

# Learning and Development

## 1. Introduction

The Forestry Commission (FC) recognises the importance of the roles our people play in achieving organisational success and is committed to delivering meaningful and appropriate learning and development to every employee.

There are four areas covered in the procedure;

- Identifying learning needs;
- Learning delivery;
- Monitoring and evaluation; and
- Recording your learning and development.

## 2. Identifying Learning Needs

### 2.1 Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

Your individual development needs are identified at both your April and October Performance Management System (PMS) reviews. Within PMS, the forward job plan and the competency framework is used to identify your gaps in knowledge, skills or behaviour. Your development needs are then recorded in the ILP.

### 2.2 Analysing Training Needs

The unit or cost centre manager has the overall responsibility for ensuring that identified training needs are collated for the unit. In most areas, this is undertaken by the training co-ordinator who:

- acts as a point of contact for learning and development queries and liaising with your dedicated Learning and Development team;
- collating training needs and passing this information to your dedicated Learning and Development team;
- updating records on 'Yourself' and running reports, as required;
- seeking approval for funding from the unit manager or cost centre manager and monitoring expenditure against the training budget; and
- organising local venues.

Your dedicated learning and development team will liaise with the unit or cost centre manager to prioritise training requests so that the programme of events meets the needs of the business.

Where events have an associated cost, your dedicated Learning and Development team will verify the expense with the cost centre.

## 2.3 Mandatory Training

You are required to attend some mandatory courses, which will be arranged between your line manager and training co-ordinator. This training may relate to the job that you do, for example Risk Assessment or Manual Handling, or be provided to all FC employees, for example Diversity Awareness.

# 3. Learning Delivery

Learning is delivered by a range of means, including training, job shadowing, mentoring, coaching, reading, and e-learning.

Your dedicated Learning and Development team will:

- facilitate the delivery of training; and
- provide advice on accessing other learning solutions.

## 3.1 Internal Learning Solutions

Where your dedicated Learning and Development team have the required knowledge, skills and resource, learning solutions will be delivered internally.

You are automatically sent joining instructions six weeks before an event. On receipt of course dates, your dedicated Learning and Development team must be advised immediately if you are unable to attend.

## 3.2 External Learning Solutions

If your dedicated Learning and Development team does not have the resource, knowledge or skills to deliver learning solutions internally, they will:

- procure and arrange external delivery; or
- provide advice to a training co-ordinator or manager so that delivery can be sourced locally.

The second option may also be offered where there is lack of demand or delivery is a low business priority.

Delivery of training by an external provider will incur costs, so once you have committed to an event you will be responsible for charges even if you are unable to attend or the unit is unable to provide replacement delegates.

### 3.3 Support for Employees undertaking Learning and Development

Where learning has an associated cost, the cost centre manager, or in some cases the unit manager, has the discretion to make funding decisions. They will consider how closely the expected learning will contribute to the achievement of business goals and targets, how appropriate the learning is for you and the availability of funds.

The level of funding will vary according to the circumstances, for example:

- If the learning is essential for your role, the cost centre or unit manager will fund the full cost of the learning, providing all required time and support, for example study time, travel expenses, professional fees.
- Your cost centre or unit manager has the discretion to support fully clearly defined career development learning.
- If the learning is desirable for your role, the cost or unit manager will partially fund the cost of the learning and may provide some of the time and support required for example study time, travel expenses, professional fees.
- If the learning is neither essential nor desirable for your role, there may be no funding of the costs, however cost centre or unit managers have discretion to provide some of the time and support required, for example study time, travel expenses, professional fees.
- If a manager refuses to provide any funding, time or support for the learning, the reasons must be communicated to you.

#### 3.3.1 Learning Agreement

When undertaking learning and development where there are resources or funding implications, you will be asked to complete a Learning Agreement (Appendix 1). The purpose is to agree the commitment required by you and the FC to complete the learning before you undertake it.

#### 3.3.2 Repayment of costs

For training that requires substantial investment or long-term commitment of the FC, employees are required to complete Appendix 2 which is a formal Undertaking to Repay. The terms of this agreement may apply if you fail to complete the learning or leave the FC (see full details in Appendix 2).

### 3.3.3 Attending learning outside normal hours

You may be required to attend or complete learning activities outside normal working hours. This must be agreed by you and your manager, with due consideration given to equality and diversity issues. The FC will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that you are able to access learning.

In all cases, claims for time off in lieu or overtime can only be made once the full weekly conditioned hours have been completed by you.

Claims for additional expenses that are incurred when participating in learning activities, including childcare, may be made in accordance with [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#).

### 3.3.4 Additional Support without Approved Funding

A salary advance can be applied for to assist with the purchase of equipment, materials and tuition for a learning activity. Details on how to apply for this can be found in [HR Procedure – Pay](#).

With your cost centre manager's agreement, learning activities may be supported by access to FC facilities and equipment. This agreement should be recorded as part of your ILP and normal security measures for removing equipment from FC premises should be followed.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of learning, you and your line managers are expected to participate fully in any post event evaluation or consolidation (for example feedback sheets, skills testing and 360 degree feedback). In addition, your dedicated Learning and Development team will regularly review all events to ensure they continue to meet business needs.

## 5. Recording your Learning and Development

It is important to keep a record of your completed learning in order to:

- demonstrate your personal achievements and competencies/skills;
- monitor investment in learning and development across the FC;

- provide evidence of FC compliance with legal obligations in relation to Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity;
- ensure value for money in the delivery of learning solutions;
- demonstrate continued professional development; and
- maintain the FC's accreditation to external bodies.

## 5.1 The 'Yourself' database

'Yourself' is a web-based application which records and manages employees' personal details, allowing you to review and maintain your own record. You can edit your training record, which is verified by your line manager, or this can be done by a training co-ordinator.

Any training events organised by your dedicated Learning and Development team will be automatically recorded. Other events which must be recorded by you, or a training co-ordinator, include:

- events attended which were not organised by your dedicated Learning and Development team, i.e. those where joining instructions for, including training courses or seminars came from external organisations;
- events attended locally for personal development; and
- membership of externally recognised professional bodies.

## Appendix 1

# Learning Agreement

### 1. Personal Details

|             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Name: _____ | Cost Centre: _____ |
|-------------|--------------------|

### 2. Training Details

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Details of proposed learning:</b>                          |  |
| <b>Learning provider:</b>                                     |  |
| <b>Duration of the learning:</b>                              |  |
| <b>Start and end dates:</b>                                   |  |
| <b>Any funding agreed with FC:</b>                            |  |
| <b>Learning delivery:</b>                                     |  |
| <b>Time commitment required (FC and personal commitment):</b> |  |
| <b>Learning goals and achievement:</b>                        |  |
| <b>Measurement and evaluation:</b>                            |  |
| <b>Support required from the FC:</b>                          |  |

**This Learning Agreement confirms that I am committed to my own learning success and my proposed plan of action to achieve my learning goals. The agreement also confirms that my line manager, on behalf of the FC, has reviewed and understands the support required to complete the learning.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature (FC):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (CAPS):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name (CAPS):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

# Learning and Development – Undertaking to repay

The FC requires employees receiving funding for undertaking learning to complete this form as a formal acknowledgement of the FC's expectation of a reasonable return on the investment made.

|                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Name:</b> _____                | <b>Cost Centre:</b> _____ |
| <b>Details of Learning:</b> _____ |                           |

The FC, as evidenced by the signature below, undertakes to:

- pay the course fees, including examination and membership fees, charged in respect of my participation in the learning above; and
- to pay the costs of any travel and subsistence, including accommodation, essential to this learning.

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I hereby agree and undertake that I will use my best endeavours to complete the learning above.

If required to do so, I will repay the total costs incurred by the FC in respect of, or in connection with, my studies, should I either:

- fail to complete my studies within \_\_\_\_\_ (insert agreed time period); or
- dismissal or discharge from my studies for misconduct or failure to fulfil my academic obligations; or
- leave the FC\*, other than to approved employment within the Civil Service, before the expiry of two years after completion of the learning.

\* To leave the FC in these circumstances includes:

- voluntarily, without the FC’s written consent; or
- dismissal or discharge from service, other than by reason of an approved voluntary early exit scheme, redundancy or reorganisation falling short of redundancy.

I understand that the total costs incurred by the FC in respect of, or in connection with, my studies include:

- course and examination fees;
- books and other course materials; and
- travel and subsistence costs.

Such amount will be reduced by one twenty-fourth for each month of service with the FC after I have completed the learning. For this purpose, the date of completion shall be the date of my award.

I agree that if I cease to be a civil servant, any costs that may be repayable to the FC in respect of, or in connection with, my studies may be set off against any pay, allowances, pension benefits or other payments due to me.

If the FC waives my obligation to repay all or any part of the costs described above, I accept that I shall be solely responsible for any income or any other tax payable as a result of the waiver and I indemnify the FC on a continuing basis in relation to any such tax.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature (FC):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (CAPS):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name (CAPS):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witnesses**  
**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature (FC):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (CAPS):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name (CAPS):** \_\_\_\_\_