

EMPLOYERS GUIDE TO WORK BASED LEARNING

(Funded Programmes)

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Introduction

If you are already providing or expressing interest in providing a work based learning, taking on a new learner or training one of your existing employees, we hope that this Guide will help you understand the services and support which we can provide and the role which you can play in the process.

Apprenticeships and Funded Programmes in

FURNITURE AND WOODWORKING

Machine Woodworking, Furniture (Furniture Making, Upholstery, Polishing & Finishing), Timber, Joinery, Saw Milling, Tooling Technology,

BUILDERS & TIMBER MERCHANTING

Management, Team Leading, Customer Service, Business Administration, Warehousing & Storage, Timber and Tiling Merchanting

Didac Limited is a specialist training company, offering tailored made courses in industry.

Didac Limited work with a number of organisations, including City & Guilds, PIABC, CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health), Machine Woodworking Association, The British Woodworking Federation, Builders Merchants Federation, Proskills and SFA – Skills Funding Agency (Post 16 Funding), who contribute towards the cost of training, and are also responsible for monitoring the quality of training programmes being delivered.

Didac also work very closely on projects with the Health & Safety Executive

A team of fully qualified and experienced staff, tailoring training programmes to suit both the Employer and Learner, carries out all training.

HOW CAN WORK-BASED TRAINING HELP YOUR BUSINESS?

We know that recruiting the right member of staff for your company and ensuring that they have the relevant skills and knowledge to do the job you require will be of paramount importance to you. We can help you in these activities through our work-based learning programmes, which will provide you with a number of key benefits:

- cost effective recruitment, with use of free Vacancy Matching Website operated by the National Apprenticeship Service
- development of a well-trained, well-motivated workforce
- help meet the costs of training (free for 16-18, subsidised for 19+)
- increased productivity through better trained staff
- improved company performance
- demonstrate your commitment to staff development

Work-based learning is also a good way of ensuring that your business complies with the 'Time Off for Study or Training' employment right.

WHAT IS WORK-BASED LEARNING?

Work-based learning is part of a national programme of government-funded provision to raise the skill levels of people - the employees of the future. It aims to develop an individual's knowledge and skills within the workplace environment and presents a real opportunity for people who want to continue their learning outside full-time further and higher education. It provides support for people (learners) to work towards the achievement of Qualifications. A high number of forward thinking employers are currently developing their employees in this way, including small employers who employ less than five staff.

WHAT ARE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS, APPRENTICESHIPS AND PROGRAMMES?

National Qualifications are designed around the skills people use at work and cover all types and levels of work. There are a number of levels within the system ranging from level one covering basic work activities, level five for senior management etc. Each qualification is made up of a number of units of competence, which set 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, co-ordinated with the Sector Skills Council (PROSKILLS, CFA etc). Each individual unit is assessed and credited and a qualification is awarded when all of the required units have been achieved. Assessment activities normally take place within the workplace by a qualified assessor.

Apprenticeships. Each year, people nationally choose a Apprenticeship. Where a learner is enrolled on an Intermediate Apprenticeship or an Advanced Apprenticeship programme they will be working towards the achievement of an Competence and Knowledge Qualification (which may be separate or combined), Functional Skills (where appropriate) and other training requirements defined for that particular occupation.



The Intermediate Apprenticeship enables learners to get basic skills to level 2, which can then lead to progression to the Advanced Apprenticeship. People who join the Advanced Apprenticeship will be developing skills as potential supervisors, technicians and managers to level 3 and are looking for a challenging and rewarding career.

The Intermediate Apprenticeship can last for up to two years but people can and often do complete more quickly.

For learners following an **Apprenticeship**, as part of their training programme learners will also be developing their Functional Skills. Functional Skills address the personal development of an individual and cover: maths, english and where appropriate ICT. They are delivered with the NVQ but are separately tested and certificated. Learners on **Apprenticeships** will also undertake the Technical Certificate which is the “taught element” of the programme.

Programmes. There is limited funded for some qualifications and programmes outside of Apprenticeships. Please contact Jon Gibson to discuss any requirements you may have.

Raising the Participation Age – School learners 16-18

An apprenticeship counts towards staying in-learning for those who are aged 16-18 but do not wish to stay in-learning at school

HOW WE WILL HELP YOU...

We will work with you to:

- identify suitable employees and work placement opportunities – Apprenticeships, using the Vacancy Service which is free.
- identify existing employees who may benefit from training
- plan and design training programmes 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 where necessary (Regular visit reports)
- assess learner competence in the workplace
- work with the national Awarding Bodies, such as City and Guilds, EDI, PIABC to award nationally recognised qualifications 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, which we play, and how this supports the role, which you can play in the work-based learning process.

RECRUITING AND SELECTING LEARNERS

The recruitment and selection process aims to attract and select learners who are best suited to the work and the training you can offer. Having discussed your particular needs we will match your requirements with the skills and experience of potential learners and help you shortlist those whom we feel would be most suited to the position you are offering. This will be in conjunction with your own recruitment activities. As the employer **the final decision regarding selection will be yours.**

Provider's role....

- produce informative promotional material to attract suitable potential learners
- link with career advisors, schools and other external organisations to attract as many suitable candidates as possible, including those who may be currently under-represented in your workforce
- use effective and fair selection methods
- refer suitable learners to you for interview
- advise you on selection methods and help with interviewing if required
- provide initial assessment tools
- use Apprenticeship Vacancy On-line tool to advertise your apprenticeship vacancies. This is a free service

Employer's role....

- advise us on the types of positions you are seeking to fill and the characteristics which potential learners will require
- interview a number of applicants and keep us informed on the outcomes of these
- take action to consider applicants from under-represented groups
- give applicants accurate information about the work which they will be doing and the training which you will provide
- treat all potential learners fairly and consistently during the selection process
- advise us of any existing employees whom you wish to train

ELIGIBILITY

The options below are open to all people. There are the categories of funding available.

1. 16 to 18 Group (Apprenticeships)

All learners between 16 and 18, are guaranteed funding to contribute towards the cost of their training.

2. 19 -23 Group (Apprenticeships)

Learner's over the age of 18, who are granted funding to contribute towards the cost of their training by the SFA at their discretion. This cannot be guaranteed and depends on the funds available at the time of application. There is an expectation from the funding body of employer contributions

3. 24+ Group (Apprenticeships)

Learner's over the age of 24, who are granted funding to contribute towards the cost of their training by the SFA at their discretion. This cannot be guaranteed and depends on the funds available at the time of application. There is an expectation from the funding body of employer contributions

FUNDING

All 16-18 school leavers are entitled to Government Funding through the SFA to contribute towards the cost of their training. These learner's, must aim to achieve a qualification in their chosen career.

The employer is responsible for the normal employment costs of the person undergoing training.

Where SFA funding only covers part of the training cost (19+), a monthly contribution per learner will be payable as agreed in the company agreement. Both parties will review this figure annually.

Employers must ensure that a contract of employment exists and that learners (Apprentices) receive at least the minimum wage for apprentices.

The new rate will apply to:

- apprentices under 19
- apprentices aged 19 and over, but in the first year of their apprenticeship

Other programmes. Didac will advise on an individual basis any training requirements you may have for learners who wish to take a formal qualification or unit of qualification, but not under an Apprenticeship route

- ***SFA funding in England only***
- ***Programmes are part funded by European Social Funding***



INDUCTING LEARNERS

Having got the right person you will want to ensure that they stay with you. One way of doing this is by providing a well-planned induction programme. Induction training will help learners settle quickly into your company by helping them understand the environment in which they are based and the job which they are doing. We will complement this by providing an induction to tell them about their training programme.

Provider's role.....

- provide induction training for learners on their training programme
- explain about work-based learning and the role of everyone
- advise you on workplace induction and initial training
- explain how qualifications are achieved
- explain to learners their rights and responsibilities
- to check that learners have understood the information which they have been given at induction
- provide learners with written information to support what they have been given during induction, to which they can refer to in the future
- ensure learners understand Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding requirements

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
- provide learners with basic information about the job which they will be doing
- provide the learner with a mentor if possible
- provide the learner with any necessary Personal Protective Equipment they may require

PLANNING AND DESIGNING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

To help you to get the best from your learner and to develop their skills and knowledge, we will jointly plan a training programme that meets both their needs and your needs as an employer. A individual learning plan will be developed for each learner which shows what training they will receive, both on- and off-the-job, to ensure that they achieve their qualification. The plan will also identify any additional support that they may require. We will obviously take into account their current knowledge, skills and experience when doing this. We will ensure that your staff are provided with whatever information they require to understand the learner's programme.

Provider's role.....

- to work with you to identify the individual's immediate training and development needs
- assess the learner's current skills, knowledge and qualifications
- identify any personal circumstances which may affect learning and training
- set out the training programme in a training plan for the learner and yourselves
- help you understand the training programme including the qualification requirements
- identify additional skills, flexibilities your business may require to remain competitive

Employer's role.....

- to help identify the individual's immediate training and development needs
- help us plan the training programme for the learner
- identify appropriate learning opportunities within the workplace which will help the learner develop and progress
- understand the learner's training programme including qualification requirements

DELIVERING TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Having planned the learner's programme we will work together to deliver the training that is required to develop the learner's skills and help them achieve their qualification.

The more learning opportunities that you can provide therefore, the greater range of skills that the learner is likely to acquire which will be of benefit to your company. You may also wish to consider giving the learner projects to undertake, or want them to attend formal training sessions in the workplace that will develop their skills and knowledge even further.

Didac staff will deliver all off-the job training, such as practical activities and underpinning knowledge (theory). We will agree when and where this will take place. In this way we can also ensure that the off-the-job training, which is being provided, is appropriate to what the learner is doing in the workplace and vice versa.

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 training sessions to support the skills that the learner is developing in the workplace, in order that they can achieve their qualification
- keep you informed of what the learner has covered during off-the-job training activities
- provide additional training outside the requirements to give "additional value for money"

Employer's role.....

- to help learner's develop their knowledge and skills by providing a wide range of learning and training opportunities
- allow learner's to attend off-the-job training sessions at the agreed times
- help learner's put into practice what they have learnt during off-the-job training sessions
- give learner's time in the workplace to complete any practical work set
- initiate a meeting with us if you have any concerns about any aspect of the training delivery
- consider training your own staff as work based trainers
- allow learners to use IT equipment for their e-portfolio and e-learning

REVIEWING LEARNER PROGRESS

To check that the learner is getting the most out of their programme it is important to monitor their progress at regular intervals. This will ensure that any additional training or support needs that are identified are properly addressed. We will fully involve the learner's supervisor/mentor or other appropriate person. This review process will be carried out a maximum of every 12 weeks. More frequent reviews can be taken if required.

Provider's role....

- organise a schedule of regular review meetings
- involve the learner and the workplace appointed person in the review
- find out and record the progress made by the learner
- identify additional training and support needs and amend the learning plan accordingly
- agree and record actions and targets between this and the next review
- make sure the learner and the workplace appointed person have a copy of the record of the 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
- advise on workplace training and assessment opportunities that may occur in the period to the next review
- advise on additional needs to meet business requirements

ASSESSING LEARNER COMPETENCE

To gain an qualification, the learner is required to collect evidence to demonstrate that they are competent 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 sorting out material, which occurs normally within the workplace or organising activities to demonstrate particular skills. The assessor will observe the learner carrying out tasks within the workplace, to make sure that their work is consistent and that the standard of work required can be reached over and over again. They will also examine pieces of work or information, which the learner has collected to demonstrate competence. The learner is responsible for obtaining any Witness Testimonies from staff in the workplace, confirming that they have undertaken or completed activities within the workplace.

Provider's role.....

- help learners and staff within your organisation understand the assessment process
- help learners understand how to 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 evidence of the work they have done and submit on e-portfolio system
- sign statements confirming the learner's competence in specific activities
- consider training your own staff as work based assessors

SUPPORTING LEARNERS IN THEIR WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMME

Following the investment that you have made in recruiting the learner, you will want to ensure that they stay with you and complete their programme. Occasionally some learner's, particularly those that come straight from school, will change their mind regarding their choice of career and their programme, after they have joined a company. We will work closely with you to ensure that learners are given proper support and that any potential problems are identified and addressed as early as possible.

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 which learners are developing in the workplace
- help learners to understand the long-term benefits of training and qualifications
- identify any problems or concerns which learners may have at an early stage
- share any identified concerns with you and agree suitable solutions where learners want to change their training programme or job
- provide Information, Advice and Guidance at start and end of programmes

Employer's role.....

- help learners to understand the long-term benefits of training and qualifications
- provide opportunities for learners to practice their skills
- 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 that they are on the wrong programme or doing the wrong job

ENSURING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY WITHIN THE TRAINING PROCESS

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 where we welcome applications from all 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 that 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.

Provider's role.....

- promote equal opportunities throughout the work-based learning 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
- monitor employer employment pattern

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 and 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 of you.

Provider's role.....

- using competent staff verify that you can provide a healthy, safe and supportive learning environment
- assist you on questions of health and safety requirements and application to individual learners
- provide a safe and healthy working environment for learners at all times
- monitor health and safety practices on an ongoing basis
- provide health and safety training for learners to raise their awareness of risk
- check learners understanding of health and safety risk awareness
- investigate any accidents involving learners within the workplace and agree preventative action

Employer's role.....

- ensure the health, safety and welfare of learners and bring your policy statement to their attention
- comply with health and safety legislation
- inform the learner about who is responsible for health and safety matters within the company
- provide initial and ongoing health and safety training in the workplace for learners
- provide necessary protective clothing
- report any accidents concerning learners immediately to us
- assess the risks to which learners are exposed at work and apply the general principles of prevention
- introduce and maintain appropriate measures to eliminate or control risks to the lowest reasonable practicable level
- ensure learners are properly supervised by a competent person
- ensure that learners are covered under public and employer's liability insurance

MAINTAINING STANDARDS

All work-based learning is subject to external inspection by the government's body for maintaining standards (OFSTED). Inspections look at the quality of training in all occupational areas where training is being provided, and at leadership and management, quality assurance and equal opportunities. Inspectors typically collect much of their evidence through discussions with learners, training providers and employers, and therefore your views and comments will form an important part of the process. Didac are also inspected by Awarding Organisations, Proskills and Matrix

Provider's role....

- to produce an annual self-assessment report and action plan to improve our provision
- to prepare for inspection by the Government's Inspectorate
- work with Inspectors during inspection
- provide learners and employers with questionnaires to provide feedback on our training programmes
- take part in the "Peer Review" process with other providers, looking at systems, processes and delivery
- provide feedback to third parties

Employer's role....

- provide us with feedback on the quality of our training programmes
- to take part in discussions with Inspectors during inspections as required
- to allow Inspectors to take part in discussions with learners during the inspection process

ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS REPORTING

Employers will normally have their own rules about the certification of sickness but Didac MUST be advised where learners are absent from work due to sickness or an accident.

All accidents, Didac MUST be notified immediately. Where a learner is absent from work for three days or more as a result of an accident, this must be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR.

TERMINATION

Where it is necessary to terminate a learner's employment, for whatever reason. It is important that Didac is contacted so that we can meet our responsibilities by placing the learner, if appropriate in alternative employment.

CANCELLATION OF VISITS

If holidays to be taken by the learner coincides with a planned visit by a trainer/assessor, their employer will notify Didac at least two weeks in advance of the first day of the holiday.

In the event of learner being absent from their employer, for any reason other than holiday, which coincides with a planned visit by a trainer/assessor, then the employer shall notify Didac to postpone and re-arrange a new date. If the employer fails to notify Didac within a reasonable period (no less than 24 hours) then Didac is entitled to make a cancellation charge.

FAQ's

Can a learner on a Didac funded programme attend another provider / course?

No. If the Didac learner is following an SFA/EFA programme, this learner can only be on one funded programme at a time. They can attend another provider / course as long as it is not a funded programme. Otherwise, this will be viewed as double funding

What is the minimum hours a learner must work on an apprenticeship?

30 hours minimum per week

When an apprentice completes, can they do another apprenticeship at the same level?

Yes, providing it is documented on the pre-assessment the reason for this. This could be as a result of the employer changing the learners job role, work requirements etc. This should be only for a maximum of 2 apprenticeships.

Does an apprentice need a contract with their employer?

YES. There must be a contract between apprentice and employer

Under what circumstances can an apprentice be dismissed?

Apprentices engaged under apprenticeship agreements can be dismissed in the same way as ordinary employees, and the normal principles for breach of contract and unfair dismissal claims etc. apply.

However, an employer's right of dismissal in relation to apprentices employed under a contract of apprenticeship is limited and the apprentice is afforded greater protection:

...If the employer terminates the agreement early, thereby depriving the apprentice of the training, the apprentice is entitled to claim damages for wrongful dismissal for the remainder of the fixed-term and also damages for future loss of earnings and prospects as a qualified person. The measure of damages can therefore be significant.

...It is only in the most serious cases of misconduct that an apprentice can be fairly dismissed. Effectively the conduct of the apprentice must be such that it renders them impossible to teach. This grounds for gross misconduct as applied to ordinary employees will not be sufficient.

...An apprentice should not be made redundant, save in cases of workplace closure. Even a genuine redundancy situation, such as a downturn in work, would not entitle the employer to dismiss the apprentice early, regardless of length of service.

Any dismissal will be subject always, of course, to following a fair dismissal procedure.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND USEFUL CONTACTS

Thank you for taking time to read this brief Guide, which we hope that you have found informative. If you have any questions or would like any further information on any aspect please do not hesitate to contact us at the address shown on the front page or individual contact below.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Didac Limited Tel: 0800 773 4230 Fax: 0117 9150009 Email: info@didac.co.uk

Managing Director - Jon Gibson - Mobile 07798 606880

Administration and Apprenticeship Vacancies - 0800 773 4230

Health & Safety and Safeguarding – Tracy Gibson / Elaine Stanley - 0800 773 4230