



A guide for employers

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Our Vision

To be recognised by individuals and employers as providing excellence in vocational and work-based learning in the North East Region.

Our Mission

In partnership with government bodies such as the LSC, employers, individuals, work-based learning providers and educational institutions we will participate in the economic and social regeneration of the region. We will achieve this by promoting excellence in the delivery of our learning and training.





Introduction

We hope this guide to Apprenticeships and work-based learning helps you to understand the services and support we provide, also your role within the learning process with regard to new recruits or existing staff.

How work-based Apprenticeships can help your business -

Recruiting the right member of staff for your company with the relevant skills and knowledge to do the job will be of paramount importance to you. We can help you in this process through our work-based learning Apprenticeship programmes, which will provide you with a number of key benefits:

- cost effective recruitment
- development of a well trained, well motivated workforce
- help to meet the costs of training
- improved productivity through better trained staff
- improved performance
- demonstrate your commitment to staff development

Apprenticeships also ensure your business complies with the 'Time Off for Study or Training' employment rights legislation for 16 and 17 year olds which was introduced in September 1999.

What are work-based learning Apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are part of a national Government funded programme to raise the skill levels of young people (aged 16-24), the **employees of the future**. They aim to develop an individual's knowledge and skills within the workplace environment and present a real opportunity for young people wanting to continue learning outside full-time education. They provide support for young people (learners) to work towards the achievement of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's), Key Skills and Technical Certificates. Forward thinking employers are currently developing their employees in this way, ranging from small employers who employ less than five staff, to household names such as Asda, British Gas, Norwich Union, BMW and the AA.

What are National Vocational Qualifications?

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) are vocational awards achieved through assessment and training. They are practical qualifications based on being able to do a job. There are five levels of NVQ, ranging from Level 1, focusing on basic work activities, to Level 5 for senior management. Each NVQ comprises a number of units of competence setting out what an individual must be able to do in a given area, and to what standard. National standards are set by national employer led bodies who know exactly what skills are needed to do each job well.

As part of their Apprenticeship learners also gain Key Skills as part of their personal development. These can include Application of Number, Communication, IT, Working with Others, Problem Solving, Improving Own Learning and Performance.

Technical Certificates are certificated separately and must contain an element of external assessment to cover the knowledge and understanding obtained through off-the-job training.

We will work with you to:

- Identify suitable employees and work placement opportunities
- Identify existing employees who may benefit from training
- Plan and design learning plans to meet your needs and those of the individual
- Provide off-the-job training to support the learning which is taking place in the workplace
- Monitor learner progress and provide help and support when necessary
- Assess learner competence in the workplace
- Work with the national awarding bodies, such as C&G to award nationally recognised qualifications (NVQ's) to learners
- Provide on-going support and training to you and your staff in all aspects of the above

The following sections of the Guide provide further information on the role we play, and how this supports the role you can play in the work-based learning process.





Recruiting and selecting learners

We aim to select and attract learners best suited to the work and training you can offer. Having discussed your particular needs we will match your requirements with the skills and experience of our learners, short-listing those most suited to the position available. Alternatively you may wish to undertake your own recruitment, as employer, the final decision will be yours. Having made the final decision your learner may be employed or non-employed and our Client Liaison Officers will discuss these options with you.

Generally learners are employed by you and subject to your Terms & Conditions of Employment. The Government's funding body, the LSC, requires all employed-status learners be issued with a formal contract of employment. Our LSC funding agreement requires all employers agree to pay employed-status learners a minimum of £80 per week. Having secured the services of the 'right' learner, many pay the Government's minimum wage.

Learning provider's role

Produce informative promotional material to attract suitable candidates

Links with Connexions, schools and external bodies to attract as many suitable candidates as possible, also those who may be currently under represented in your workforce

Use effective and fair selection methods

Refer suitable candidates for you to interview

Advise on selection methods and interviewing if required

Discuss benefits of employed and non-employed status learners

Employer's role

Advise us on the types of positions to be filled and the characteristics required by the candidates

Interview a number of applicants and inform us of outcomes

Take action to consider applicants from under represented groups

Give applicants accurate information about the work required of them and the training provided

Treat all applicants fairly and consistently during the selection process

Advise us of any existing employees you wish to train

Inducting learners

Having selected the right person you will want to ensure they stay with you. One way of doing this is by providing a well-planned induction programme to help learners settle quickly into your company by helping them to understand the environment in which they are based and their job description. We complement this by providing an induction to advise the learner of their individual learning plan.

Learning provider's role

Provide induction training for learners on their learning programme

Explain work-based learning and everyone's role

Advise employers on the workplace induction and initial training

Explain how NVQ's are achieved

Explain rights and responsibilities to learners

Check learners understand the information they received at induction

Provide learners with information supporting what they have been given during induction, for future reference

Employer's role

Show learners where everything in the workplace is

Introduce them to the people they will work with and their supervisor

Train them in the health and safety of your workplace

Explain your company policies and procedures

Inform learners of their conditions of employment or placement

Provide learners with basic information about the job they will be doing

Provide the learner with a mentor if possible





Planning & designing ILP's

An Individual Learning Plan helps you get the best from your learner and to develop their skills and knowledge. We will jointly plan an ILP to meet the needs of both learner and employer. An ILP will be developed for each learner, showing the training they will receive, both on and off-the-job, ensuring they achieve their qualification. The plan will also identify any additional support required. We will take into account their current knowledge, skills and experience when doing this. We will ensure your staff are supplied with whatever information they require to understand the learner's NVQ programme.

Learning provider's role

Working with you to identify the individual's immediate training needs

Assess the learner's current skills, knowledge and qualifications

Identify any personal circumstances which may effect learning and training

Provide copies of the ILP for the learner and yourselves

Help you to understand the ILP including the NVQ, Key Skills and Technical Certificate

Employer's role

To help identify the individual's immediate training and development needs

To help us plan the ILP for the learner

Identify appropriate learning opportunities within the workplace which will help the learner develop and progress

Understand the learner's ILP including NVQ, Key Skills and Technical Certificate

Delivering learning plans

With an agreed ILP we work together delivering the training required to develop the learner's skills ensuring they achieve their qualifications. Most of the training takes place within the workplace, allowing learners to develop their skills by others performing activities, practicing themselves and learning from their colleagues and supervisors. The more learning opportunities that you can provide, the greater the skills your learner acquires to ultimately benefit your company. Allowing learners projects to undertake, or attending formal training sessions in the workplace, will develop their skills and knowledge even further.

Regarding off-the-job training, this is a matter of personal choice. You may wish to carry out some training within the company. We can provide off-the-job training sessions to support learning in the workplace, or engage external suppliers to develop theoretical understanding, agreeing times and venues with you when planning the ILP. This ensures off-the-job training is appropriate to what the learner is doing in the workplace and vice versa.

Learning provider's role

Provide help and advice on planning workplace training and learning activities

Be aware of the learning activities that are taking place within the workplace

Provide appropriate off-the-job sessions to support the skills the learner is developing in the workplace, enabling them to achieve their qualification

Keep you informed of what the learner has covered during off-the-job training

Employer's role

Help learners develop knowledge and skills by providing a wide range of learning and training opportunities

Allow learners to attend off-the-job training sessions

Help learners put into practice what they have learnt during off-the-job training sessions

Give learners time within the workplace to compile their NVQ portfolio

Express your concerns on any aspect of training





Reviewing learner progress

To ensure your learner is getting the maximum benefit from their learning programme it is important to monitor their progress at regular intervals. This will ensure any additional training or support needs are identified and properly addressed. We will fully involve the learner's supervisor and always arrange to meet when least disruption will be caused to normal workplace activities.

Learning provider's role

Organise a schedule of regular review meetings

Involve the learner and the workplace supervisor in the review

Find out and record the progress made by the learner

Identify additional training and support needs and amend the ILP accordingly

Agree and record actions and targets between this and the next review

Make sure the learner and the workplace supervisor have a copy of the recorded review

Employer's role

Let us know how the learner is progressing in the workplace

Advise us of any concerns which you may have regarding the learner's progress

Attend learner progress reviews

Advice on workplace training and assessment opportunities which may occur in the period to the next review

Assessing learner competence

To gain an NVQ, learners must collect evidence to demonstrate their competence in a range of different activities. Each learner is allocated an assessor who will discuss and agree the best way of providing evidence to reach the national standard. This will involve agreement on materials which occur normally within the workplace, or organising activities to demonstrate particular skills. The assessor's role is of key importance in observing the learner as they carry out tasks within the workplace in conjunction with discussions to ensure their work is consistently of a standard as required by the relevant awarding body. An assessor will also examine or observe pieces of work, activities or information collected by the learner to demonstrate competence.

Learning provider's role

Help learners and staff within your organisation to understand the assessment process

Help learners to understand how they collect evidence and match it to the occupational standards

Formally assess learner competence

Give constructive feedback to learners following assessment

Employer's role

Provide opportunities for the learner to demonstrate their competence in specific tasks

Help learners to collect a diverse range of evidence from their work

Sign statements confirming the learner's competence in specific activities





Supporting learners in their WBLP's

Work Based Learning Plan. Following the investment you have made in recruiting your learner, you will want to ensure they stay with you and complete their training programme. Occasionally some learners, particularly those who come straight from school, may change their mind with regard to their choice of career and learning plan after they have joined a company. We will work closely with you to ensure that learners are given adequate support and any potential problems are identified and addressed as early as possible.

Learning provider's role

Keep in regular touch with learners and yourselves

Encourage and motivate learners in their training programme

Show real interest in the skills learners are developing in the workplace

Help learners to understand the long-term benefits of training and qualifications

Identify any problems or concerns learners may have at an early stage

Share any identified concerns with you and agree suitable solutions should a learner want to change their training programme or job

Employer's role

Help learners to understand the long-term benefits of training and qualifications

Provide opportunities for learners to practice their skills

Give learners time at work to develop their portfolio

Encourage learners to attend and show real interest in their off-the-job training

Be aware of any problems or difficulties which may be facing learners

Share your concerns with us

Help learners to find suitable alternatives if they decide they are on the wrong training programme or in the wrong job

Ensuring equality of opportunity

We operate and promote a policy of equal opportunities throughout the whole of the work-based learning process. This is reflected in our recruitment practices, welcoming applications from persons regardless of sex, marital status, race, disability, colour, age, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnic origin. We aim to treat learners fairly and equally during their training programmes and ensure they know what to do if they have a complaint. We trust that your commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity will be the same as ours.

Learning provider's role

Provide equal opportunities throughout the work-based training process

Have a written equal opportunities policy which staff, learners and employers understand and are committed to

Advise you on equal opportunities issues and legislation

Explain to learners how they should treat other people

Make sure that learners know what to do if they feel they are being unfairly treated in the workplace

Act on any complaints received from learners

Employer's role

Comply with equal opportunities legislation

Demonstrate your commitment to equality of opportunity in the workplace through a clearly publicised statement

Ensure equality of opportunity in selection, recruitment and training activities

Ensure that learners are treated fairly and equally

Make sure that learners are not bullied, harassed or made to feel unwelcome in the workplace

Explain to learners what to do if they have a complaint about the way they are treated





Health and Safety

We have a positive commitment to promoting good health and safety practice in the workplace and know that this will be equally true for you. Learners placed with you, whether employed or non-employed status, are regarded as employees for the purposes of health and safety.

Learning provider's role

Using competent staff to verify you provide a healthy, safe and supportive learning environment

Advise on health and safety issues relating to learners

Provide a safe and healthy working environment for learners at all times during off-the-job training

Monitor health and safety practices on an ongoing basis

Provide health and safety training for learners to raise their awareness of risk

Check learner's understanding of health and safety risk awareness

Investigate any accidents involving learners within the workplace and agree preventative action

Employer's role

Ensure health, safety and welfare of learners and bring your policy statement to their attention

Comply with health and safety legislation

Inform the learner who is responsible for health and safety matters in the company

Provide initial and ongoing health and safety training in the workplace for learners

Provide necessary protective clothing

Report immediately any accidents concerning learners

Assess risks learners are exposed to and apply the general principles of prevention

Ensure learners are correctly supervised by a competent person

Maintaining standards

All work-based learning is subject to external inspection by Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), to be merged with Ofsted, the Government's body for maintaining standards. Inspectors look at the quality of learning in all occupational areas where learning/training is being provided in four general aspects:

- learner support
- equal opportunities
- management of training
- quality assurance

Inspectors typically collect much of their evidence through discussions with learners, learning providers and employers, therefore your views and comments will form an important part of the process.

Learning provider's role

To provide an annual self-assessment report and action plan

To prepare for inspection by the Government's Inspectorate once every four years

Work with inspectors during inspection

Employer's role

Provide us with feedback on the quality of our learning programmes

To take part in discussions with inspectors during inspection, as required

To allow inspectors to take part in discussions with learners during the inspection process





Further information

Thank you for taking the time to read this brief guide and we hope you have found it to be informative. Each year ITEC North East invites employers to contribute via Employer Forums to developing our services, you are invited to join your local forum at any time.

If you have any questions or would like any further information on any aspect, please do not hesitate to contact a Client Liaison Officer at the relevant address shown below.

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