

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Overview

This Policy has been developed to support the delivery of the HR Strategy, SEEDA Growth objective, which focuses on personal and professional development, identifying tools, interventions and resource needed to develop the SEEDA workforce to be able to deliver effectively the Regional Economic Strategy through the Corporate Plan 2008/11.

2. Scope

This Learning and Development policy applies to all employees of SEEDA.

All SEEDA staff should familiarise themselves with the contents of this policy and should act in accordance with the principles set out in it.

Anyone contravening any aspect of this policy is liable to disciplinary proceedings.

3. Role of Learning & Development Team

The Learning and Development team are part of the HR Department. Their role is to identify and promote all forms of learning and development and encourage staff to receive appropriate skills development which is in line with SEEDA's business needs and provides added value to the Agency's work.

4. Definition of Terms

Internal Training – identified induction training, all internal business process and systems training and internally run professional or personal development training, on-line training available on the intranet, individual coaching, work shadowing, and teach-ins.

External Training - attendance at identified external development events which attract a cost to SEEDA, or buying in of any form of external training resources e.g. distance learning for individual learning or other externally sourced interventions.

5. Eligibility for Learning and Development

Permanent staff – all relevant internal training and external training where there is a clearly identified business need.

Contract staff

- Fixed staff contracts of 12 months or over – all relevant internal training and external training where there is a clearly identified business need and the end date of the contract is sufficient in time to allow the return on investment of the training undertaken.
- Fixed staff contracts of less than 12 months – all relevant internal training.

- Consultants/3rd party Contractors - all relevant internal process and systems training.

Agency temporary staff – all relevant internal process and systems training.

6. Identifying development requirements

Identified development needs should be reflected in objectives set out in the yearly objective setting process for individual staff members and these requirements should be added to the Continuing Professional Development Plan (CPDP). Any newly identified development needs that arise throughout the year e.g. at quarterly review time, should be added to the CPDP and this new version should be sent through to the L&D team for collation into SEEDA's overall development schedule.

NB: All identified development needs are seen as requests and will be assessed against business needs and resource availability.

Any identified group team or directorate development needs should be discussed with the L&D team directly to find the best solution.

7. Course enrolments

Requests for training will be recorded from CPDPs, to help with scheduling, and staff will be requested to complete and send an L&D form into the Learning & Development team to confirm they still have a training requirement and that they have their manager's commitment for them to participate.

Each internal course will have a minimum number of participants (shown on course description available on the L&D pages on the Intranet and on the invitation to the course sent out) and will only run if this is met; if it is cancelled staff will be offered alternative dates.

For all external training requirements an L&D form will need to be completed and forward to L&D team for authorisation and for a purchase order to be raised. The L&D team require the form at least 3 weeks in advance to process the requisition. Once the PO has been raised the course can be booked, the participant will be responsible for making the booking.

NB: The L&D team reserve the right to refuse to authorise a booking if it is deemed not to meet SEEDA's business requirements or a more cost effective alternative is available e.g. L&D have received several requests for the same training and will be setting up the training centrally.

8. Sponsorship

SEEDA recognises the need for continuous professional development and dependent on business requirements and availability of funding provide the opportunity for all permanent members of staff to apply for sponsorship. The scheme covers professional, academic or NVQ (or equivalent) qualifications.

The following guidelines are designed to give staff an idea of the sort of funding that may be available and how to apply.

In most cases, sponsorship covers the cost of: course fees, registration fees, assessment fees, examination fees, summer school fees and membership fees (if applicable) to join a professional body. Sponsorship also includes the cost of books, materials, and equipment up to the value of £50 per person per year. Funding will normally last for the duration of the course of study, subject to a maximum of two years. If a course of study exceeds two years, an individual may be asked to submit a further application.

The amount of funding provided depends on the amount of budget available and also the extent to which an individual is able to meet certain criteria. Firstly, an individual must be able to undertake a course of study and pass the professional examination/assessment and must also have the support of their line manager and Executive Director. If they meet these overriding criteria, their application will then be assessed against the following criteria:

- *Whether the course of study is directly relevant to their current job.*
- *Whether the course of study is directly relevant to their future career development/progression.*
- *Acceptable performance and attendance.*

Individuals wishing to be considered for company sponsorship should identify this need at the start of the performance year and submit a business case to Learning and Development.

It is likely that each year 2-3 people will be granted company sponsorship. The maximum funding per course of study per year will normally be £1500, although in exceptional circumstances, the figure may be increased. In some instances where financial support is not possible, for example because of budgetary constraints, individuals may be offered alternative support for the essential progress of a qualification, e.g. paid study leave instead of funding. Part-funding may also be offered.

How to apply for Company Sponsorship

To apply you should complete a Company Sponsorship form (available from Learning and Development) together with a business case and an upto date copy of your Objectives. This should be signed by your Line Manager and Executive Director and submitted to Learning and Development in good time before the course begins.

All applications will be reviewed and approved or rejected by the Directors Group.

If your application is successful, you will be informed in writing and required to confirm that you accept the following terms and conditions:

If you abandon the course or you leave SEEDA, either during the course or within 2 years of completing, we reserve the right to recoup the cost of this course from your salary as per the table below:

Timescale	Amount Recouped
Course abandoned within 3 months of start	100% of that year's fees
Course abandoned after 3 – 6 months	75% of that year's fees
Course abandoned more than 6 months after starting but within the first year	50% of that year's fees
<i>(Where course is funded for more than one year)</i> Course abandoned 12 months +	25% of total fees paid
Employee leaves within 2 years of completing course	25% of total fees paid

9. Equality and Diversity

SEEDA is committed to ensuring that all employees are treated equally by eliminating discrimination on grounds of gender, colour, race, religion or similar belief, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, age and trade union membership.

All Learning and Development material will be checked to ensure that the language and images used in them reflect the diversity of our employees and partners. We will make reasonable adjustments where necessary to accommodate specific needs of employees.

Wherever possible a range of training options, such as computer based training and regional courses will be offered to ensure all employees have equal access to training irrespective of location or hours of work.

10. Budgets for Learning & Development

The following budgets are used to fund development:

Directorate Admin Budgets – Used for team or individual skills training identified in CPDP/objectives or directorate Business Plan.

Specific Project related training – This should be charged to the project, a budget line with forecast spend, should be set up and this cost should be treated as a project cost.

11. Budget signoff

All L&D forms should be signed off at the appropriate level within the appropriate directorate to authorise the spend.

The Head of Learning and Development, or designated deputy, will have final sign off to ensure the requirements of this policy are met.

12. Cancellations

Once a participant has confirmed attendance on a training event e.g. a course, coaching session or other form of training intervention they are expected to attend.

If a participant needs to cancel off a course they should give as much notice as possible to the L&D team, to provide time to find a replacement. A record will be kept of all cancellations and “repeat offenders”, those that have cancelled twice or more will be reported to their line manager and added to an HR report discussed at Directors Group.

No-shows will be immediately reported to their line managers and their name will be added to Directors Group report from HR. The only exceptions will be sickness, traffic problems or emergency leave.

13. Course attendance

All course participants are expected to arrive on time, with any course pre-work completed.

Learning objectives should be discussed and agreed with the line manager before attending the course.

Participants are expected to respect the rights of all participating and not inhibit or disrupt the course to the detriment of the others present. Any behaviour deemed to be unacceptable by the facilitators will result in the participant being asked to leave and a full report will be made to their line manager.

With respect to external events, participants are expected to remember that they are representing SEEDA.

14. Evaluation

Internal courses will be evaluated immediately afterwards and comments will be used to enhance the course. Periodically a further evaluation may be requested, with a sample of previous participants, to assess how well they are applying their learning after a number of weeks.

For external training events, a follow up questionnaire will be sent out to assess the effectiveness of the training and the training provider to see if they should be retained and recommended or removed from the list of training providers approved by SEEDA.

15. Support

If you need support and guidance on Learning and Development, in the first instance you should look to obtain this from your immediate manager or your manager's manager. If you are unable to get the support you need from your managers, then you should talk with one of the Learning and Development team.