a subject-specific activity that related directly to the outcomes of each vocational subject being taught.

Writing the subject specific activities and developing the assessment rubric in time to train and prepare colleges for the June – July WBE placement was pressured. The subject specific activities were designed in consultation with college representatives across the different business programmes as well as the WCED representative. The assessment rubric was developed in conjunction with the College of Cape Town, False Bay College and the WCED representative. The WCED representative reports that colleges were consulted during the process and the rubric changed five to six times. It is recognised by the SACCI project manager that the rubric was designed in a hurry and suggestions to improve the rubric would need to be gathered during the piloting of the task books.

The allocation of marks for each vocational subject

The mark awarded for a subject was made up of two marks: 50% for the generic parts of the task book and 50% for the subject-specific activity for the subject in question. This is illustrated for one subject in the table below.

Table12 : Mark allocation for task book activities

ICASS practical 2 Mark for Vocational Subject 1	
50%	50%
Generic activities (activities 1-3), the Induction Checklist and the Daily Log and Journal	Subject-specific activity for vocational subject 1

5.2 The assessment process and the assessment rubric

This report now considers the degree to which the WBE student task book was successfully assessed as ICASS practical task 2 for business studies in three of the four¹⁷ colleges piloting the task books.

All three colleges used the assessment rubric contained within the task books. Each of the colleges assessed the books in slightly different ways, as follows:

Table 13: Method of assessment of the task book in each college

College of Cape Town	False Bay College
<p>The lecturer / WBE co-ordinator at the City campus marked the whole book (the generic and subject specific activities) for both marketing and management students.</p> <p>At the Crawford campus the generic activities were assessed by the two business centre facilitators. The subject specific activities were circulated for assessment among the core subject lecturers. In the FEA programme a different subject related lecturer moderated the subject related activities.</p> <p>At the Gugulethu campus the HOD marked the generic activities 1-3 and the subject specific activities 4-7 were marked by the subject lecturers.</p>	<p>The programme heads for each programme (OA and FEA) marked the generic activities 1 - 3 and the subject specific activities 4 -7 were circulated amongst lecturers of each subject.</p>
Northlink College	West Coast College
<p>Northlink College did not mark the task book of the 10 students placed as part of the College pilot but the business studies programme manager did review the assessment rubric.</p>	<p>The subject lecturers and programme heads shared the marking of both the generic and subject specific activities. In other words, staff gained experience in marking both generic and specific activities.</p>

Staff report the books have all been assessed and are possible to mark. They further report that during the assessment of the task books it was evident that students worked hard and

¹⁷ The task books were not assessed for the 10 students that were part of the Northlink College pilot.

could demonstrate understanding of most of the outcomes of the core vocational subjects. Student marks were high and staff comment that they deserved the marks they received. This links to the finding above that the students were able to complete the activities; in other words their ICASS marks was not compromised due to unfair or impractical tasks. Staff are of the opinion that the assessment of the task books was fair and reliable.

A number of issues were raised in relation to the assessment rubric included in the task book. While adjustments are required, staff are of the opinion that these issues are not sufficient to invalidate the ICASS mark for this roll out due to the high standard of work submitted by students. In addition, the College of Cape Town report that one moderated FEA task book was reviewed by an Umalusi representative and positive comments were received. This lends support to the validity and reliability of the assessment process.

All staff interviewed agree that an assessment rubric (as opposed to a marking memo) is required as each submitted task book is so different. Staff further comment that the strength of the rubric is that the assessment criteria link to the subject outcomes which in turn are directly linked to the activities in the book. This is a key strength of the assessment process. In other words, the overall logic of the rubric is sound.

The following comments about the assessment rubric were collected from staff at the three colleges that assessed the task book (as well as the WCED representative):

- The use of a 5-point rating scale¹⁸ is not recommended in assessment rubrics. The academic head at False Bay College as well as the DHET ICASS policy guideline explain that the use of a 5-point scale allows the lecturer to go for the middle rate, as opposed to forcing the lecturer to rate the student as “good or not so good.” This does not seem to have been a significant factor in this roll out as students generally received high marks. The academic head reports that she imagines that the SSACI project manager received advice from the WCED and college representatives to use a 5-point scale as that is how the NC(V) is reported but there are ways to use a 4-point scale in the rubric; and once marked to convert it back to the mark out of 5 required for reporting purposes. The WCED representative reports that “The lecturers felt it (a 5-point scale) will make more sense and be easier to understand”.

¹⁸ 1- not yet achieved, 2 – not yet competent, 3 – competent, 4 – highly competent, 5 – outstanding.

- On some of the assessment criteria the rubric is not testing level of ability in relation to the criteria; rather it is testing whether the student included something or not. Staff used criterion 3 in section A as an example (which reads “The student has included the structure/organogram of the employer and attached the relevant page in the task book”). The student can get full marks (a rating of 5) by merely attaching a company organogram. Other students who developed their own organogram in PowerPoint (or through hand drawings) were awarded the same rate of 5 despite considerably more effort. This is evident from the review of a sample of books as part of this evaluation as well as feedback from lecturers who marked the books.
- The rubric needed to allow for a mark of zero. For example, with criterion 3, if the student did not to attach an organogram they could still be awarded a mark of 1, as this is the lowest rate in the scale. However, both the College of Cape Town and False Bay College gave ‘0’ if not included.
- It was reported by HODs and lecturers from two of the colleges that the rubric can be strengthened by including specific guidelines for each rating scale in relation to each of the criteria so that they are able to assess whether students have demonstrated the particular competence. The WCED representative and lecturers from the two colleges report that this level of specificity is required to make the rubric more rigorous and to control for subjectivity in the marking process. The WCED representative reports she has received comments on the rubric from academic staff and has already started considering ways to improve the rubric.
- Academic staff from all three colleges who assessed the task book report that the criteria need to be weighted in some way. They provided the example where completing the daily journal requires more effort than attaching promotional material; yet similar marks are allocated to both. In fact the majority of lecturers thought the logbook was a significant amount of work and should get more than the current maximum of 10 marks.
- A minor structural comment is that the rubric is difficult to find in the task book. It was suggested that the rubric for each activity is placed behind the relevant activity and the final mark cover at the very last page of book (last page of part 4). This will also allow the students to see the criteria and their relative weighting.

It is noted that the students were not able to comment extensively on the assessment process. At the time of interviews many students had not seen the assessment or their mark. Students who did see their mark (for example the West Coast College students) were happy and felt the assessment was fair and accurately reflected the work that they put in. Some of the students were not aware that the assessment rubric was included in the book and requested it. It should be noted that the College of Cape Town removed the assessment rubric from the book.

5.3 Other challenges with the assessment of the task books

As discussed in the implementation of the task books above, some students were not able to complete all items in the activities in the workplace. Students were given the opportunity to **complete the tasks on their return** and then the activities were marked. Colleges did not provide a definitive answer to the question of what to do in the case where an activity was completed but **not signed by the employer**. Where the student completed an activity to a high standard once back in the college, and the answers clearly related to a particular workplace, the student was allowed the mark by the lecturers. The ideal is that the student should get all work signed off but the process has to allow for flexibility.

The **assessment timeframe** was reported as a difficulty by one college. Programme heads and the academic head at the college report that it was a challenge to get the task books marked in time to meet internal report processes, as students still needed to spend time on the task books when returning from the placement. If the task book replaces ICASS practical task 2 it means that the mark should be reflected on the June report. The difficulty was that as the WBE was conducted in the June/July holiday students had to complete them on return to the college. This meant that students had to wait for the books to be marked and hence could not get the June report on time. Final year students need their mark to apply for further study. The programme head and academic manager report that this placed pressure on lecturers who were busy with other marking as well. The other two colleges do not seem as concerned about delaying the report.

In sum despite these constraints, **a critical finding is that the assessment of the task book as ICASS practical task 2 is fair, valid and reliable**. Overall, the assessment process enhances the value of the WBE; this is discussed further in section 7.2 on whether the task books should be assessed in the 2013 roll out of business studies books.

6. Post placement processes: feedback and debriefing

An important question in the evaluation concerns implementation challenges for colleges and employers and lessons to be learned for future implementation. This section of the report examines this question in relation to post placement processes.

The final phase in the WBE process as outlined in the SSACI WBE training manual is phase 4: post-placement. Post placement activities include overseeing the completion of task books and assessing the task books as reviewed above. The final step in the post-placement process is conducting WBE reflection and review sessions in order to ensure the continuous improvement of WBE. As stated in the manual:

After each group of students has completed a placement, reflection sessions should be conducted with students, employers, college lecturers and college management. The feedback from these sessions should be taken into the planning process for the next round of WBE placements.

The manner in which colleges shared the learning from the WBE during internal processes (such as meetings) was not investigated in this evaluation. The focus was on how students were debriefed on return to the colleges as well as communication with employers post placement. Findings are as follows.

6.1 Debriefing students on return to the college

There is an inconsistent picture of how student debriefing was handled by colleges. Some colleges (or programmes within colleges) had structured feedback sessions while others had informal one-on-one discussions between lecturer and student.

Table 14: Student debriefing sessions at each of the colleges

College of Cape Town	False Bay College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No structured sessions took place; lecturers “just sort of spoke” with students individually and occasionally during class. One lecturer reports reading the student evaluations at the back of the task book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturers report that there were conversations amongst students about their experiences and how to complete certain activities (e.g. the finance statements) Lecturers did not use the WBE as part of their teaching as it is in the middle of the year; although they report it is possible to use student experiences as part of revision.
Northlink College	West Coast College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The programme head conducted a formal review meeting with students and prepared a short report on students’ experiences and lesson learned from the pilot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HOD for OA and placement officer held a joint debriefing session with students. Students were asked to comment “about challenges, what could be improved and what they liked”. Lecturers were not part of the debriefing session but report informally allowing students to share experiences in the class.

Note: students across all colleges did not do the PowerPoint presentation of the WBE contained with the task book.

Students report enjoying sharing their stories with lecturers. Where lecturers conducted structured feedback during class discussions students describe being able to make links between the ‘class topics’ and their experiences in the workplace.

A few academic staff comment that lecturers themselves have not been in industry (or not for many years) and can use student feedback to “make future students mindful when they go out”. In other words, lecturers can use student reports to prepare future students on the realities of the workplace.

Overall, staff highlight the need to formalise post placement debriefing sessions with students as a lesson learned from the pilot WBE process.

6.2 Communication with host employers post the placement

A key finding is that colleges did not consistently follow up with all employers or send thank you letters once the students had left the workplace; as a result useful feedback from employers on how to improve the WBE process is being lost. Two out of the seven employers sampled report receiving no communication from the colleges and in another two cases HR officer’s responsible for students were not thanked but report senior management might have been thanked.

In response to the question whether they would host the students in 2013, five out of the seven employers responded positively. The sampled employers made the following comments on the post placement process, as well as confirmation of future involvement in WBE:

Table 15: Employers’ accounts of post placement processes

Large (Global) manufacturing company	Large insurance company
The HR officer responsible for the students did not receive any communication from the college after the students left the workplace; although she recognises that communication may have been sent to her senior manager.	The HR officer responsible for the students was requested to provide feedback by the placement officer at the college. She did not directly receive a thank you letter.
	The senior HR manager and the programme head have an ongoing relationship.
Host in 2013: Yes	Host in 2013: Yes
Large data storage company	Medium sized security company
The HR officer did not receive a thank you letter or any feedback when the students returned to the college.	The college did not contact the employer or send a thank you letter.
Host in 2013: No Reason: difficulties experienced with the college prior to the placement (see section 2 of report)	Host in 2013: Yes

and feeling the students were 'dumped' at the workplace.	
Retail franchise (single store)	Private education provider
The college did provide the employer with feedback after the student returned to the college. The owner describes being impressed with the college.	The deputy director and the WBE champion (a lecturer) at the college are in ongoing contact and the deputy describes a good relationship.
Host in 2013: Maybe Reason: depends on whether that the student is of the same high quality.	Host in 2013: Yes
Small owner-run laundry	
The college phoned to thank the employer.	
Host in 2013: Yes	

The SSACI WBE training manual suggests that review sessions (for example in the form of breakfasts) should be held with employers. Conducting post placement processes, such as gathering feedback and expressing appreciation, is essential to maintain relationships with employers and increase the possibility of future placement with employers.

College staff report that they attempted to contact larger organisations but it was not possible to contact all the host employers. At the final project review meeting the SSACI project manager reminded colleges of the importance of sending out thank you letters. Colleges are provided with a sample thank you letter in the SSACI training manual.

As reported in section 3, colleges are growing partnerships with industry through the WBE process. Formal processes (such as an employer database) are not yet in place at all colleges. The placement officer from Northlink College reports that he is in the process of developing a database and sending 'letters of intention' to employers to gauge commitment for the 2013 WBE cycle. Examples of formal process were not provided by the other colleges.

7. Considerations for the 2013 roll out of WBE

This section of the report considers **two key evaluation questions**: how to assist students who do not find a WBE placement to complete the ICASS practical task 2; and again whether the WBE value was enhanced or compromised through the addition of the assessment component. The answers to both these questions have important implications for the 2013 roll out of the task books and the task book model implemented in the future; specifically whether the books should be in a generic or subject specific format.

7.1 Dealing with students that do not get a WBE placement

A key question in this evaluation is that if the task book is used as ICASS practical task 2 how do the colleges deal with students who do not find placement with a host employer? Addressing this question is vital for the sustainability of WBE as an assessed component of the NC(V).

This dilemma is highlighted by the DHET as one of the factors in the department's hesitation to make the use of the WBE task book a compulsory ICASS component of the NC(V); as students who do not find placement cannot be disadvantaged. The DHET representative claims that there is still a lot to be done to get industry and colleges together and there are shortages of employers in some areas; she explains:

If we are going to say as a department that WBE is part of the ICASS then we need to take responsibility. Colleges differ a lot and in many of the geographic locations, the colleges are not close to places to get students workplace exposure. This is the biggest challenge of implementing something like this and why the department will not say it is compulsory. If you think of the numbers we want to put through the NC(V) it becomes millions of people.

How do we assist students in a specific geographic location to find workplaces? Is it the student's responsibility or does the college assist and then who at the college does it? Is it the lecturer, the academic head, as everyone will say it is another person's responsibility. Taking these difficulties into account can we penalize a student's mark for a specific subject if part of ICASS?.

As reported above the placement figures for Level 4 business students at the colleges piloting the ICASS task books are high. While it is recognised that the pressure to place students with employers will become greater with increasing student enrolments and high WBE targets for 2013, finding student placements will be achievable for colleges in the Western Cape. This is due to the fact that Western Cape colleges are primarily in urban areas and are fairly well capacitated when compared to other colleges in the country.

As part of this research college staff were asked to comment on how to deal with students who do not find placement with a host employer and whether there is an alternative way to complete the task book.

- The majority of the college staff accepted that places “just have to be found for students”, arguing that the purpose is to gain workplace exposure and an alternative way to complete the book defeats the purpose.
- The most consistent proposal was to start WBE earlier in the year; perhaps even in the March holiday. This will allow colleges (especially in areas where there are few employers) to recycle students through same employers. This also allows some flexibility in finding students new employers in the cases where employers withdraw and can accommodate students who miss WBE in June due to cultural commitments; such as male initiation that frequently occurs in longer holidays. However, although college staff describe using other term holidays as a ‘back up plan’ the June-July remains the most ideal holiday due to its length and the fact that students would have covered relevant aspects in curriculum. In some subjects the order of topics can be changed but not in others, for example accounting.
- It was suggested that WBE must be documented as a compulsory component of NC(V) at enrolment.
- While traditional businesses are the most ideal organisational types, colleges in rural areas will need to think beyond industry and place students at schools, local doctors, clinics, municipality, non-government organisations and so on.
- All college staff suggested that work placement officers play a stronger role in assisting students to find WBE placements, although WBE should remain the responsibility of academic staff to ensure integration back into college curricula.

The WCED representative and SSACI project manager commend the pilot colleges’ commitment to finding WBE placements for all students. However, both the WCED and SSACI are aware that if the business studies task books are rolled out nationally there will be colleges that will not be able to place all students and an alternative method of allowing students to gain the benefits of using the task book will need to be developed. A model of using the task book as a research tool is suggested. The model is outlined in the recommendations section of this report.

7.2 Moving forward: the task book assessed as ICASS practical task 2

The majority view is that the task book should be assessed. In fact this was unanimously reported at the final project review meeting where all four colleges were represented. College staff reported that the assessment gives the whole WBE experience more validity.

In the words of one lecturer “if it is not measurable, it is not deliverable. It is quite simple”. A clear sentiment is that if the process is going to be taken seriously by both staff and students it needs to be assessed: to quote another college staff member (intensively involved in the WBE process for a number of years) “We have been crying out for it, make it compulsory for them if there are no marks students don’t take it seriously”. This was confirmed by students in all focus groups. Students even describe situations of merely not handing in a practical task 2 and hoping to pass on other marks.

Staff report that the task book as an assessed component of ICASS task 2 avoids repetition or overlap with ICASS practical task 1 (as previously the second practical was not always sufficiently different).

The WCED representative reports that the inclusion of the assessment of the WBE using the task books has served to standardise and improve the quality of the ICASS practical 2 task. In addition, she reports that it has enhanced the value of the WBE. **This is a critical finding.**

Staff report that completing the task book is a great deal of work for students and staff (as much as simulated work) and therefore should be assessed.

Staff reported that the task book provides sufficient evidence in the form of the employer signatures to count as a valid assessment. It is for this reason that despite challenges described above of getting signatures the requirement should remain. The WCED representative was firm on this point.

The majority of students were of the opinion that the task books should be assessed, for the following reasons:

- The experience was better than a college practical and they learned more.
- Knowing it will be assessed forced them to move from one job / section of the company to another and forced them to ask the employer to help.
- Assessment allowed them to know how well they did and what their faults were.

It is noted above that the marks are high but academic staff do not consider this to be a problem. Rather this was expected as students do better in practical than theoretical tasks.

One view was that while assessing the task books increases validity, the drawback is that students spend too much time during the actual WBE completing the books and hence could lose valuable practical exposure. The finding of this evaluation does not support this view as it is found that the task book is a useful guide that provides structure to the student's experience in the workplace.

Assessment gets lecturers involved. Academic staff stressed that by assessing the book more lecturers become involved in WBE and what is contained within the task book. It is reasoned that lecturers having assessed the books realise the importance of WBE and the need to prepare students for WBE. All lecturers report that they will start preparing future students for WBE and the task book throughout the year. The SACCI project manager reports that SSACI has implemented generic task books in other programmes, such as engineering, since 2008 but this is the first that lecturers have been so actively involved.

In sum

Assessing the task book enhanced the student's experience and exposure to the workplace.

7.3 The format of the task book: generic versus specific activities

A key question in the evaluation is whether the task book, with an assessed component, can be used in business studies as well as other engineering and non-engineering programmes. Essentially the question is: should the task book be implemented as a combination of both generic and specific subject activities (as piloted) or should only the generic activities (1-3) be used?

There are two camps of thinking on the generic – subject-specific task book debate:

- 1- The **current format** with subject specific activities should be **retained**.

- 2- The **generic task book** is easier to implement and should be **used**.

Camp 1: the current format with subject specific exercises should be retained

The majority view expressed in interviews and the final project review meeting is that the task book in its current format, with subject specific exercises, worked well and should be retained. Three of the pilot colleges intend using the task book in its current format in the 2013 roll out.

Both staff and students report that although students had some difficulty understanding one or two activities the majority learnt a great deal from completing the subject specific activities. At the final project review meeting academic staff reported that students could understand the theory they were learning after going into industry because of the specific activities. This is supported by the findings on the successfully implementation of the task book above.

A few finance lecturers felt that Section A (the generic part) was good but should not be marked as part of the ICASS mark as it brought student marks up. They report that in a few cases students passed who would have failed if only the specific exercises were marked. However, other staff report that there is no trend whether section A brought up or down the subject mark. It is also argued that it is not a significant problem if the mark was raised by the generic activities as students worked hard and the daily journal (in section A) in fact covers specific subject skills.

Academic staff hold the firm view that if the task books are going to be assessed than they should include the subject specific activities. If only generic activities are use than the books should not be assessed. The generic activities are not sufficient to meet ICASS requirements which need to include outcomes for each specific subject. The view is that without the specific activities colleges will need to give students practicals for the core vocational subjects in addition to the task book.

The specific activities provide evidence of what the student has learnt and it can be the only evidence of the WBE as lecturers cannot visit all the students.

The use of the subject specific task book is firmly supported by the WCED representative, who would like the use of the specific activities task book to be compulsory. As reported the WCED representative argues that the specific task as an assessed ICASS practical task 2 increases the quality of practicals across colleges, which have been variable to date. This is not just a WCED view; one programme head and a few lecturers describe doing detailed

practicals while another college will do something minor yet students can be awarded the same mark.

The feeling is that the task book is a useful tool that provides structure as noted above. One programme head at Northlink College and the academic staff interviewed at the College of Cape Town report that the task book integrates the four vocational subjects very well.

It is recognised that implementation of the subject specific task book requires commitment from academic staff but the majority of staff interviewed do not see this as a significant problem.

The issue of getting the marking done in time for reporting is recognised but college staff, in support of the specific subject books, claim this can be handled with some adjustments to the year plan. For example, a programme manager at Northlink College has received permission from the academic head at the college to conduct the ICASS practical task 2 in the third term. Students will go on WBE in June-July, finish the task book in the college and the book will be assessed in third term.

The college representatives at the final project review meeting feel that the specific activities task book may not be implementable in all programmes (such as engineering) but argue that it is not necessary to have the same model for business studies and engineering; as the specific activities task book worked in business studies it should be retained.

Camp 2: the generic task book should be used

The minority view is that the generic book should be used as it has value and is easier to implement. This view is held by the academic head of one college who has experience using the SSACI task books across a range of programmes in the generic format as well as the 2012 specific activities format in business studies. This view is supported by the head of business studies at the same college and one marketing lecturer from another college. While the use of the generic book in business studies may be the minority view some insightful issues are raised which are considered below.

As discussed above a key constraint in using the subject specific task books is the difficulty to get marking done in time for internal reporting purposes; it is not possible to reflect the mark on the June report which final year students need to apply for future studies.

It is felt that students learned a great deal from the generic activities and the specific exercises are time consuming, even overwhelming, and can distract the student's attention away from gaining experience in the workplace. Note the findings of the evaluation do not support this claim as business studies students describe deriving great value from the WBE using the current task book; despite some constraints in completing a few activities.

One marketing lecturer from one college reviewed the marketing task book (but was not involved in implementation) and is of the opinion that marketing students will not be able to complete 90% of the task book, which is a reason to use the generic book. The WCED curriculum planner for business studies disagrees and reports that the marketing students at the College of Cape Town were able to complete the activities. The findings of this evaluation confirm that although a small group of marketing students were sampled, the problems they experienced in completing activities was not substantially different from the experiences of students on other business studies programmes.

The generic task book can be used across all NC(V) programmes and possibly even NATED programmes. It is recognised by the academic head as well as the WCED engineering curriculum planner that it will be impossible to use the subject specific task book in engineering. The SACCI project manager holds a slightly different view. The project manager recognizes that it will not be feasible to duplicate the full ICASS model in engineering due the specific challenges¹⁹ in an engineering environment. Yet she claims that the possibility of having some subject specific activities should be explored. For instance, it may be possible to add at least one or two specific activities to the generic activities, which could count toward the ICASS mark.

The subject specific task book is long and involves high printing costs (this cost was raised as a concern by all staff across all colleges). A generic book resolves this issue as the book is shorter and can be printed in bulk for all college programmes.

The academic head supports the task book being assessed but claims there are ways to assess the generic task books and still meet ICASS requirements, as presented in model 1 and 2 below.

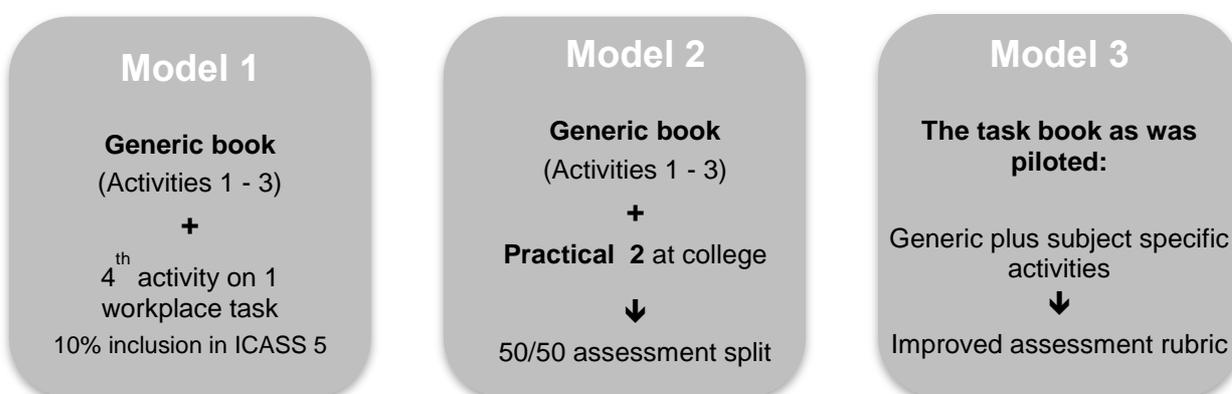
¹⁹ Engineering is less generic than business studies and engineering employers are very varied. This means that students may not be exposed to all the activities needed to complete the subject specific tasks. Also engineering employers are reluctant to allow students to do practical tasks due to their lack of competence and safety considerations.

Issues raised by the academic head in relation to possible national roll out of the business studies task book in 2013:

- Colleges with capacity constraints (where ICASS practical tasks are reportedly already weak) may struggle to implement the task book with generic and specific activities, as opposed to the shorter generic book.
- A generic task book could assist with the issue of non-placement of students. More students can go to the same employer at different times as the book is easier to complete. If there is a real shortage of employers in rural areas in a 'worse case scenario' much of the generic task book can be done during a one day visit to an employer, such as the local municipality.

Models of task book implementation

The following models of task book implementation, with an ICASS component, are developed based on interviews with college staff and feedback received at the final project review meeting. These models can guide the decision on which task book to use in 2013 in business studies programmes as well as other college programmes.



Model 1

Model 1 is the generic task book (activities 1 - 3) with a fourth activity on one workplace task; integrated across all the core vocational subjects. The fourth activity requires the student to develop a “detailed report on one task carried out in the workplace.” For example the task could be: assisting to plan a meeting, making arrangements (e.g. venue, travel, or accommodation) for a meeting or event, assisting with the development of a presentation and so on.

This was how the generic task book was originally designed and implemented prior to changes for ICASS practical task 2 in business studies. This book is less amenable for use as an ICASS instrument.

One suggestion was that in this model the WBE task can form part of the ICASS 5 instrument (the internal exam); counting for 10%²⁰ of instrument 5.

The advantages of model 1 is that is suitable for use across all NC(V) programme types and the student can go on WBE at anytime of the year (March, June, even September if necessary).The disadvantage is that the task book counts for very little marks, which removes the incentive value of assessing the task book.

Model 2

Model 2 is the generic task book (activities 1 - 3) plus an integrated practical task at the college. This practical task could be the same as the previous practical task 2 or be a research project that the student primarily completes prior to the WBE with some reflection on the experience on return to the college. The could be a 50/50 assessment split – the task book counts 50% and the practical counts 50% of the subject mark.

Model 2 addresses the difficulty of getting marking done for the June report. The model does not address the variable quality of practicals across colleges and opportunities to make linkages between the workplace and the college curriculum (subject topics) are lost.

Model 3:

Model 3 is the task book as it was piloted – the generic plus subject specific activities with an improved assessment rubric.

Three of the four colleges involved in the pilot support model 3 and intend rolling it out in 2013 due to the implementation successes of the project.

²⁰ The exam is a mark out of 180 and the WBE task rubric is converted to a mark out of 20. The two are combined into a mark of 200 and then convert to the ICASS task 5 mark. The DHET ICASS guidelines allow the colleges flexibility to conduct the assessments at different times. The minimum is that five internal assessment instruments need to be conducted and they need to be weighted according to the guidelines making up 100 (refer table 11 in section 5.1).

7.4 The DHET perspective in the debate of generic versus subject specific task books

The DHET representative has reviewed the task books and comments that both the generic and the subject specific books can be implemented as part of the WBE. The representative presents two considerations in evaluating which format of the book should be implemented in which context; the first concerns college-industry partnerships and the second refers to the different nature of each NC(V) programme.

(1) The specialist reasons that one of the aims of WBE is to make industry aware of the NC(V) as a new qualification in a climate where FET colleges do not have a good reputation in industry. A suggested way to connect industry with a local college is to start with the generic book:

The generic does not ask that much of the employer - later when there is a well established relationship with the employer then the college could use the more detailed documents. We learned in implementing learnerships that don't want to burden employer too much so that they do not take the student. If the paper work is too much then second time around the employer will avoid it.

(2) The specialist argues that there “should be flexibility – each NC(V) programme is supposed to be treated differently”. It is suggested that the task books be grouped into three categories – engineering (a task book that can deal with all types of engineering); business studies and then utilities/service. The DHET position is clear; “There cannot be a one size fits all approach for all 19 programmes”.

The DHET are aware that the circumstances and character of each college are different and this needs to be carefully considered in deciding which model of the task book to implement. As the DHET representative says:

We do not want to tailor-make a qualification – the colleges must choose what they want to implement taking their capacity, the needs of the community and the types of workplaces into account.

Interestingly, college staff regardless of their position on the most appropriate book, express concern that they do not want a rigid system imposed on them – they want the flexibility to implement the book in a manner appropriate to their own circumstances.

The DHET perspective is that the task book has been developed and early indications are that it is a useful book. However, development and implementation are separate functions and the department needs to take an incremental approach to the implementation of the

task books; “we can’t just take books and distribute to the colleges”. Considering the vast differences between colleges across the country it is recommended by the DHET representative that the WBE task books are piloted beyond one province – “perhaps it should be piloted in a few colleges in each province”. The suggestion was made that during this pilot weaker colleges can be partnered with stronger colleges (including colleges in the Western Cape that have implemented the task books).

Once the national pilot is followed with a second evaluation the decision can be made to enter a national implementation phase. The representative notes that capacity constraints at the national department mean that the FET directorate can support the decision to implement the task book but cannot be directly involved in implementation.

However, the DHET representative also claims that there will always be implementation issues and these will affect different colleges differently, if there is a good instrument that can be used there is no reason for colleges that have the capacity to delay. The DHET is aware that the DHET and colleges are in a transitional phase of colleges becoming the responsibility of the DHET and colleges that have the capacity to implement the task book should not wait on the DHET. She sums up the position as follows:

I cannot instruct someone in province to implement SSACI. If it works duplicate it and there will be buy-in from DHET. But maintenance and support cannot happen at DHET. The colleges can't wait for the department to position itself – run with it if working.

The DHET has taken the process forward by allowing the SSACI project manager to present the project at its FET college curriculum managers’ workshop in October. Discussions are currently underway on conducting training for a national roll out of the subject-specific WBE business task books as ICASS practical 2 in 2013. The DHET representative highlighted that provincial education staff must be part of this training to be able to support colleges implement the task books.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of the SSACI WBE ICASS Project was to develop a model for providing WBE for college students that can be incorporated into core curricula. The objective has two sub-goals. 1) To increase the sustainability of the successes experienced with the use of the SSACI WBE task books in engineering programmes through the formal inclusion of assessment. 2) To maintain and enhance the value of workplace experience for students, employers and colleges.

Overall there is evidence that the objective of the project was successfully achieved and the task books can be used and assessed in all business studies programmes, across a range of employers. Attaching the WBE to ICASS practical task 2 was successfully achieved and while aspects of the assessment rubric need to be improved overall the assessment dimension enhanced the student's experience of the workplace through specific activities providing a guide for students as well as employers. The project contributed to the improved quality of the ICASS practical task and ultimately the NC(V). Recommendations are made that the successes of the project should be expanded throughout the college sector.

A key consideration of the evaluation was the overall value of the project for students, employers and colleges. The WBE ICASS project was undoubtedly of high value for the students. A few challenges minimized the students' experiences (such as the nature of the employer not always matching college tasks or a lack of mentorship in the workplace) but despite this staff and students report that overall students benefitted, were positive about the experience and were able to make useful connections with what they were learning at the college and the workplace.

The majority of the employers felt the process went well; the students were able to assist the company and five of the six employers sampled are willing to host college students in future.

Benefits for the college are not immediately felt but there is consensus that the project can be a marketing tool for the colleges. Employers were satisfied with the students' standard of work but it will take time and repeated cycles of work placement to reinforce these impressions of the quality of the students and as a consequence the value of the certificate. Repeated cycles will also lead to greater partnerships between employers and colleges.

Constraints were experienced during the placement but these can largely be handled through the adequate preparation of students in future WBE cycles.

This report now makes recommendations on:

- student placement and handling students who are not placed with a host employer,
- preparation of students and employers for WBE,
- lesson learned about post placement,
- college staff roles and responsibilities for implementing WBE,
- the structure and implementation of the task book,
- assessment of WBE as ICASS practical task 2,
- models for the roll out of WBE in 2013,
- general considerations.

8.1 Student placement with host employers

Sourcing host employers for WBE

WBE placement figures were high in all the colleges that piloted the task book and this is a key **implementation success** of the project.

- The model of **students** finding their **own placement** (with the assistance of the college where necessary) worked fairly well in the Western Cape pilot. However, considering the difficulty described by students in sourcing employers, and the concern about the suitability of the employers in all cases, it is recommended that the sole responsibility for sourcing host employers cannot rest with students. **Colleges need to take a more proactive role** in assisting students find placement. This recommendation is in line with the DHET position that if the WBE task book is formalised as part of the ICASS than students need to be provided with adequate support so as not to disadvantage students who are unable to source host employers.
- In addition, the model of students finding placements will come under increasing pressure as the number of students requiring WBE increases from 2013 onward. In order to meet these escalating figures college staff (both academic and work placement staff) will need to develop more **structured approaches to maintaining relationships with host employers** as well as directly supporting students to source new employers.

Strengthening relationships with industry partners is discussed in the recommendations on post placement processes.

- In relation to the immensity of WBE targets it was suggested by one academic head that the focus of workplace exposure should be on **level 3 and level 4 placements**, as level 2 students are still too immature to enter the workplace and require guidance from the college. The college staff in the pilot suggest using **SSACI task book with level 4 students** only at this stage as a means to prepare them for employment.
- WBE should be highlighted as part of **college enrolment processes** as a compulsory course requirement in order to make the student aware of the possibility of needing to find a host employer early in the course. This does not remove the college's responsibility to assist students with WBE placement.
- The type of employer and the degree to which students were kept busy with appropriate tasks (and not used as free labour) impacted on the quality of the student's experience. This was not a significant problem in this pilot but may become a significant constraint as more students are placed with employers. Colleges need to develop **systems to evaluate the suitability of the host employer**.
- Recommendations on the responsibilities of college staff in relation to WBE are discussed below.

Dealing with students who do not find placement with a host employer

It is anticipated that sourcing sufficient host employers could be a challenge if the WBE business studies task books are rolled out nationally in 2013. It has been shown that sourcing employers in urban areas is achievable but this may not be the case for colleges located in rural areas. This is the DHET's primary reservation in making the implementation of the WBE task books a compulsory component of the ICASS.

- Business functions, such as office administration, are generic functions that all organisations engage in, meaning that while it was found that traditional businesses are the most ideal organisational type for WBE rural colleges will **need to think beyond industry**. Students will need to be placed at schools, local doctors, clinics, municipalities, non-government organisations as so on. **Thorough preparation of these employers** will need to be conducted to avoid the difficulties described by

some students in the pilot, where they were not given sufficient work or were given inappropriate work.

- The degree to which the model of students finding their own host employers, as was the case in the pilot, can be duplicated nationally in business studies is limited. In the case of insufficient employers college staff will need to develop partnerships with local employers and **'recycle' different students through the same employers.**
- In order to facilitate this, the **WBE should start earlier in the year**, for example in the March holidays. The model of students who do not find placement in the June-July holiday working one day a weekend can also be followed.
- In the event that a host employer cannot be found for a student, a model of using the **task book as a research tool** is suggested. In this case, the student could complete the majority of the activities through researching an organisation online. In addition, telephonic interviews could be conducted for certain activities (such as the 'appreciate your career path' activity). An accompanying document will need to be written offering the student guidelines on how to do conduct this research.

With regard to the task book being used across all programmes it is recognised that finding employer placements for students on specialised programmes (such as engineering) may be a significant challenge in rural areas.

8.2 Preparation of students and employers for WBE

Overall it is found that both student and employer preparation by the college can be improved.

The preparation of students for WBE

Student preparation for WBE and the use of the task book was not adequate across all colleges. Staff from all four colleges report that the most important lesson from the pilot is that they will start preparation for WBE, both in terms of the students finding places as well as working with the task book, early in the year.

- Preparation should be in the form of a **structured orientation** aimed at students and college staff; the orientation should focus on what is required before, during and after

the placement. Students need to know the minimum requirement of what needs to be collected or completed while in the workplace.

- **Students** must be well prepared by the college to conduct their **own employer briefing during the placement**. This is a core recommendation – the success of the WBE placement, using the task book, depends on the student knowing what is expected in each activity of the task book and requesting documents or exposure in those areas from the employer. The student knowing the book addresses instances where the employer has not fully engaged with the task book or been briefed adequately by the college, where the incorrect level of employee is briefed or where the student is not assigned a mentor.
- Academic staff suggest that **certain tasks** relating to the activities in the book could be directly **addressed by lecturers** in the classroom or simulated environment before the students go on the WBE placement. This could be in the form of research tasks like researching the employer on the internet or other small practicals.
- A formalized **workshop on student code of conduct** while in the workplace, interpersonal skills and being an ambassador for the college should be conducted with students just prior to going out to the host employers.
- A related recommendation is that a separate **guideline document** be developed for **lecturers** that outlines the WBE process from start to finish. The focus of the guideline should be the lecturer's role in ensuring that the students are prepared for WBE and the completion of the task book.

The preparation of employers for WBE

The preparation of the employers shows a mixed picture. Employers not being prepared for the placement has a negative impact on students gaining meaningful exposure to different aspects of the workplace and diminishes opportunities for the college to build industry partnerships (this is exacerbated where employers felt that students were 'dumped on them').

- All **employers** should be briefed by college staff **early** (at least one or two months prior to the placement) to clarify what is expected during the placement and to orientate the employer to the task book. This will:

- enable employers to develop a schedule for the students to ensure they are kept busy throughout the placement;
 - allow employers to develop alternative ways to assist students complete difficult or confidential tasks, such as working with employer financial statements;
 - avoid the minor problem of employer withdrawal on the first day of placement.
- The distance between the colleges and host employers is recognized as a constraint but college staff should **visit a sample of employers** as part of the briefing process, especially when a group of students are placed at one employer. At minimum staff should visit 10% of the host employers at some point during the student placement and submit a formal report.
- The **briefing strategy could vary** depending on the nature of the employer. It is noted that the employer confirmation letter is not sufficient to prepare the employer for WBE.
 - The bulk of the organisations (hosting one or two students) should be briefed telephonically.
 - Large companies hosting groups of students should be visited by college staff to brief the company but also to build partnerships.
 - Another strategy is to hold briefing workshops or breakfast sessions at the college for employers that have committed to host students; although employers report that attendance may be low (especially by staff in senior positions).
- A strong one or two page **employer briefing document** should be developed to guide the employer on the requirements of the task book. For ease of reference the document could be presented as a single diagram or flow chart. This document needs to be a stand alone document (separate from the task book) for use in cases where colleges are not able visit host employers due to logistically constraints. Northlink College have developed a document which can be used and adapted by other colleges. SSACI should develop this document.
- Employer briefings should be directed at senior staff at the company as well as the **staff (such as supervisors)** that will work **directly with the students**, as it was found that in some cases the incorrect level of staff was briefed; meaning staff members responsible for students were unprepared on the student's arrival.

- The importance of **assigning a workplace mentor** to the student should be highlighted in employer briefings.

8.3 Post placement

A significant implementation weakness in the pilot was the lack of formalised post placement processes – debriefing students and follow-up with employers.

- **Debriefing students** on return to the college needs to be **formalised**. Debriefing sessions should be conducted by academic staff as well as work placement officers ideally as a structured workshop which results in a short report. This will ensure that:
 - practical experiences are linked back to classroom practice and will assist students to make connections between theory and the workplace;
 - lessons learned are recorded for future WBE cycles.
- Work placement officers should use student feedback on the suitability of host employers to expand the college's employer database.
- Opportunities for future placement of students with employers could be lost due to the lack of formal **debriefing sessions with employers**. The session provides the college with an opportunity to learn from the employer as well as to rectify any difficulties experienced by the employer. Smaller employers should be phoned and larger companies that hosted a group of students should be visited. All companies should receive an emailed letter of thanks. See the recommendation above that staff should visit a minimum of 10% of the host employers.
- Colleges should develop a **database of host employers** using the data recorded in the student's completed task books (part 4); unless recorded the possibility of placing students with the same host employer in the future is lost as it was the students and not staff who sourced the employers.

8.4 College staff roles and responsibilities in relation to WBE

In the pilot academic staff (programme heads and lecturers) were responsible for the implementation of the WBE (with some support from work placement officers in two

colleges) and this contributed the students' experiences of the workplace and ability to make connections with the college curriculum.

- In order for these implementation successes to be maintained clear **roles and responsibilities in relation to WBE** as part of the ICASS need to be established. These responsibilities need to be defined according to pre, during and post placement functions.
 - A **WBE champion** should be identified for each programme.
 - WBE using the task book should primarily be the **responsibility of academic staff**. This responsibility **includes sourcing host employers**. Academic staff should prepare students on how to complete the task book as well as ensure that learning is translated back into classroom practice.
 - The increased **involvement of NC(V) lecturers** in the WBE process is a key success of the project, yet more needs to be done to encourage earlier involvement of lecturers so that they are not seeing the task books for the first time when assessing.
 - **Work placement staff** should support academic staff in sourcing host employers and maintaining continued relationships with the employers.

8.5 The structure and implementation of the task book

The WBE task book was successfully implemented and served to enhance the student's workplace experience through providing guidance to the student and employer during the work placement. Key findings are as follows:

- The **content and structure** of the task book was reported by all respondents as well conceived.
- The strength of the task book is that it can be a **stand-alone book** that students can use to guide their WBE experience due to the varying types of employers, as well as varying levels of mentoring from employers, that students will encounter while on the WBE.
- The **task book links** directly to the different **programme curricula** and students are able to provide examples of linkage between the workplace experience and the theory covered in their programme.
- The task book encourages **students to take initiative** while in the workplace through providing specific instructions of what documents need to be obtained or activities completed.

- The task book is **relevant to general business** or administrative functions and well received by employers, who recommend no changes to the book.

An analysis of completed task books across all business studies programmes as well as outcomes of student's surveys of completion rates finds that students were able to **complete the majority of activities** contained within the task books.

- In general students were able to complete the generic activities (1-3) with ease. The generic activities do not require revision.
- Minor difficulties were experienced with the completion of a few subject specific activities due to two reasons:
 - Difficulties in sourcing confidential documentation from employers. This can be improved through the college preparing the student on 'creative' ways to source documentation. The task book should make reference to alternative ways to source documentation and provide brief examples.
 - Students misunderstanding some questions. A few questions need to be reworked for clarity. Detailed recommendations relating to specific activities / questions are included as appendix 5.
- It is noted as recommended above that the **adequate preparation** of the student prior to WBE has the **most significant impact** on the student's ability to complete the task book activities.
- The **introduction of the WBE** and use of the task book can be **reduced** and possibly presented as a diagram to allow everyone working with the task book to gain an overview of the process at a glance. Other recommendations in relations to **streamlining a few aspects** of the book and adding a few select icons to make the book slightly more user friendly are provided in appendix 5.
- The **daily activity log and journal** is highlighted as an **important component** of the task book and should remain, see appendix 5 for minor suggestions on improvement.
- Employers were not consistently aware of the **administrative documents** referred to as "Part 4: WBE documentation" (such as the student profile) at the back of the task book. These should be moved forward or highlighted in some way at the start of the book.

- Students require time on return to the college to **complete the task book** and this should be formalised into the **year plan**. It is estimated that three to four periods are required over a week.
- It is recommended that **all revisions** to the business studies task books be **completed by SSACI** so that a fully revised, final version is available to the college sector.

8.6 Assessment of WBE as ICASS practical task 2

The WBE task books were successfully assessed as ICASS practical task 2 for business studies programmes in the pilot; **assessment was found to be fair, valid and reliable**. The task book as a formally assessed component of the NC(V) enhanced the students' experiences of WBE through providing structure and an incentive to complete the task books, which were completed to a high standard. Overall assessment provided credibility to the WBE project.

Some constraints were found in relation to the assessment;

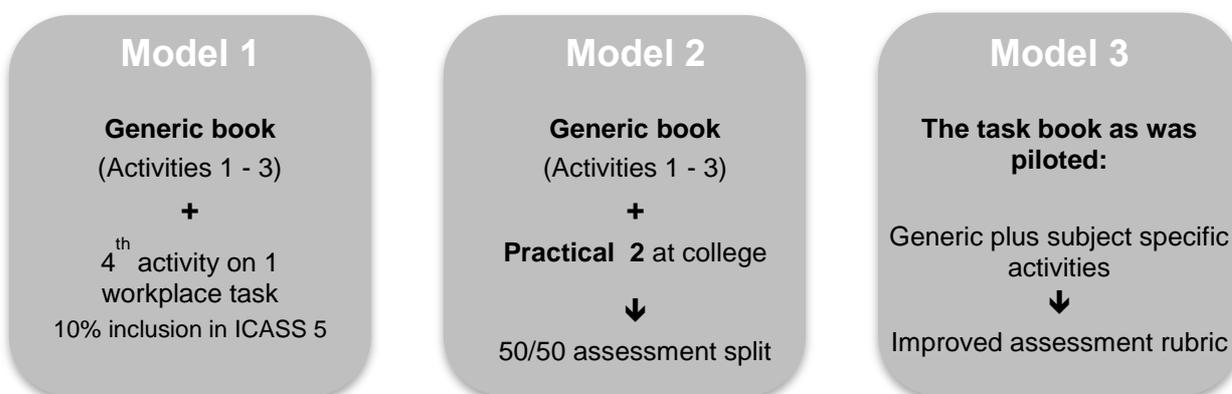
- The **timeframe for marking** the task book is a difficulty as the ICASS practical task 2 is usually included in the June report, yet students were still on placement in June-July. This issue can be resolved by **reworking the year plan** and reporting on the ICASS practical task 2 in the third term. This also allows more flexibility on when students go on WBE.
- The **assessment rubric** needs redevelopment. Assessment for the pilot remains valid as task books were completed to a high standard. SSACI should lead the redevelopment process. The rubric should be workshopped with experienced college staff who have already indicated their availability to the SSACI project manager and the WCED curriculum planner for business studies.
- It was debated whether the task book can count as a valid assessment if **employer signatures** are not obtained in all cases. Flexibility on this issue is required and while signatures should remain a requirement, lecturers should use their discretion in cases where signatures are missing yet students produce a high standard of work. The signatures of the daily journal should remain compulsory.

Overall it is recommended that the **task books remain an assessed component** of the business studies programmes in the Western Cape and after further piloting be expanded to other colleges in the country. This relates to the discussion of task book models below.

8.7 Toward the 2013 roll out of WBE: task book models

Overall the SSACI WBE ICASS project has been successful. The question debated by college stakeholders, the WCED and DHET is how broadly the WBE task books should be implemented and which task book model should be implemented.

Three models of the task book are presented in this report, which are basically split on the lines of whether they include subject specific activities or only generic activities and whether the task book replaces the entire ICASS practical 2 task or contributes to a smaller percentage of the ICASS mark. All three models support the assessment of the WBE task book. To recap the models are as follows:



Recommendations in relation to the most suitable model are made on three levels – the model to be used in business studies programmes in the Western Cape, the model to be used nationally in business studies and the model to be used in college programmes other than business studies.

A model for Western Cape Colleges

Three of the four Western Cape colleges that piloted model 3 intend using the business studies task book for the dual purpose of WBE and ICASS practical task 2 in 2013. It is

recommended that all colleges in the Western Cape, including South Cape College and Boland College, implement the WBE ICASS task book for all business studies programmes in 2013 for the following reasons:

- The success of the project shows that the tasks can be implemented and students derived significant value.
- Colleges in the Western Cape have the capacity to implement the subject specific task books.
- There are sufficient employers in the Western Cape. West Coast College has some campuses in rural areas but managed to place 100% of students; which further demonstrates that it is feasible to find host employers.
- The colleges have enough time to prepare for the WBE in 2013, which can ameliorate some of the difficulties experienced in the pilot which was rushed.
- Colleges should attend to the recommendations in relation to preparation and maintaining employer relationships.
- Western Cape colleges will receive the support of the WCED in the implementation of the WBE ICASS task book.
- The DHET supports the use of model 3 in colleges that have the capacity to implement the task book. The DHET will not make the use of the WBE ICASS task books compulsory at this stage.

The model to be used nationally in business studies programmes

The DHET suggests an incremental approach to roll out of the WBE task books in other colleges in the country, due to the different capacity and geographic location of the colleges.

- It is recommended that a **national pilot of the business studies subject specific task books**, model 3, is implemented in a few colleges in each province. The sample of colleges should include colleges in rural areas with limited host employers.
- During the national pilot colleges with capacity constraints can be partnered with stronger colleges (such as colleges in the Western Cape who have experience implementing model 3).
- The pilot should be followed by a **second evaluation** which can directly address the possibilities and constraints of implementing model 3 as a **compulsory ICASS component of business studies programmes**.

The model to be used in non-business studies programmes (such as engineering)

It has been demonstrated in a previous evaluation, as well as SSACI's own research of task book development, that the **generic activities task book can successfully be implemented in engineering programmes**. It is reported in the current evaluation by the WCED engineering planner that it will not be possible to implement model 3 in engineering. Yet this does not mean that the completion of the WBE task book in engineering cannot be assessed as part of ICASS, even if a smaller percentage as outlined model 1 or 2.

- It is recommended that SSACI approach the WCED and select colleges to explore the possibilities of piloting model 1 or 2 in engineering programmes in 2013. This will not require development capacity as the task books are already in place; although the assessment rubric may need to be adjusted.
- Some colleges are using the generic books in other programmes such as tourism and hospitality as well as IT and possibilities of incorporating assessment should be explored.

In essence the same model cannot be adopted across all FET college programmes but each programme will benefit from formalising WBE with some form of assessment attached to the experience.

8.9 General recommendations

Colleges need to **allocate a WBE travel budget** to assist students to travel to host employers (especially when not in their immediate community) as well as for staff to visit a sample of employers.

Colleges should involve **parents** as it was reported that parents were enthusiastic about WBE and can assist students find employers.

A **marketing campaign** should be developed to promote WBE in public media such as newspapers and radio. This can be a joint Western Cape College initiative.

This value of and **lessons learned** from the SSACI WBE ICASS Project should be **shared** with the college sector as has already been done in FET College Times and DHET curriculum managers' workshop.

The development of a **job readiness programme** (how to find work, how to write a CV, how to be interviewed and how to control finances) could be beneficial for final year students. This was recommended by a work placement officer.

Lecturers need to gain workplace exposure themselves in order to remain up to date with advances in their field and the realities of the workplace. SSACI is currently engaged in researching and piloting a model for providing lecturer workplace experience (LWE).

In closing

SSACI is commended for its continued support and development of the FET college sector in South Africa and the development of work-based experienced resources as part of its broader FET College Support Project.

Appendix 1: List of interviewees

Number of students interviewed

College of Cape Town				
Office administration (OFA)	Finance, economics and accounting (FEA)	Management	Marketing	Total students
11	4	5	5	25
False Bay College				
Office administration	Finance, economics and accounting			Total students
4	3			7
Northlink College				
Office administration				Total students
10				10
West Coast College				
Office administration			Management	Total students
5			5	10
Total number of students interviewed				52

Number of employers interviewed

Large data storage company	Medium sized security company	
1 HR Officer	1 personal assistant to CEO 1 Bookkeeper	
Large insurance company	Large (Global) manufacturing company	
1 HR Officer 1 HR department staff member	1 HR Officer	
Retail franchise (single store)	Private education provider	
1 owner-manager	1 deputy director	
Small owner-run laundry		
1 owner-manager		
Total number of employer individuals interviewed		9

Number of staff interviewed at each college

College of Cape Town	False Bay College	
Lecturer: WBE co-ordinator Business centre facilitator HOD: Office administration	3 lecturers Head of business studies Education specialist Senior academic staff member	
3	7	
Northlink College	West Coast College	
Programme head: Office administration Programme head: Finance, economics and accounting Work placement officer	3 lecturers HOD: Office administration Deputy Campus Manager Placement co-ordinator	
3	6	
Total number of college staff interviewed		19

Appendix 2: Documents reviewed in the evaluation

Department of Higher Education and Training South Africa. Greenpaper for post-school education and training (2012).

FET College Project: July 2012 State of Project Report.

Notes on the philosophy and approach used in the WBE task books – generic and subject specific.

SSACI: FET Colleges Project: *Final evaluation report*. Singizi consulting. December 2010. SSACI: Providing workplace-based experience for FET College students (2012 edition)

SSACI Report on Logbook Revision (engineering).

Revised guidelines for the implementation of internal continuous assessment (ICASS) in the NC(V) qualifications at FET Colleges published by the DHET February 2012.

Project plan: piloting WBE as an integrated component of NC(V) level 4 business programmes in the Western Cape in 2012.

WBE task books for all four business studies programmes and optional subjects-appendix task books.

Sample of completed and assessed WBE task books for each programme type.

Minutes of Project implementation review meeting, 3 August 2012.

Minutes of Final Project implementation review meeting, 12 October 2012.

Various documents supplied by the pilot colleges.

Appendix 3: Terms of reference evaluation questions

The key questions for the evaluation are:

<p>1. What was planned and achieved (at project and at college level) and why, with regard to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">The use of the WBE task books as ICASS practical 2The placement of students for WBE with host employersCollege assessment of the task booksHow students who did not complete a WBE placement were accommodated with regard to their completion of an ICASS practical 2 task
<p>2. How the implementation of the books and the assessment worked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">What worked well?What did not work so well?
<p>3. The value of the WBE experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">What was the value of the experience for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">For students?For employers?For the colleges?Was the “WBE value” enhanced or compromised in any way through the addition of the assessment component?
<p>4. What are the key task book design and implementation issues and challenges that arose for colleges and employers, and what lessons are there for future implementation?</p>
<p>5. What would colleges do to improve their implementation of the WBE task books as a component of the ICASS in future?</p>
<p>6. Recommendations arising from the implementation the ICASS project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">General recommendations on providing WBE as an assessed component of the NC(V)Recommendations for improving the task books, assessment strategy and implementation for business programmes for a 2013 roll outRecommendations for the application to other non-engineering and engineering programmes

Appendix 4: Summary of task book activities per business studies programme

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Activity	Activity title	Subject relevant to	Where activities can be found
Activity 1	Overview of the Workplace	Activities 1-3 are relevant to all vocational and optional subjects. Together they contribute 50% of the practical 2 mark of each subject.	Activities 1-6 are contained in the WBE Office Administration task book for NC(V) level 4 students
Activity 2	Health and Safety Aspects		
Activity 3	Appreciate your Career Path		
Activity 4	Ensure Customer Satisfaction (same as Activity 7 (option 1))	Office Practice	
Activity 5	Plan and Prioritise Tasks	Business Practice	
Activity 6	Prepare an Organogram and Presentation in PowerPoint	Office Data Processing	
Activity 7 (option 1)	Ensure Customer Satisfaction (same as Activity 4)	Personal Assistance	Options 1-4 for activity 7 are contained in the Office Administration WBE optional subject appendix
Activity 7 (option 2)	Develop a Project Plan	Project Management	
Activity 7 (option 3)	Pricing and Costing	New Venture Creation	
Activity 7 (option 4)	Complete an Income Statement and Balance Sheet	Applied Accounting	

MARKETING

Activity	Activity title	Subject relevant to	Where activities can be found
Activity 1	Overview of the Workplace	Activities 1-3 are relevant to all vocational and optional subjects. Together they contribute 50% of the practical 2 mark of each subject.	Activities 1-7 are contained in the WBE Marketing task book for NC(V) level 4 students
Activity 2	Health and Safety Aspects		
Activity 3	Appreciate your Career Path		
Activity 4	Plan and prioritise tasks	Marketing	
Activity 5	Activity 5: Team work	Advertising and Promotions	
Activity 6	Prepare an organogram and presentation in PowerPoint	Marketing Communications	
Activity 7	Ensure customer satisfaction	Consumer Behaviour AND Contact Centre Operations	

FINANCE, ECONOMICS AND ACCOUNTING

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY TITLE	SUBJECT RELEVANT TO	WHERE ACTIVITIES CAN BE FOUND
Activity 1	Overview of the Workplace	Activities 1-3 are relevant to all vocational and optional subjects. Together they contribute 50% of the practical 2 mark of each subject.	Activities 1-6 are contained in the WBE Finance, Economics and Accounting task book for NC(V) level 4 students
Activity 2	Health and Safety Aspects		
Activity 3	Appreciate your Career Path		
Activity 4	Complete an income statement and balance sheet	Applied Accounting	
Activity 5	Analyse and interpret and income statement and balance sheet	Financial Management (FEA students)	
Activity 6	Investigate the need for and challenges faced providing a product or service	Economic Environment	
Activity 7 (option 1)	Develop a Project Plan	Project Management	Options 1-3 for activity 7 are contained in the FEA-Management optional subject appendix
Activity 7 (option 2)	Pricing and Costing	New Venture Creation	
Activity 7 (option 3)	Prepare an Organogram and Presentation in PowerPoint	Office Data Processing	

MANAGEMENT

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY TITLE	SUBJECT RELEVANT TO	WHERE ACTIVITIES CAN BE FOUND
Activity 1	Overview of the Workplace	Activities 1-3 are relevant to all vocational and optional subjects. Together they contribute 50% of the practical 2 mark of each subject.	Activities 1-6 are contained in the WBE Management task book for NC(V) level 4 students
Activity 2	Health and Safety Aspects		
Activity 3	Appreciate your Career Path		
Activity 4 and 5	Team work	Management Practice AND Operations Management	
Activity 6	Develop a budget	Financial Management (Management students)	
Activity 7 (option 1)	Develop a Project Plan	Project Management	
Activity 7 (option 2)	Pricing and Costing	New Venture Creation	
Activity 7 (option 3)	Prepare an Organogram and Presentation in PowerPoint	Office Data Processing	

Appendix 5: Detailed recommendations on business studies task book revisions

1. Office administration	Recommendation
<p>1.1 Activity 4 (ensure customer satisfaction).</p> <p>Optional activity 7 in marketing.</p>	<p>The instructions need to be made more clear and specific guidelines provided. Question 5 needs to be completely redeveloped and the use of the checklist clarified (or replaced with an alternative). Sub-questions in 5.2 and 5.3 need to be reduced in line with updated checklist / task. These revisions will require the logic of 'whole' activity to be reviewed.</p>
<p>1.2 Activity 5 (plan and prioritise tasks).</p> <p>Activity 4 in marketing.</p>	<p>Rewording to clarify the purpose of the activity is required. The purpose is not to schedule someone's diary as much as to develop a schedule of work. Examples of how to complete can briefly be included.</p> <p>Use reminder / caution icon.</p>
2. Finance, economics and accounting	Recommendation
<p>2.1 Activity 4 (complete an income statement).</p> <p>Optional activity 7.4 in the OA task book</p>	<p>The difficulty in completing the activity relates to the constraints in obtaining confidential data from host employers. The activity should remain but the alternative methods of obtaining data should be made explicit in the task book; perhaps through providing brief examples and the use of a reminder / caution icon.</p>
<p>2.3 Activity 6 (investigate the need for and challenges faced providing a product and service)</p>	<p>Activity to be reviewed for clarity (students report not always understanding the question).</p>
3. Management task book	Recommendation
<p>3.1 Activity 6 (develop a budget)</p>	<p>Same as 2.1 above.</p>
4. Marketing	Recommendation
<p>4.1 Activity 2 (health and safety)</p>	<p>Students from other programmes did not experience difficulty so no substantial reworking required. The activity could be briefly reviewed to provide guidance on how to manage the situation where a host employer does not have health and safety policies in place.</p> <p>Use of a reminder / caution icon.</p>
<p>4.2 Activity 4 (plan and priorities tasks)</p>	<p>Same as 1.2 above.</p>
<p>4.3 Activity 6 (prepare an organogram presentation in PowerPoint).</p>	<p>No revision required (students from other programmes did not experience difficulty).</p>
5. Optional activities	Recommendation
<p>5.1 Develop a project plan (OA task book: activity 7- option 2 / FEA task book: activity 7- option 1 / Management task book: activity 7- option 1).</p>	<p>The activity should be checked for clarity and more guidelines provided. Question 2 is not clear to students and the question should be re-written for clarity and possible examples given.</p> <p>A system to deal with students not exposed to a project-like task during the placement needs to be designed. This should briefly be discussed with key college academic staff.</p> <p>In general students report that optional subjects tasks can have more detailed guidelines. This should be briefly reviewed.</p>
6. Other aspects of task book	Recommendation

<p>6.1 Guiding Icons</p>	<p>Four icons should be developed and be included in the appropriate place in the task book. Three of the icons assist students to know what needs to be done at the different phases of the placement. The icons are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what needs to be done before work placement, • what needs to be done during the placement, • what needs / can be to be done after the placement when back in the college. <p>The fourth icon is a warning or exclamation icon to highlight areas of difficulty in completing a task or where they student needs to be more creative (for example 2.1 and 3.1 above – alternative ways to source / complete financial statements).</p> <p>A table explaining the meaning of the icons should be placed in part 1 after the introduction.</p>
<p>6.2 Introduction</p>	<p>A one or two page graphic document outlining the whole WBE process needs to be developed. This document should appear in the front of the task book and given as a separate guiding document to employers and academic staff.</p> <p>Note: the one-pager used by Northlink College can be used for the introduction.</p>
<p>6.3 Part 4</p>	<p>Many of the forms in part 4 are not looked at again after completion and in some cases not used – for example the student profiles are not provided to host employers. These forms could either be moved forward to after the introduction or significantly highlighted in the reworked introduction.</p> <p>Note: it works well when colleges manage these documents separately but not all colleges have the administrative capacity.</p>

<p>7. Assessment rubric</p>	<p>Recommendation</p>
<p>7.1 Redevelopment of the assessment rubric</p>	<p>The process of redevelopment should include a workshop with key academic staff involved in the pilot, redesign of the rubric and the opportunity for academic staff to comment / approve the final draft.</p> <p>Factors that need to be considered in the redevelopment of the assessment rubric:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of a 5-point rating scale is not recommended in assessment rubrics. The scale should change to a 4-point scale and the method to convert it back to a mark out of 5 for NC(V) reporting purposes should be outlined. • The assessment criteria need to be redeveloped to ensure that they are testing level of ability in relation to the criteria; rather it is testing whether the student included something or not. This will be dealt with through the redevelopment of the rating scale and guidelines as suggested below. • The rubric should allow for a mark of zero (where the student does not complete the task at all).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was recommended by academic staff that specific guidelines for each rating scale in relation to each of the criteria be provided. This will assist lecturers to assess whether students have demonstrated the particular competence required in by the criterion. A caution here is that the assessment rubric could become long and complicated if separate guidelines are provided for every criterion. Guidelines for the ratings should be more detailed but provided at a broad / meta level and more clarity provided where necessary for certain criteria. • The assessment criteria need to be weighted in some way. For example more marks should be allocated to completing the daily journal than the task of attaching promotional material. <p>The DHET revised guidelines for the implementation ICASS should be re-consulted for good examples of assessment rubrics.</p>
<p>7.2 Position of assessment rubric in the task book</p>	<p>The assessment rubric for each activity should be moved to after the activity and the final cover sheet of the assessment rubric placed as the last page of the task book - this will facilitate lecturers moving between specific activities and the cover sheet.</p>