

Flexible Training Opportunities Rules and Guidance

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1. Flexible Training Opportunities

About Skills Development Scotland

Created in 2008, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) which brought together the careers, skills, training and funding services of Careers Scotland, Scottish University for Industry (learndirect scotland) and the skills intervention arms of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

As Scotland's leading skills body, Skills Development Scotland is equipped to provide people with skills, training and funding advice. Learning and development are essential to productivity and competitiveness, and Skills Development Scotland can help to direct your people development efforts so that you gain more from your investment.

The aim of the programme

The aim of Flexible Training Opportunities is to help Scottish businesses invest in learning and development opportunities for their employees. The focus of the programme is to support learning activity which promotes improved workplace productivity, helping you to increase organisational resilience through this period of economic recovery. Skills Development Scotland will provide a financial contribution to your business to allow you to invest in learning and development for your staff, and so help support the sustainability and growth of small businesses within Scotland.

2. Who can apply?

You can apply for Flexible Training Opportunities if:

- the total employee headcount for the business applying for this funding is 50 or less
- the business is and the employees participating in the programme are based in Scotland
- your business or enterprises is a private sector organisation including voluntary and community not-for-profit status
- your business is privately run or funded outwith the Public Sector
- you agree that Skills Development Scotland reserves the right to request evidence or information to confirm the status of the business
- you accept the terms and conditions of the programme, as outlined in this document and the application form.

The programme is also open to businesses operating as sole traders or freelancers (as defined below).

You are a sole trader if:

- you are trading as an individual
- your business finances cannot be separated from your personal finances insofar as a sole trader carries unlimited liability and is personally responsible for obligations incurred.

You are a freelancer if you are currently:

- employed on a fixed term contract of not more than 364 days.

3. What can I apply for?

What type of training will be supported?

This fund has been established to enable employers to have access to funding to support the delivery of flexible interventions to meet specific business needs and that the link between this learning and business priorities must be demonstrated within the application by reference to the desired outcomes.

The programme will provide funding for the uptake of skills that will contribute to business productivity and success.

You will need to demonstrate that:

- the training courses you identify in your application cover sufficiently different areas of your employees' skills development and also support or are in line with your business priorities
- any training being undertaken through this programme will not commence until the application for funding has been approved by Skills Development Scotland
- the training is delivered by an external organisation

Below is a list of the type of training that is eligible for support. This list is not exhaustive but a guide to the type of activity:

- Qualifications including individual units
- Master Classes
- Learning based on National Occupational Standards
- Industry recognised qualifications
- First line supervisory management
- Workshops
- Taster sessions

What will not be supported?

Legislative or statutory training will not be funded through Flexible Training Opportunities.

This is any non-negotiable training that is required by legislation or statute - regardless of your own rules and regulations - to comply with the law and requirements of regulatory bodies as below:

- to carry out duties safely and efficiently
- to protect employees from harm
- to maintain competence to required standards

This would exclude the following types of training (examples):

- Diversity including Disability and Race Equality
- Fire Safety: Instruction and Evacuation / Fire Wardens / Fire Marshalls
- Manual Handling / Safe Load Handling
- Health and Safety Awareness (including risk assessment / risk management)
- Display Screen Equipment (VDU Risk Assessment)
- First Aid Appointed Persons and First Aid at Work
- Food Safety.

Other exclusions include:

- training delivered in-house by staff employed by the business
- company teambuilding away days
- company process awareness activity
- leadership and management programmes (excluding first line supervisory management)
- travel and accommodation costs for employee or trainers
- staff backfill costs / downtime costs
- employer administration costs.

4. Rules of the programme

The following rules form part of the agreement between your business and Skills Development Scotland, therefore, please ensure that you fully understand and accept the following:

- funding for Flexible Training Opportunities will be allocated on a **first come first served basis**
- the business will be responsible for negotiating the cost of the training and meeting the payment terms agreed with the organisation providing the training
- the cost of the training being applied for must not be funded by any other public source
- employers can apply for funding for up to 10 training courses
- those employees participating in the programme must also be based in Scotland
- funding through this programme cannot be used to offset the cost of training already undertaken as the required eligibility and verification checks will not have been carried out
- the business will be required to complete the funded training, and submit a claim with supporting evidence that the approved training has been completed no later than 16th March 2010 (further guidance on this is shown in Section 8 of this document)
- if you need to make any changes to your application after it has been submitted or approved, it is important that you let us know as quickly as possible. Not doing so may result in your claim being rejected (further guidance on this is shown in Section 8 of this document)
- to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the programme, and to ensure that the training provided meets the objectives outlined within the application, Skills Development Scotland reserves the right to monitor the Business' progress and outcomes and to ensure that the training is being delivered by a bone fide provider
- during, or at the end of the project, Skills Development Scotland, or its approved contractor, reserve the right to contact the business to undertake an evaluation of the programme, the results of which may be made available to our funders, stakeholders and key partner organisations.

5. Amount of support

How much can I apply for?

- upon receipt of the necessary evidence, we will retrospectively fund 50% of each training course up to a maximum of £500. For example, if a training course costs £1,200, we will refund £500. If it costs £300, we will refund £150.
- an employer can apply for funding for up to 10 courses

6. Help with identifying the right training for your workforce

Once you receive the application form, you will have to detail what training you wish your employees to undertake, in accordance with the programme rules.

You may have a clear idea of what training you wish to apply for, and the organisations that will deliver that training. Please record this on Part 3 of the application form, ensuring that it meets the criteria set out in Section 3 of this document, and relates to business objectives.

If you require assistance in identifying appropriate training, you can call our free helpline on 0800 783 6000 our advisers will be happy to conduct a course search for you. Alternatively, you can access an online course search tool at:

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/tools>

If you require guidance on training that is specific to your sector, we have provided a list of Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) that represent your industry in Appendix 1. We have provided links to each SSC on our website:

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/knowledge/signposts/sector-specific-sources.aspx>

For further guidance on improving business performance through employee development and on identifying the appropriate training for your employees, we have provided a series of online workbooks that can be found in the employers section of our website:

www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk

We suggest the following workbooks to help you at this stage of the process:

How do you decide what development you and your people need?

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/49734/workbook1sds.pdf>

How do you plan and deliver the development that your people and your business needs?

<http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/49737/workbook2sds.pdf>

7. Information to help you apply

How do I apply?

To apply for funding from the Flexible Training Opportunities Programme you need to:

- read the Programme Rules & Guidelines
- complete all sections of the Flexible Training Opportunities Programme application form
- ensure you sign and date the application form
- return the application form to the address provided in this section

Please ensure that each piece of information is completed clearly and you have made a copy of your application for your own reference. Regrettably, we are unable to accept faxed or e-mailed applications.

At this stage you are responsible for negotiating the cost of the training and meeting the payment terms agreed with the organisation delivering the training and detailing this on Part 3 of the application form

Make sure you answer every question on the application form – only complete applications will be accepted.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your application reaches Skills Development Scotland. We cannot accept responsibility for applications that are not submitted in time.

Completed application forms should be sent to:

**Flexible Training Opportunities
Skills Development Scotland Centre
New Lanarkshire House
Dove Wynd
Strathclyde Business Park
Bellshill ML4 3AD**

8. What happens next?

If your application is successful

If your application for the programme funding is successful you will receive confirmation in an award letter outlining the detail of the award and documented confirmation of the successful employees and training courses.

Remember that any training being undertaken through this programme should not commence until the application for funding has been approved by Skills Development Scotland.

This award letter will be sent to you within five working days of our receiving your application.

Accompanying the award letter will be a claim form. This will confirm the details of each training course as shown in Part 3 of your application form.

The claim form will ask you to:

- provide evidence from the organisation delivering the training identified in your application has been completed at the costs agreed (for each training course). The evidence we need will be:
 - an original bank statement showing that the payment has been made by your business to the organisation providing the training.
 - A copy of the invoice from the organisation providing the training.
- sign a declaration to this effect
- provide bank details so we can transfer costs into your account.

The claim form must be sent to Skills Development Scotland no later than 16th March 2010, the training must have been completed and you will need to provide evidence to this effect.

If your application is unsuccessful

If your application for Flexible Training Opportunities funding is unsuccessful you will receive a letter informing you of this and the reason(s) why within 10 working days. We will advise you if you are able to reapply, depending on the reasons outlined in our letter.

Changes in circumstances

When submitting your application, please ensure that your employees will be able to commence the training within the timescales outlined. However, we recognise that business conditions can change over a short period of time. Under certain circumstances, changes can be made to your original application.

Any changes must be notified to Skills Development Scotland immediately and, if accepted, will result in an updated claim form being issued to you.

Examples of permitted changes:

- course cancellations
- a nominated training provider can no longer deliver the course
- a nominated employee leaves the company or is otherwise unable to attend the course.

If you are unsure if the change you wish to make is allowed, then our advisers will be happy to provide guidance.

The latest agreed version of the claim form that we have on record must correspond with the claim form submitted by you within the 90 day period.

If there are changes to your original application, or you no longer wish to participate in the programme, you should inform your Skills Development Scotland contact immediately, otherwise, your claim may not be processed. Contact details for your Skills Development Scotland will be available in your award letter.

When will I be paid?

Upon receipt of your claim form, we will notify you within **5 working days** as to the status of your claim.

Within a further **10 working days**, one single payment will be made to the business. You will be asked to provide bank details on the claim form to enable this payment to be made.

If you have any further queries about any aspect of this programme, please contact Skills Development Scotland on 0800 783 6000.

Industries by Sector Skills Council

Industry	Sector Skills Council (SSC)
Accountancy and Finance	Financial Services SSC
Advertising	Skillset SSC
Animation	Skillset SSC
Arts	Creative & Cultural SSC
Building Products	Proskills SSC
Building Services Engineering	Summit Skills SSC
Business and Information Technology	E-Skills
Business Change	E-Skills
Central government	Government Skills SSC
Chemical and Pharmaceutical	COGENT SSC
Children, Early Years and Young People's Workforces	Skills for Care & Development SSC
Cleaning	Asset Skills SSC
Coatings	Proskills SSC
Community Justice	Skills for Justice SSC
Community Learning	LLUK SSC
Computer Games	Skillset SSC
Construction	ConstructionSkills SSC
Courts Service	Skills for Justice SSC
Crafts	Creative & Cultural SSC
Custodial Care	Skills for Justice SSC
Design	Creative & Cultural SSC
Education	LLUK SSC
Environment and Land Based Industries	Lantra SSC
Extractive and Mineral Processing	Proskills SSC
Facilities Management	Asset Skills SSC
Fashion and Textiles	Skillfast-UK
Film	Skillset SSC
Food & Drinks Manufacturing and Processing	IMPROVE SSC
Financial Services	Financial Services SSC
Forensic Science	Skills for Justice SSC
Freight Logistics and Wholesaling Industry	Skills for Logistics SSC
Furniture, Furnishings and Interiors	Proskills SSC
Further and Higher Education	LLUK SSC
Gas	COGENT SSC
Glass and Glazing	Proskills SSC
Glazed Ceramics	Proskills SSC

Industries by Sector Skills Council

Industry	Sector Skills Council (SSC)
Health and Fitness	SkillsActive SSC
Healthcare	Skills for Health SSC
Heritage	Creative & Cultural SSC
Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism	People 1 st SSC
Housing	Asset Skills SSC
Interactive Media	Skillset SSC
Internet and Web	E-Skills
IT Services	E-Skills
Libraries	LLUK SSC
Music	Creative & Cultural SSC
Nuclear	COGENT SSC
Oil	COGENT SSC
Outdoors, Playwork and Caravanning Industry	SkillsActive SSC
Paper and Pulp	Proskills SSC
Parking	Asset Skills SSC
Passenger Transport	GoSkills SSC
Performing	Creative & Cultural SSC
Petroleum	COGENT SSC
Photo Imaging & Publishing	Skillset SSC
Planning	Asset Skills SSC
Policing and Law Enforcement	Skills for Justice SSC
Polymers	COGENT SSC
Power	Energy & Utility Skills SSC
Printing	Proskills SSC
Property	Asset Skills SSC
Prosecution Services	Skills for Justice SSC
Advertising	Skillset SSC
Radio	Skillset SSC
Retail	Skillsmart Retail SSC
Retail Motor Industries	IMI
Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	SEMTA SSC
Social Care	Skills for Care & Development SSC
Software	E-Skills
Sport and Recreation	SkillsActive SSC
Telecommunications	E-Skills
Training Providers	LLUK SSC
TV	Skillset SSC
Waste Management	Energy & Utility Skills SSC
Water Industries	Energy & Utility Skills SSC
Work-based Learning	LLUK SSC
Youth Justice	Skills for Justice SSC

Our website will give you further information on the opportunities available, plus contact details:

www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/knowledge/signposts/sector-specific-sources.aspx