



Leading learning and skills

# Learning and Development Policy and Guidance

5 March 2007

## Aims

This Policy and Guidance is for managers and employees. The LSC provides opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills of its workforce enabling everyone to maximise their potential and contribution.

The Learning and Development Policy sets out the framework and the Guidance on the Policy is structured in the sections shown on the following pages:

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## **Introduction**

- 1 The mission of the Learning and Skills Council is to raise participation and attainment through high quality education and training that puts the learner first. The LSC's vision is that, by 2010, young people and adults in England will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world.
- 2 Achieving this goal requires the LSC to build a new learning culture in this country and promote lifelong learning for all. It is essential that the LSC adopts the same approach to learning and development that it aims to encourage in other organisations. Its policies and practices therefore aim to demonstrate the principles of lifelong learning and promote the LSC as an exemplar in its people development plans and processes.
- 3 To be a dynamic and outward-facing organisation capable of meeting its challenging strategic objectives, the LSC will provide opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies of its workforce, enabling everyone to maximise their potential and contribution. The Policy and Guidance below provides the framework for achieving this mission.

## **Policy statement**

- 4 The LSC is committed to linking its learning and development activity to corporate strategy, business objectives and the competency framework to improve the organisation's performance. Managers have a responsibility to identify and communicate clear priorities that link the development of their people to the aims and objectives of the LSC at corporate, regional, team and individual level. Decisions to fund learning and development will be made in the context of these business priorities. The LSC will actively encourage individuals to develop their skills and knowledge to achieve the LSC's objectives. These principles are central to the Investors in People Standard, to which the LSC is committed.
- 5 Individuals have a responsibility to be proactive in their learning and development and to pursue their career and continuing professional development, where this benefits the organisation. Managers at all levels have a responsibility to fully support their people in work-related learning and development activities.
- 6 Individuals and managers have a responsibility to take advantage of the full range of learning opportunities that exist, using informal and unplanned activities that occur on a day-to-day basis as opportunities for learning as well as structured activities such as mentoring, secondments, coaching, shadowing and off-the-job training.
- 7 The LSC will remove barriers to learning and development, ensuring all individuals have equality of access to relevant learning and development opportunities. Where appropriate, the LSC will make use of the positive action provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. This is consistent with the LSC's equality and diversity policy.
- 8 All learning and development activity will be evaluated and measured against business objectives and the competency framework, so learning is effectively transferred to improve performance in the workplace, maximising quality and return on investment.

## Education Policy

- 9 We will ensure all LSC employees are trained and supported (by their line manager) to gain Level 2 equivalent skills by 2010, and where appropriate Level 3 and above (including funding where appropriate)\*. We will ensure all those people joining the LSC have at least a first full level 2 qualification within three years of joining. The LSC will remove barriers to education and training ensuring all individuals have equality of access to relevant learning and development opportunities
- 10 The LSC will actively encourage individuals to develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities to achieve the necessary relevant qualifications aligned to business objectives for their job role and career development. Where practical, training and development will be made available at a time that meets the needs of employees' work patterns. These principles are central to the Investors in People Standard, to which the LSC is committed
- 11 The LSC will provide training, learning and development initiatives to support the education of all employees including corporate, local and accredited activities, evaluated against business objectives and the competency framework. All LSC employees will have Personal Development Reviews with their line managers to identify and plan learning and development activities, reviewed twice yearly.
- 12 The LSC will evaluate the education activity and full/partial funding made available according to whether it is essential or desirable to the individual's job role.
- 13 If you are interested in obtaining a formal qualification or undertaking other development, please speak to your line manager in the first instance.

*\* to achieve a level 2 qualification, the LSC will cover all qualification costs and provide study time in line with any Essential activity (outlined in annex A). For level 3 qualifications and above, the LSC will contribute towards qualification costs and provide study time in line with current policy, and whether activity is agreed as Essential or Desirable (outlined in annex A).*

## The Role of the individual

- 14 Every individual has a responsibility to:
  - actively identify their learning and development needs as part of the performance management process, including keeping up to date with information specific to their role.
  - take advantage of a variety of opportunities for learning and development, both formal (typically off-the-job training) and informal (such as on-the-job coaching and other activities) and make use of available learning materials.
  - provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of learning activities to the appropriate people (e.g. their manager, the provider, HR Advice Centre.)
  - with their manager identify objectives before and review them after a learning and development activity.
  - with their manager agree expectations around commitment levels, attendance and any other issues (for example expenses).
  - identify opportunities to apply learning within their job to continually improve their performance.

## **The Role of the manager**

- 15 Managers play a crucial role in the development of their people maximising individual motivation and performance. Managers have a responsibility to:
- deliver an appropriate induction for all new starters, returners and job movers meeting the individual's needs.
  - identify the development needs of their people as an integral part of performance management, by agreeing and reviewing challenging personal objectives.
  - provide equal access for all individuals to appropriate opportunities to learn and develop making available the necessary resources for agreed learning and development activities.
  - help individuals identify and take advantage of informal learning and development opportunities (e.g. by coaching them in work activities and encouraging the use of learning materials wherever appropriate – see below) as well as more formal opportunities (such as off-the-job training courses).
  - discuss and agree learning objectives before and review outcomes after a learning activity maximising the transfer of learning to an individual's job performance.
  - set expectations around commitment levels, attendance and any other issues (for example expenses).
  - measure the impact of learning on performance against business objectives and the competency framework, and provide constructive feedback to further develop skills and identify additional areas for development.

## **The Role of the HR Advice Centre**

- 16 The HR Advice Centre (HRAC) is the first point of contact for individuals and line managers who have queries about learning and development. The HR Advice Centre also provides information about available learning and development opportunities.

## **The Role of the Learning and Development team**

- 17 The Learning and Development Team (including Regional Learning and Development Managers) develops and implements, in partnership with managers across the organisation, a range of strategies and interventions designed to meet learning and development priorities and create a culture of lifelong learning.

- 18 The key functions of the team are:

- developing learning and development policy and strategy.
- identifying priority development needs within the LSC (both from corporate objectives and through local training plans).
- developing learning and development programmes, according to identified needs
- evaluating learning and development programmes.
- setting up, managing and evaluating corporate contracts with preferred suppliers.
- providing specialist advice and guidance on referral from the HR Advice Centre.

## **The Role of senior managers**

- 19 Regional Directors (RDs), National Directors (NDs) and their senior teams have a responsibility to:

- demonstrate their commitment to improving the performance of their people by setting objectives to support peoples' development and encouraging others to support their own and others' development.
- demonstrate a commitment to their own learning and development by undertaking continuing professional development.
- deliver learning and development strategies linked to the business planning process.
- agree and communicate the strategic learning and development priorities to their people, enabling them to prioritise learning and development needs within their teams.
- evaluate learning and development activities.
- agree, in conjunction with the LSC, the learning and development needs of Council members and their alignment with the overall learning and development priorities
- decide, when there are competing demands on the learning and development budget, the activities that are delivered according to strategic and / or operational needs.

### **Priorities and budget implications**

- 20 Every region and National Office Group has a devolved learning and development budget. The Learning and Development Team holds a central budget to develop corporate solutions to priority learning and development needs (see the section on the role of the Learning and Development Team).
- 21 Every region and National Office Group is responsible for making cost effective use of their budget. They are responsible for agreeing/deciding with their managers the learning and development priorities in line with the business plan. The cost of any development activity organised locally will be met from the local budget.

### **Identifying learning and development needs**

- 22 Job related development needs are primarily identified as part of the Performance Management process. At the beginning of the operational year, the manager and individual agree his/her (suitably challenging) personal objectives. Both take into consideration the knowledge and skills required to meet those objectives, and if development needs are agreed, appropriate activities and actions identified.
- 23 The resulting development plan for the individual (see the Performance Management Guide - Development Planning section - in Ask HR) builds into team / regional development plans. Development plans should be reviewed regularly, to ensure they reflect current development needs.
- 24 In considering learning and development needs, managers and individuals should look primarily at the immediate demands of the individual's role, and then at broader development needs. For example:
  - Personal effectiveness and behaviour in relation to the competencies.
  - Career development for those experienced in their current role to maximise potential or development for more challenging roles

### **Team/Regional/National Office Group development plans**

- 25 Team leaders and senior managers prepare a development plan that identifies development needs across their area of responsibility. These plans link to and support key business objectives and combine the needs of the individuals, teams, regions or National

Office Groups, as appropriate. The Learning and Development team collates information from all plans and identifies the needs for national and regional activities/programmes. Line managers take responsibility for meeting one-off, individual development needs.

## **Learning priorities and measurement criteria**

- 26 To effectively measure the success and evaluate any learning and development activity it is necessary for the individual and manager to discuss and agree specific learning priorities against business objectives and competency levels. These will enable the identification of the most effective and appropriate learning intervention, how the learning can be transferred to the workplace and the manager's support.
- 27 The individual and manager should agree the potential changes the activity will make to the individual's job performance, in terms of one or more of the following criteria:
- improvement/changes in levels of competencies
  - achieving or exceeding job objectives
  - quantity (how many or how much)
  - quality (to what standard)
  - time (by when)
  - cost (how much)
  - frequency (how often).

## **Selecting the Learning Method**

- 28 Everyone can access the full range of potential learning and development options by consulting the Learning and Development e-brochure and their Learning and Development Manager. The precise nature of the learning need will partly determine the most appropriate activity. Other factors that could influence the choice include the cost, the learning preferences and personal circumstances of the learner and the availability of different options.
- 29 As well as considering the 'traditional' learning option of attending a course, managers are encouraged to think creatively about other learning methods available and choose the most appropriate approach in the circumstances. Options include:
- on-the-job development (e.g. mentoring, secondments, coaching an individual through a new task or project, or shadowing a colleague).
  - open/flexible learning.
  - e-learning
  - attending conferences or networking events
  - reading books and articles
  - meeting others with similar/different job roles.
- 30 If a programme, course of training or education is proposed as a way of meeting a development need, managers should be satisfied that:
- it is the most effective way of meeting the identified need.
  - there is a clear link to business objectives and learning & development priorities.
  - the appropriate competency and levels are being addressed.

- the individual's job performance will be enhanced and in the case of longer courses, the individual is likely to cope with the commitment involved.
- 31 Managers then decide if the programme, course of training or education is essential or desirable to assess the level of priority and determine if funding is available – See Annex A.

## **Information and learning materials**

- 32 Every region has information and learning materials.
- 33 The Learning and Development team has implemented a strategy for e-learning, delivered via Net G e-learning.
- 34 In National Office there is a national resource known as the Knowledge Centre. The Knowledge Centre allows individuals to undertake learning activities in a dedicated area with equipment, learning materials and support provided. Individuals are able to borrow a range of learning materials (e.g. CD ROMs, books, videos, audio tapes, workbooks etc.) for their private study. Materials and services offered by the National Knowledge Centre are available to all staff. Where applicable, managers and individuals should consider e-learning and the Knowledge Centre when considering options.

## **Agreeing support for Learning and Development activities**

- 35 Managers and individuals should also agree the level of support needed during and after the learning.
- 36 Some forms of learning and development require a significant level of support. For example, the commitment of a formal course of education is likely to entail examinations and substantial amounts of study. Managers have the discretion to allow some time off for studying – see Annex A.
- 37 Less formal learning and development also requires support. If, for example, the manager and individual have jointly identified on-the-job coaching as the most effective method of meeting a development need, time should be set aside to manage the coaching process effectively. Similarly, with open or flexible learning, individuals may need some time away from their work to undertake the learning. Any time allowed for flexible learning is at the discretion of the manager, although managers should take into consideration the time that equivalent off-the-job learning might have taken.
- 38 If an off-the-job course of training or education is considered appropriate, managers should identify whether it is essential or desirable - see Annex A. This will help to determine its level of priority and the support that can be provided. In summary:
- The cost of essential activities is met in full by the LSC, as set out in Annex A. Time off with pay for course attendance and some study time, will also be allowed. These activities are likely to be of a high operational priority.
  - Desirable activities are a lesser priority, although still relevant to an individual's current role. They can receive financial support from the LSC, but remain subject to budget availability. However, time off with pay to undertake core activities will normally be subject to an annual limit.

- 39 In the case of desirable activities where the content of a course is considered only partially relevant to the individual's role, managers can agree to a joint-funding arrangement. As a guide, if the content of a course is assessed as less than 20% relevant to business objectives, it would not usually attract any support from the LSC. If 80% or more of the course content is judged as relevant, it is considered for full LSC funding. The individual's contribution to the cost could, therefore, range from approximately 20% to 80% of the total cost. If a joint-funding arrangement is agreed, it is the individual's responsibility, with the support of the manager, to make necessary invoicing arrangements with the provider to split the cost. The facility to deduct the individual's contribution from their pay is not currently available.

### **Non-Completion of an Agreed Learning Activity**

- 40 As learning and development budgets are limited, the LSC is committed to achieving value for money and public funds are used as effectively as possible. There is provision, in the circumstances outlined below, to require individuals to repay the cost of learning and development.
- 41 If an individual fails to complete an agreed programme, activity, course of training or education, or if they leave or terminate their employment with the LSC before the course is completed, managers will use their discretion to recover the direct costs already incurred. See Annex B for the procedure to be followed.
- 42 These cost recovery arrangements can be avoided in most cases if the line manager plays an active part in the individual's development and in the pre-course briefing process in particular:
- Discussing and agreeing precise objectives of the development or learning need and identifying the most effective and appropriate activity to meet those objectives. In many cases, a lengthy syllabus-based programme of study may not be the most cost-effective development option.
  - Managers not making assumptions about an individual's circumstances or needs. Discussing objectives, aspirations and options will help make the most appropriate choice of learning and development activity and avoid problems or non-completion of courses
  - Discussing the measure of success, evaluating progress, the necessary support and opportunities for reinforcing the learning in the workplace. These ensure any problems or issues are identified and support provided.
  - Informing the individual of the implications of not completing the course, or of resigning before they have completed.

### **Post-learning reviews**

- 43 Within a week of completing a learning activity and again after three months, managers and individuals jointly review and evaluate the benefits against the agreed objectives and plan how the learning will be put into practice. To maximise the benefits, the manager plays a key role in identifying opportunities to apply the new learning in the workplace, and providing feedback to the individual on their performance. This demonstrates the Investors in People best practice. (See the Learning and Development form under the Policy and Forms area of the Learning and Development section of Ask HR).

## **Evaluating the effectiveness of learning activity**

- 44 The reviews form part of the Performance Management process, Personal Development Plan and day-to-day discussions. (See the Learning and Development form under the Policy and Forms area of the Learning and Development section of Ask HR).

## **Professional Memberships**

- 45 The LSC promotes continuing professional development (CPD), ensuring its people's knowledge and skills are kept up to date.
- 46 Where a professional development route leading to a qualification is agreed as the most appropriate option, financial support and time off will be allowed in line with Annex A, and subject to budgetary constraints.
- 47 Professional development may also involve membership of a relevant professional body. The LSC provides financial support to individuals covering the costs of initial registration (if needed) and ongoing annual subscriptions, provided the manager considers the membership is a requirement of the job. (Ask HR – Learning and Development – Policies and Forms – Professional Subscriptions Form).
- 48 Certain professional bodies require members to undertake a prescribed number of days of CPD each year to maintain their professional status. Any CPD activities form part of the individual's Development Plan. Individuals and managers need to know if any such requirements for development apply and if these are linked to essential or desirable learning activities, as outlined in Annex A. Where it is agreed that their membership must be maintained, the CPD requirements should be met within the overall framework of this guidance.

## Annex A – Essential / Desirable learning activities

Activity	Definition	Funding arrangements	Time off
ESSENTIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High priority, compulsory or essential training, education or qualifications etc.</li> <li>• A necessity for performing a role, or where a regulatory requirement applies, e.g. audit training for internal auditors</li> <li>• Key job-specific skills training (such as CODA for finance people)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LSC pays all direct costs for essential activities, i.e.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Course fees</li> <li>○ Registration / membership fees (where applicable)</li> <li>○ Examination fees (including exam re-takes where this is considered justifiable);</li> <li>○ The cost of essential books that cannot be borrowed *</li> <li>○ Travel and subsistence costs associated with attending the course, funded from local T&amp;S (in line with the Finance Guide).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>* Any books purchased remain the property of the LSC and should be returned via HR on completion of the course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time off with pay will be given for mandatory activities to cover all course attendance and examinations.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, and at the discretion of the manager, time off for related study may also be allowed. This is usually no more than 10 days in any year. This covers revision for exams, preparation of assignments or final dissertation etc.</li> </ul> <p style="color: red;">For staff undertaking the accreditation route of Introduction to Management or Proactive, see this link</p>
DESIRABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium/low priority training, qualifications or development relevant, but not essential, to the role, or where no regulatory requirement exists, e.g. CIPD qualifications for HR staff.</li> <li>• Training could be developmental for the individual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment of some or all of the costs of desirable activities is subject to budget availability. The LSC only will meet a proportion of the cost if the content is judged to be not entirely relevant to current business objectives. (See paragraph headed 'Agreeing support for learning and development activities').</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 10 days off with pay in any one year is normally allowed, although this can be varied at the discretion of management and in accordance with operational needs. This covers course attendance, examinations and related study / revision time.</li> </ul>

## **Annex B – Cost Recovery Procedure**

- 49 Individuals will be required to sign an agreement letter (see Annex C) before starting the course (usually a course or programme of study leading to a qualification), stating that they agree to repay the direct costs if they fail to complete the course, or if they leave the LSC before completing.
- 50 In cases of non-completion (as opposed to termination of employment) the manager must look extremely carefully at the reasons. It is essential that individuals are not treated unfairly or penalised for circumstances beyond their control. Managers have discretion to waive the requirement to repay costs if they are satisfied that the non-completion was justified or unavoidable.
- 51 The LSC will seek to recover direct costs only, i.e. course fees, examination fees, registration fees etc. The LSC will not recover associated travel and subsistence costs, the notional cost of time off work to attend the course, or study time. Any learning materials purchased for the individual by the LSC will remain the property of the LSC.
- 52 If cost recovery action needs to be taken, the process set out in Annex D should be followed.

## Annex C – Letter confirming non-completion arrangements

[To: employee name, date]

Dear

### **Learning and Development costs: [details of course title, dates]**

I am writing to confirm the terms on which the LSC is prepared to assist you with the financial costs of the above development activity.

The LSC will pay the [course fees, examination fees, registration fees, etc – delete / add as appropriate], subject to a limit of £ . Where requested by the LSC, you will need to provide satisfactory receipts in respect of these expenses to [ ] by [ ] in order to receive reimbursement.

The LSC will also require repayment of part or all of these costs in the event that you:

- Fail to complete the course
- Leave your employment following your resignation (whether you provide proper notice or not) prior to completing the course.

If you fail to complete the course and remain employed by the LSC, you will be required to repay the amount concerned either in a lump sum, or by way of a regular deduction from your wages.

If you leave the LSC prior to completing the course, the costs will be deducted from your final payments in respect of salary and / or holiday pay, or will be deducted from any other amounts owed to you by the LSC. If there is any balance still owed by you to the LSC, you will be required to repay this separately (whether by way of payment of a lump sum or standing order).

Please confirm that you agree to these terms by signing in the space indicated below.

Yours sincerely

[manager's name / title]

I, [employee name], accept the financial assistance offered by the LSC in respect of my training costs on the terms set out above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[employee signature]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[date]

## **Annex D – Recovery of training costs**

If an employee leaves or no longer pursues training a recovery of the costs reimbursed may apply depending on the guidance and individual circumstances.

### **Member of staff remains employee of the LSC**

If a member of staff remains an employee of the LSC details of the recovery agreed with the employee should be passed to payroll to arrange recovery through salary.

If the amount cannot be recovered in one instalment a recovery period may be agreed with the employee e.g. 5 instalments of £100. The general rule to be applied is to recover the sum involved over a shorter time period as possible that is affordable to the individual concerned.

The notification to payroll should include the form (see Annex E on the next page), which must be signed by the employee to confirm their agreement to the recovery of the sum involved.

### **Member of staff is leaving employment of the LSC**

In this situation the amount to be recovered should be collected from the employee's final salary wherever possible. This will require timely notification to payroll to facilitate such recovery.

The notification to payroll must include the signed authority of the employee (see Annex E) to confirm their agreement for the recovery of the sum involved.

Where the sum involved cannot be recovered through the employee's final salary for whatever reasons an invoice is to be raised by the Finance department. The invoice raised is to be passed to Human Resources who will write to the employee concerned providing details of the recovery applicable.

Raising an invoice allows Finance to monitor the recovery of sum involved and advise Human Resources when the amount has been repaid.

## Annex E – Notification to Payroll of costs to be recovered

To: Payroll Department  
National Office  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry

**Employee name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee payroll number:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please arrange the recovery of the following amount through payroll:

A) The amount of £\_\_\_\_\_ in one instalment.

OR

B) The amount of £\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ instalments of  
£ \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm my agreement to the above recovery of training costs from my salary.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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In case of any query in respect of the above please contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resources

Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

