

# 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 Train to Gain Programmes in  
Machine Woodworking, Furniture (Furniture Making, Upholstery, Polishing & Finishing),  
Timber, Joinery and Saw Milling Industries*

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

Didac Limited is accredited with City & Guilds, CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health), IMWoodT., The British Woodworking Federation, Proskills and LSC's Learning & Skills Councils), 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
- development of a well trained, well-motivated workforce
- help meet the costs of training
- 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 City and Guilds National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). 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 Vocational Qualifications, Apprenticeships and Train to Gain?

**National Vocational Qualifications** are designed around the skills people use at work and cover all types and levels of work. There are five levels within the NVQ system ranging from level one covering basic work activities up to level five for senior management. Each NVQ 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. Each individual unit is assessed and credited and an NVQ 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 Apprenticeship or an Advanced Apprenticeship programme they will be working towards the achievement of an NVQ, Key Skills, Technical Certificate and other training requirements defined for that particular occupation. The Advanced programme enables people to get basic skills to NVQ 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 NVQ level 3 and are looking for a challenging and rewarding career.



The Apprenticeship programme training 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 Key Skills. Key Skills address the personal development of an individual and cover: communication, application of number and problem solving. They are delivered with the NVQ but are separately certificated. Learners on **Apprenticeships** will also undertake the Technical Certificate which is the “taught element” of the programme.

**Train to Gain.** Train to Gain is a service designed to help businesses, like yours, get the training they need to succeed. You might have seen the TV advertising for Train to Gain, but not realised the significance for your business. If you read on - you will.



The Learning and Skills Council’s Train to Gain service provides impartial, independent advice on training to businesses. It can help businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness by ensuring that employees have the right skills to do the best job.

Train to Gain is of particular value to the woodworking sector, because of the many statutory health and safety requirements for running a woodworking company, including the particular dangers of operating woodworking machinery in a competitive business environment.

Professionally delivered training and assessment will underpin the knowledge you need in your business, and for the first time we can offer **funded training and assessment opportunities** through Train to Gain for existing staff

## How we will help you...

We will work with you to:

- identify suitable employees and work placement opportunities - Apprenticeships
- 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 (1/4 reviews for Apprenticeships, IAG for Train to Gain. Regular visit reports)
- assess learner competence in the workplace
- work with the national Awarding Bodies, such as City and Guilds, to award nationally recognised qualifications (NVQs) 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.**

### *Training provider's role.....*

- produce informative promotional material to attract suitable potential learners
- link with connexions, 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

### *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 + Group (Apprenticeships)

Learner's over the age of 18, who are granted funding to contribute towards the cost of their training by the LSC 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. 19 + Group (Train to Gain)

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Level 2 is free of charge (eligibility criteria applies)
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Level 3 is free of charge for some qualifications (an employer contribution is payable for those qualifications that are not applicable)
- Some Level 4's are available and an employer contribution is payable.

## Funding

All school leavers are entitled to Government Funding through the LSC to contribute towards the cost of their training. These learner's, must aim to achieve an NVQ in their chosen career.

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

Where LSC 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.

The Employer will also be required to cover the cost of relevant Awarding Body fees.

Employers must ensure that a contract of employment exists and that learners (Apprentices) receive at least £80.00 per week in wages.

## 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.

### *Training 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 NVQs 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 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, such as Basic Skills. 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.

### ***Training 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 NVQ and Key Skill 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 NVQ, Technical Certificate and Key Skill 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. Much of the training will take place within the workplace itself. This will typically involve learner's developing their skills through observing others perform activities, practising themselves and learning from their supervisor/mentor.

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.

### ***Training 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

## 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 for Apprentices and at least 3 times throughout the Train to Gain programme. More frequent reviews can be taken if required.

### *Training 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 NVQ a 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 Witness Testimonies from staff in the workplace, confirming that they have undertaken or completed activities within the workplace.

### *Training 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
- 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 learner's are given proper support and that any potential problems are identified and addressed as early as possible.

### *Training 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

### *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.

### ***Training 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.

### *Training 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. At Didac's last inspection, we achieved an overall Grade 2 (1 being the highest and 4 the lowest)

### *Training 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, including the Woodwise Employer Forum

### *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 what ever 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 entitles to make a cancellation charge.

## **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**

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