

HR & OD POLICIES

human resources and organisational development



Learning and Development Procedure

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1. AIM

The aim of this document is to ensure that learning and development provision is planned, delivered and monitored on the basis of equality of access for all.

In support of the One Aberdeenshire Principles, to ensure that all Aberdeenshire Council employees are equipped with the right skills, knowledge and abilities to ensure we provide the best possible service to our colleagues, customers and communities.

2. INTRODUCTION

Employee development is defined as developing the skills, knowledge and abilities employees need to perform their current jobs effectively, develop their own potential and respond to future changes. The purpose of this is to enable all employees to contribute fully to the achievement of the Council's aims and objectives and the implementation of its values.

Approved training is defined as that which is required by the organisation and covers things such as health and safety, new policies and procedures, positive action to address inequalities in the workplace, professional development (including some job specific training required by regulatory bodies), management development and ICT skills.

Supported training potentially covers a broad range of learning activities that are not essential for work performance but which aim to enhance an individual's knowledge, skills or behaviours in the job or in preparation for future career changes.

3. STRATEGY

To achieve the policy and aims outlined previously requires a partnership between the organisation and its employees. Aberdeenshire Council considers itself to be a **learning organisation** supporting a workforce of **lifelong learners**.

The **learning organisation** framework consists of the following four elements:

- **Enablers** (policy, strategy, leadership, people management processes and the use of information technology) that contribute to
- **Environment** (supportive culture, a learning climate and organisational team working) that contribute to

- **Learning** (individual learning, team learning and organisation learning) contributing to
- **Results** (improved 'business' results).

Lifelong learning is concerned with *improving access to learning opportunities and encouraging people to take greater responsibility for their own learning*. It reflects the fact that, in the midst of change, we need to continually update skills in the workplace and also better equip people to manage their own future.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of each **employee**, in partnership with his or her line manager, to:

- Identify their learning and development needs.
- Participate fully and positively in any learning and development activity (including pre and post activity discussions).
- Undertake any required mandatory training.
- Monitor time and effort put into learning and development with a view to getting the right balance between work and private life, reducing stress and adherence to the Working Time Regulations.

It is the responsibility of **line management** to:

- Consider, and attempt to meet, the learning and development needs of employees within available resources.
- Discuss with each employee (prior to undertaking any learning and development activity) the objectives of the activity, how the activity is expected to change their knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behaviour and how these anticipated changes can improve the way things are done.
- Discuss with the employee (after the employee undertakes any learning and development activity, or at regular intervals throughout an extended period of learning and development activity) any new skills or knowledge acquired, how these can be used for increased job performance or development purposes and any follow up action that is required.

- Ensure before any employee is permitted to enrol for a further or higher education course that both parties are aware of their responsibilities as outlined in Types of Learning and Development section. (See Section 5)
- Ensure that any mandatory training is undertaken by employees within the required timescales.
- Monitor the time and effort put into an employee's learning and development with a view to getting the right balance between work and private life, reducing stress and adherence to the Working Time Regulations. Please refer to the [Working Time Policy](#) for more information.
- Ensure that upon termination that any training costs are repaid as appropriate in accordance with this procedure.

Support will be available to ensure that managers are aware of the broad range of issues and options involved in learning and development. (See Section 6)

Each **Director**, in conjunction with their **Heads of Service**, is ultimately responsible for:

- Considering the learning and development needs of their employees and developing the relevant plans to address these and, where appropriate, using the [Training Needs Analysis and Budget Setting](#) module on ALDO to gather such information and to allocate resources.
- Ensuring the appropriate financial resources are made available for developing their employees-
- Working with line managers to ensure the learning and development needs identified in the Services' plan are addressed.

The **Learning and Development Team** is responsible for:

- The provision of learning and development (either directly or through sub-contractors/partners) arising from corporate initiatives or management requirements.
- Advising on learning need analysis, the development of learning plans, training providers, learning methodologies and venues.
- Supporting the development of learning opportunities relevant to the needs of Services.
- Providing a programme of development support accessible to all employees.

- Seeking and managing external funding for learning and development.
- Contributing as members of working groups throughout the Council and beyond.

The **Resourcing and Development Manager** is responsible for:

- Maintaining the Council's Learning and Development Strategy.
- Liaising with Service Directors/Heads of Service on corporate and service learning and development needs and programme implementation.
- Line managing the corporate learning and development delivery to ensure best value
- Delivering on agreed strategies and programmes.

The **Head of HR and OD** is responsible for:

- Supporting the strategic management team in developing an appropriate Aberdeenshire Council culture and climate.
- Making recommendations to the strategic management team about appropriate levels of investment in learning and development.

5. TYPES OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Induction

This encompasses both new starts and people changing jobs within the Council.

Initial impressions are formed during the first weeks of employment. All employees should undertake a well-monitored induction process that includes information about Aberdeenshire Council, their Service, location and job.

All new permanent, temporary and fixed term employees with a contract (or cumulative service) of 12 months or more should participate in the Corporate Induction process as soon as possible and certainly within two months of commencing employment with the Council.

Guidance on what should be covered during the induction period is available in the [Service Induction Guidance and Support Pack](#). An abbreviated format of the process may be more suitable for temporary positions.

All Services should provide new starts with a service specific Welcome Pack which provides information about the person's new post and location.

Job Related Competencies

To provide the best possible service to the public it is essential that employees' competencies reflect the aims and values of Aberdeenshire Council as well as the detailed knowledge of their own area of work (including compliance with statutory obligations for example health and safety). Teachers and associated professionals

Partnership Learning Agreement

Policy and Resources Committee has approved the development of a learning agreement outlining a partnership between the trade unions with learning representatives and the Council.

The agreement is to:

- Identify the roles of Learning Advisors and Representatives and of CPD Co-ordinators within the Education and Children's service.
- Reiterate the roles of line managers and outline the linkages to existing processes and schemes, for example the Professional Development and Review Scheme/ Personal Performance Plan.
- Clarify the relationship between the Corporate Learning and Development Team and Trade Union Learning Representatives and Advisors.
- Set out arrangements for managing and maintaining relationships.
- Prevent duplication of effort, confusion or conflict.

Aberdeenshire Council believes that having a clear workplace agreement will encourage:

- Dialogue between union and employer over learning matters.
- A sharing of resources and expertise in the arena of learning.
- Employees to feel confident in the learning opportunities they can access.
- Line managers to be clear about their roles.
- Advisors to work in partnership with the employer.

Job Related Qualifications

Assistance (financial and other) will be given to employees undertaking approved qualification based courses. Assistance may be given for undertaking supported courses.

Development beyond the Current Job

Future employability or promotion prospects may be enhanced, where budgetary provision and service requirements permit, by preparing employees for tasks, duties and responsibilities which extend knowledge and skills which (though relevant to current post) will be required to be exercised to a greater extent in a future post. Particular attention will be given to the Equality Act 2010 and the additional requirements stated in the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

As part of the employee review schemes, managers should be aware of their responsibilities in terms of monitoring the activities and tasks which employees become involved in. This should avoid jobs changing to the extent that regrading claims may be made, particularly where it is unlikely that funding to support such a move is available. Further details on the [review schemes](#) can be found on Arcadia.

Pre-Retirement Training

The Council provides a face to face corporate [Pre-retiral Course](#) which employees have the opportunity to attend during their last five years of employment should they so wish. This course is organised by the Learning and Development Team and is bookable on ALDO. Separate [Pre-retiral](#) information is also available on ALDO.

6. METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Learning and Development methods are varied and their use depends on circumstances, individual and organisational needs and finances. They include the following:

- On-the-job coaching, mentoring and training.
- Off-the-job training courses and seminars run in-house.
- Off-the-job training courses and seminars run externally.
- Access to learning resources including online materials via [ALDO](#) (and other learning management systems) programmes and learning communities.

- Day, evening or block release courses at local colleges or universities.
- Open and flexible learning programmes.
- Internally or externally run competency based SVQ programmes.
- Secondments.
- Work shadowing.

Further details on any of these can be obtained from the Learning and Development Team within Business Services.

Line managers must agree and authorise employees' participation/attendance at any such development activities prior to any event. Support will normally be given unless the employee's absence would result in operational difficulties.

7. ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Generally speaking this falls into two areas: time and money. The level of assistance provided should be standard within each Service and across the Council. Particular attention should be given to the guidance within the Working Time Regulations and the Council's own policies for overtime with a view to minimising potential difficulties and helping to ensure a work life balance.

Approved Training is defined as that which is required by the organisation and covers such things as health and safety, new policies and procedures, positive action to address inequalities in the workplace, professional development (including some job specific training required by regulatory bodies), management development and ICT skills.

Supported Training potentially covers a broad range of learning activities that are not essential for current work performance but which aim to enhance an individual's knowledge, skills or behaviours in the job or in preparation for future career changes.

Paid leave of absence

Employees authorised for study requiring day release will be allowed paid leave during working hours to attend sessions held as part of the course. In addition, reasonable travelling time will be authorised where sessions commence during the working day. No travel time may be claimed where the actual attendance time and travel time does not exceed 7.25 hours per day.

Approved Training

For approved training the Line Manager will grant time off with pay, subject to operational requirements, for the purpose of final revision prior to sitting examinations. The amount of time off will usually be limited to one day paid leave per examination up to a maximum of three days. Any leave approved beyond that limit should be either part of annual leave entitlement or flexi leave, or as unpaid leave of absence. Subject to negotiation, these arrangements may also apply for supported study.

Where the examination, assessment or first re-sit for an authorised course of study falls within normal working hours all employees will be entitled to time off with pay.

Any request for paid leave should be made via Employee Self Service, or by completion of the [Paid Special Leave Form](#).

Employees undertaking work towards the achievement of vocational qualifications shall be given reasonable paid time within working hours to carry out the work required in producing portfolios of evidence. This facility will also extend to employees undertaking assessor and internal verifier qualifications and in all cases shall be subject to the exigencies of the service.

Employees working towards the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) will be allocated paid time for the induction and testing stages of the programme. Study time beyond this will be allocated at the discretion of the line manager.

Employees undertaking modular based programmes with continuous assessment shall be granted 0.5 days within working hours per 40 hour module in which to revise and prepare their submissions. This shall be subject to operational demands.

In cases where the study involves a residential element appropriate reimbursement of reasonable expenses will be made. (Reference should be made to Aberdeenshire's [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#)) No time off or payment in lieu will be granted for attendance at a residential weekend unless it forms part of an approved programme of support.

Supported Training

If training is defined as being supported rather than approved, and day release includes an afternoon and evening session, the employee will not be entitled to claim pay for evening hours and will not receive time off in lieu.

For employees on flexi-time, normal day release, (i.e. morning and afternoon sessions) should be recorded as a standard day, (i.e. 7 hrs 15 mins / 7.25 hours).

Where the study is held over an afternoon and evening session, the employee will be deemed to 'clock out' at the end of their full, normal, working day. No allowance will be made under flexi-time arrangements for evening sessions.

Subject to negotiation and operational requirements, the Line Manager may grant time off with pay for the purpose of final revision prior to sitting examinations. The amount of time off will usually be limited to one day paid leave per examination up to a maximum of three days. Any leave approved beyond that limit should be either part of annual leave entitlement or flexi leave, or as unpaid leave of absence.

Where the examination, assessment or first re-sit for an authorised course of study falls within normal working hours all employees will be entitled to request time off with pay.

For supported training, any time off for subsequent re-sits, shall be as annual, flexi or unpaid leave.

Any request for paid leave should be made via Employee Self Service or by completion of the [Paid Special Leave Form](#).

Financial Assistance

Approved Training

Subject to the production of valid receipts, employees participating in approved training are entitled to the following from their Service's training budget:

- Course fees and other approved educational expenses.
- Travelling expenses. All travel requests to be made to the Corporate Travel Team to ensure employee costs are covered and ensure the best value option.
- Out of pocket expenses incurred at residential training courses in accordance with current rates.

It should be noted that applications for financial assistance will generally only be considered for one year at a time. There is no automatic commitment on the part of Aberdeenshire Council to contribute towards future years' study.

Where textbooks are purchased in connection with an approved course of study, and the employee requests reimbursement, an invoice or receipt must be produced before any such reimbursement can be made. Textbook reimbursement will normally come from Service training budgets. In return the Service may request that the textbook be retained within the Service as a resource once the employee has

completed their course of study. For approved training 100% of the purchase price will be provided.

Supported Training

Subject to the production of valid receipts, employees participating in supported training are entitled to 50% of the following from their Service's training budget:

- Course fees and other approved educational expenses.
- Travelling expenses. All travel requests to be made to the Corporate Travel Team to ensure employee costs are covered and ensure the best value option.
- Out of pocket expenses incurred at residential training courses in accordance with current rates.

Where textbooks are purchased in connection with a supported course of study, and the employee requests reimbursement, an invoice or receipt must be produced before any such reimbursement can be made. Textbook reimbursement will normally come from Service training budgets. Where reimbursement is requested for supported training, the Service will reimburse 50% of the purchase price. In return the Service may request that the textbook be retained within the Service as a resource once the employee has completed their course of study.

Repayment of Expenses

This section outlines the circumstances under which the Council reserves the right to claim repayment of all expenses paid to employees during a course of study.

This policy extends across all employee groups and applies to all learning and development activities where there is a potential cost implication to the Council. The policy covers circumstances where courses are not completed or where employment terminates by resignation, redundancy, ill-health or under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

It is the responsibility of the Service to ensure that repayment of training expenses is undertaken as appropriate.

The policy will apply both when the termination is during the period of study or for a period of up to two years following completion of the activity, in accordance with the [Repayment Undertaking Form](#).

While this part of the policy extends to all employees, each case will be considered in light of its own particular circumstances.

Circumstances that impact on the decision include:

- Termination of employment due to redundancy or ill-health.
- Where an employee has been unable to complete a course of study due to the exigencies of the service, illness or exceptional personal circumstances.
- Where an employee has been instructed by the Council to undertake a particular course of study.

Care must be taken to avoid any form of direct or indirect discrimination.

In normal circumstances, any expenses being reclaimed will be deducted from the employee's salary/wage or termination payment as agreed with the Service.

Other Financial Assistance

There are some other forms of support available provided by other organisations. This currently includes [Individual Learning Accounts](#) (ILA's) available to those over 16, who have an income of £22 000 or less, who don't have a UK degree or postgraduate qualification or overseas equivalent and who are resident in Scotland. Eligible employees may be able to access up to £200 funding to support their learning. Costs for approved training will be met entirely by the Council.

8. SUPPORTING PROCESSES

Identifying Learning and Development Needs

Learning and development needs arise at different levels (e.g. individual, team, Service and organisation) and at different times.

It is expected that individual needs will be identified in a formal and regular manner through the implementation of the [Council's employee review schemes](#).

- Personal Performance Plan (PPP) (all non-teaching employees below Chief Officer Grade).
- Professional Development Review Scheme (for teachers and associated professionals).
- Chief Officer Appraisal Meeting.

Other needs arise on an ongoing basis and it is recommended that opportunities to address these be considered whenever they are identified.

Internal Training Provision

All face to face learning and development events, courses and workshops are booked through [ALDO](#) (Aberdeenshire Learning and Development On-line). To find course descriptions, dates and venues of events and to book a place, log on to ALDO. Employees who do not have access to ALDO should speak to their line manager who will be able to view information and book courses on their behalf.

For any queries relating to training courses, problems accessing the information, requesting log in details for ALDO, or booking a place on a course, email training.courses@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

External Training Provision

Nominations to attend external courses or to study further or higher education courses at colleges or universities should be considered by each Service.

It will be the responsibility of the Head of Service or nominated officer to ensure the [Employee Training Repayment Requisition Form](#) is issued to and completed by the employee. The form should be retained on file within the employee's service.

Failure to Attend Learning Events

Considerable inconvenience and cost can be incurred when participants fail to attend learning events both internally and externally. To minimise this, nominated employees are requested, wherever possible, to give at least five working days advance warning of non-attendance for in-house events, or to comply with the booking conditions for externally run events. In some circumstances the Learning and Development team may contact the delegate's Line Manager regarding the absence.

Learning Records

It is essential, not least of all for legal reasons, that records are kept within Services for all learning and development activities undertaken by employees. A typical record will include information on the employee, the date(s) of the activity, details of the activity, who provided the activity, the full cost of activity, qualification outcome (if any) and an evaluation of the activity (see section below).

ALDO holds employee training records for all online courses and face to face courses booked through ALDO. Employees can access their own record of learning. In the future learning and development records will be held on the iTrent system. For more information on this please contact training.courses@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Care should be taken to ensure compliance with relevant Data Protection legislation. Further guidance can be obtained from your Data Protection Service representative or Data Protection Officer.

Evaluation of Development and Training Activities

It is imperative that the Council evaluates the investment in learning and development to assess achievement and improve future effectiveness. This will be achieved if the following procedures are adopted:

- An agreement between employee and line manager prior to the event on learning outcomes expected from the training event (this might arise through the PPP meeting or similar meeting).
- Links are made to the contribution of learning and development activities to the Services' achievement of its goals, targets and performance indicators.
- On some occasions an immediate evaluation at the end of the event to check if initial learning outcomes were met.
- Follow-up evaluation may be sent out some time after the event to ascertain if the initial learning outcomes have been transferred to the workplace and whether attendance at the training event has led to a change in work performance/behaviour which has benefited the individual and the organisation (this might again be taken as part of an PPP or similar meeting).
- Action takes place to implement improvements to learning and development identified as a result of evaluation.
- Senior management's continuing commitment to learning and development is demonstrated to all employees.
- Teachers and associated professionals have their own Professional Development and Review Scheme to evaluate the effectiveness of training.

For further advice and guidance on any of the above please contact [askHR](#).

Learning and Development

Index of Documents

Procedure

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes
01-10-2001	-	Creation of all Documents
31-07-2012	01-10-2001	Revision for Audit purposes - highlight of Supported Training or Approved Training and general update.
13-09-2013	31-07-2012	Links updated
08-07-2015	13-09-2013	Format update
20-04-2017	08-07-2015	Update to procedure
13/12/2019	20/04/2017	Update to procedure
15/08/2022	13/12/2019	Update – Employee Training Repayment Requisition Form