

# Training and development policy

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## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 We recognise that our employees are key to achieving our objectives and business plans and are committed to the personal and professional development of all employees and to helping them achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 We will ensure that all newly acquired skills and knowledge are put to good use. Employees are encouraged to increase their technical knowledge, skill and competence and to focus on personal growth, enabling them to progress in their own area or cross-functionally.
- 1.3 Employee development is any learning opportunity or activity which:
  - improves the ability of employees individually or collectively to perform their professional duties
  - develops their appreciation of our goals
  - enables them to develop new skills for current or future roles
  - is necessary for compliance with any statute, regulation or rule
- 1.4 We will provide appropriate training for employees providing it is both relevant to them and the business. Such training may be provided as self-learning, on-the-job, seminars, courses, either at college or elsewhere. We may identify relevant courses, conferences and seminars and, wherever possible, employees will be expected to make every effort to attend them. It is a condition of employment that employees participate in any training we deem necessary for them to reach the required levels of attained standards.
- 1.5 We are committed to the development of positive policies to promote equal opportunity in employment regardless of any protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race (including nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or philosophical belief, sex or sexual orientation). This principle applies equally to our training and development activities.
- 1.6 We will ensure that this is implemented through:
  - ensuring promotion and transfer criteria are justifiable
  - ensuring assessment criteria are clear and unbiased
  - ensuring managers conducting performance reviews, salary reviews and bonus reviews are aware of their obligations to carry these out fairly and consistently in line with our equal opportunity policy
- 1.7 This policy is not contractual but indicates the way in which we wish to manage our training and development activities.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees, including apprentices and those on fixed-term contracts.

## 3 Responsibilities

### 3.1 Management responsibilities

- 3.1.1 The primary responsibility for the planning and implementation of cost-effective training and development lies with our managers who will act in consultation with the Directors.
- 3.1.2 A range of development methods will be used to meet these needs: this may include (but is not limited to) formal training courses, seminars, webinars, e-learning, presentations, conferences, secondments, training for professional qualifications, on the job training, coaching and mentoring, background reading and project work.
- 3.1.3 Managers are expected to ensure that all staff for whom they are responsible are properly trained and will identify any training and development that would enhance their competence. This may be identified at the end of probation reviews, at any subsequent performance reviews or discussions, and then form part of the performance development review process.
- 3.1.4 As well as identifying current needs, longer term needs will be considered by providing employees with the opportunity to participate in developmental activities, if these are relevant both to them and the business and will prepare them for future roles within our business. This will form part of our succession planning and will be a means of identifying those who are available and qualified to move into vacant posts in the event of resignation, promotion, retirement, etc, thus ensuring our future management needs are met.
- 3.1.5 We will:
- foster a culture of improvement, coaching and excellence
  - motivate employees, thus improving individual/organisational performance
  - provide the opportunities for career and personal growth
  - attract and retain a supply of high quality management
  - recognise employee development as an on-going process.

### 3.2 Individual responsibilities

- 3.2.1 We encourage all employees to take responsibility for their own professional/career training and development needs. An employee who identifies a need for training or development should discuss this with their manager to agree how the need should be met.
- 3.2.2 Prior to any staff development activity commencing, the desired objectives and outcomes of the training and development should be agreed. This can be documented on the performance review documentation.

- 3.2.3 Before any training is booked the employee must ensure that the date(s) do not conflict with any other employees' holidays, absences or other activities that might cause operational difficulties and therefore no booking must be confirmed until it has been agreed and signed off by a Director.

## 4 Induction

- 4.1 As part of the induction process, new employees will be provided with information on our business, its work, structure, the people who work here, health and safety rules, basic working practices, as well as our policies and procedures and those specific to the new role.
- 4.2 It is each manager's responsibility to ensure that new employees are provided with proper induction training, ongoing monitoring and coaching during their probationary period, and that the end of probation performance review is undertaken before the end of the probationary period to enable a timely decision to be made regarding confirmation in post.
- 4.3 All new employees, and other workers on our premises such as agency temps, work experience students, contractors and volunteers, will be informed of our procedures for fire safety, first aid and any workplace hazards.

## 5 Performance review process

- 5.1 All employees are appointed on an initial probationary period, detailed in written statement of terms and conditions of employment. The purpose of this period is to monitor their performance and progress during the early stages of their career with us and to ensure that any training needs are identified and met quickly.
- 5.2 A performance review, involving a formal discussion with each employee's manager, will take place shortly before the end of the probationary period, and then annually. This process aims to guide performance and to ensure that everyone's efforts are clearly focused on the achievement of our business aims and objectives, as well as individual ones. As this is very much a two-way process, employees may conduct a self-assessment on their own performance which will assist them in discussions with their manager.
- 5.3 During the review meeting, the employee's performance will be discussed in a constructive way to:
- agree / clarify the job content
  - learn from tasks previously performed
  - use this knowledge to enhance future contribution
  - identify any training and development needs
  - identify any obstacles to good performance
  - set individual targets/objectives.

5.4 These discussions are intended to help employees to fulfil their potential, for their own benefit as well as that of the business, and to result in a personal training and development plan that reflects both the employee's wishes and aspirations as well as the needs of the business.

5.5 In the unlikely event of an employee not agreeing the conclusions and outcomes of the performance review, this can be raised with your manager's manager.

## 6 Career development

6.1 Job specific training will be given to you on joining us but changes in the way we work, or progression within our business, may result in the identification of further training requirements to supplement or update your existing skills and knowledge.

6.2 We are fully committed to providing necessary and relevant training and development opportunities to all employees to ensure that our strategic objectives can be achieved. Note that we regard training as a serious activity which is an integral part of our activities - you should therefore make every attempt to attend any training organised for you.

## 7 'On the job' training

7.1 Sometimes the most relevant form of training will be 'on the job' training. This should be planned in the same way as any other learning method. This is to ensure a systematic consideration of the skills required and the proper delivery and evaluation of this.

7.2 Where an employee's job involves the operation of tools, machinery or equipment, specific on-the-job training will be provided by the immediate supervisor. It is the responsibility of the employee's manager to ensure that this is carried out. This training will also be given if an employee changes jobs. If new tools, machinery or equipment are purchased, further training is likely to become necessary. If so, this will be arranged before work using the new tools, machinery or equipment commences.

## 8 Health and safety training

8.1 It is a requirement of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA) that we provide adequate training to our employees and workers to enable them to carry out their duties without jeopardising either their health and safety, or that of their colleagues and visitors. Other, more specific legislation and regulations may necessitate specific training as appropriate (eg that which relates to the use of machinery, lifting and handling activities, handling hazardous substances, noise, VDU usage and the wearing of personal protective equipment).

8.2 The employee's manager provides or advises on training in all areas of health and safety. Managers should ensure that statutory requirements applying to their teams are met and that health and safety training is included in the training plan, and monitored and evaluated.

- 8.3 For non-statutory training, a risk assessment will be used to determine whether any training is necessary to carry out the job safely. The specific needs of the individual will also be considered.

## 9 Management training

- 9.1 We recognise the importance of good people management and will seek to ensure that all of those with line management responsibilities are trained in implementing our policies; in effective recruitment; equal opportunity awareness; handling grievances and disciplinary issues; harassment and bullying; and managing absence. In addition, personal skills training in time management, delegation, coaching and mentoring may be delivered where appropriate.

## 10 Equal opportunity training

- 10.1 All employees, irrespective of their seniority, will be given guidance and instruction, through our induction and other training as to their responsibility and role in promoting equality of opportunity and not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues or job applicants, nor encouraging or tolerating other employees to do so.

## 11 IT training

- 11.1 The employee's manager is responsible for ensuring that all those who use computers or VDU equipment are properly trained to use these, and that the appropriate workplace assessments are undertaken.
- 11.2 We recognise that changes in technology are ongoing, and will ensure that training on new or upgraded software will be organised as necessary. Managers are responsible for ensuring that those who use computers or VDU equipment are properly trained and are fully aware of the requirement to comply with our IT and data protection policies.

## 12 Further education and training

- 12.1 We may offer financial support to employees who believe that further education may be beneficial or necessary for their professional development. This should be discussed with the employee's manager who will then agree any plans and advise whether support is available.
- 12.2 If agreed, we may cover the cost of college fees, examination/test fees, seminar or other teaching costs, together with any text books and other items required, plus reasonable travelling, subsistence and other appropriate expenses. Any text books or other items purchased will remain our property and may be used by other employees if required.

- 12.3 Where financial support is authorised for training that is more focussed on building overall skills and knowledge rather than being specific to the employee's role, the employee may be required to agree to refund all or some of the costs of this training on termination of employment (see below).
- 12.4 Employees aged 16 or 17 who have not attained the qualifications listed below have the right to reasonable paid time off work to study or undertake training which will lead to a relevant qualification. This applies to those who have not achieved the following:
- either 5 GCSEs at Grades A\*-C or
  - a National Vocational Qualification at Level 2 or
  - a General National Vocational Qualification at Intermediate Level or
  - a BTEC First Certificate or Diploma or
  - a City & Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education at Intermediate Level.

## 13 Working hours

- 13.1 Whilst most training will take place during normal working hours, we will aim to agree individual flexible working patterns for any employee who is engaged in a development opportunity outside of work, for instance further or higher education.
- 13.2 Up to a maximum of two days' paid study leave may be agreed per annum, on the basis of one day per exam. Study leave may also be authorised if we have not supported any privately funded training and each case will be agreed on a discretionary basis.
- 13.3 We reserve the right to request an employee who fails any examination to resit the examination in their own time and at their own expense.
- 13.4 Employees who are currently studying for a course approved by us and which is relevant to their role or have completed a qualification will normally be authorised paid time off to take exams, attend essential residential courses and to attend their graduation. Paid time off for study leave is discretionary and is subject to agreement with your manager.

## 14 Training support

- 14.1 We are fully committed to the career development of all our employees and are therefore willing to assist with the costs associated with appropriate personal study and training. Expenses incurred attending training courses, seminars etc during normal working hours will be dealt with under our normal expense policy and procedures.

- 14.2 We will consider financial support for costs associated with training for proficiency at work and/or career development. Subject to approval of the request in principle, the Directors will then normally approve the following expenditure in relation to the course: course fees, travelling expenses where appropriate, course materials such as books or essential equipment, (which shall remain company property), examination fees, professional memberships etc. In addition, paid or unpaid study leave of a specified duration may be authorised for certain professional qualifications.
- 14.3 We will normally fund 100% of the fees for tuition, provided that:
- the course is relevant to the company
  - a Director approves it
  - the employee remains in our employment for 24 months after the completion of the course.
- 14.4 We will pay the agreed cost of the course fees and, where applicable, the fees for a first sitting of any exams; employees will be required to pay for any exam re-sits themselves. If they fail their exams and choose not to re-take them, they may be required to repay 100% of the course fees and exam fees paid on their behalf.
- 14.5 All half/full day release is to be agreed with the employee's line manager and approved by the relevant Director.
- 14.6 Two days' study leave will be given for each examination subject. In addition, paid time off will be given to sit the exams.
- 14.7 Such assistance will however normally only be offered to those employees who are prepared to commit to remain in our employment. Any such training expenditure is therefore normally dependent on the employee agreeing to sign a repayment agreement: should they leave for any reason other than redundancy or sickness within 24 months of completing the course, or fail to maintain a minimum of 80% attendance level at the course, they may be required to repay the following proportion of the total sums paid on their behalf.
- 14.8 Repayment may be phased as follows:
- On leaving during the course – 100%
  - Failure to complete the course, without a good reason – 100%
  - On leaving within 6 months of the completion of the course - 100%
  - On leaving within 7-12 months of the completion of the course - 50%
  - On leaving within 13-18 months of the completion of the course – 25%
  - Thereafter, no repayment required.
- 14.9 Should any reclaim of fees be necessary, we reserve the right to deduct any amounts due under this agreement from any salary or payments due on leaving or to make suitable arrangements with the employee to have the costs repaid.

## 15 Training budget

- 15.1 We aim to allocate the appropriate resources to support training and development activities. All training and development expenditure will be authorised a Director.

## 16 Monitoring, evaluation and feedback

- 16.1 We will monitor and evaluate all training activities attended by our employees.
- 16.2 Following the completion of a training or development activity, the employee will be asked for feedback on the positive and negative points of the training so we can assess whether the training was successful and relevant and if it might benefit other employees. This will also be reviewed during the performance review process.

## 17 Related policies and documents

- Equal opportunity policy

The above list is not exhaustive.

## 18 Further information

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to a manager in the first instance.

## 19 Policy owner

This policy is owned and maintained by the Directors.

## 20 Policy review date

Date last reviewed: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022