

Individual Training Accounts

Marketing Guidelines

July 2020

Skills Development Scotland Individual Training Accounts are a high-profile initiative and ensure that the needs of individuals and the economy are met in line with Scotland's Labour Market Strategy. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are intended to deliver the training and skills that will help people get into work or improve the job prospects of those in low paid work.

To register as an ITA Approved Provider you will be asked to demonstrate Quality Assurance standards for the courses you offer. This requirement runs through every stage of the ITA experience and it is equally important that these Standards are applied to how you engage and communicate with your potential learners.

These Marketing Guidelines outline what is expected of your marketing and communications activity as an ITA Approved Provider.

Marketing activity

You may wish to undertake promotional activity of your own to help ensure that ITAs are promoted effectively. We are keen to encourage and support you in this.

However, it is essential that the integrity of Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and ITAs is maintained through clear and consistent communications. You are therefore required to adhere to the following guidance when undertaking any promotional activity for ITAs or for any courses marketed in conjunction with SDS.

Promotional literature

If you wish to undertake promotion of ITAs (i.e. not related to specific courses), generic English language leaflets have been developed for this purpose. Please contact marcomms@sds.co.uk to make an order.

Should you wish to produce your own promotional materials for ITA approved courses you must meet the following criteria:

- you must not promote yourself as an ITA Approved Provider or use SDS or ITA branding until your registration has been accepted and your courses are published on the ITA database and My World of Work website.
- the ITA Approved Provider marque must only be used on promotional material for courses which are included on the ITA database. Any accompanying promotional material must not imply that a course will attract ITA funding until that course has been approved.
- if you have any doubts or queries regarding the status of your courses or your registration please contact the training provider helpline on 0141 285 6100.
- you must never advertise a course as 'free' if ITA funding is to be used. It must be made clear to learners that if they choose to undertake the course with their ITA funding that they will be unable to access any additional ITA funding for the rest of their ITA learner year.

- it should be clear that ITA funding is provided by Skills Development Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.
- should you wish to publish promotional material such as prospectuses before your registration has been accepted you may include generic information on ITAs. However, this must not imply that your courses will be eligible.
- if you cease to deliver ITA approved courses you must immediately remove all related information and branding from your promotional channels.

The following wording is pre-approved for use. Any alternative wording must be approved by the ITA Marketing Team:

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are for people who are 16 or over, resident in Scotland and either in low paid work or actively seeking work. You must have an income of £22,000 a year or less, or be on certain benefits to be eligible to get up to £200 towards the costs of learning or training.

You can apply for an ITA if you are not undertaking any secondary, further or higher education, SDS funded training or participating on the Community Jobs Scotland programme.

ITAs are available if you are looking to progress in or change your job. There is a wide range of courses to choose from and you can study with any ITA approved learning provider, including, local colleges, universities and private training providers.

To find out more or to apply, visit myworldofwork.co.uk

Use of the ITA Approved Provider marque:

- all marketing materials (online and offline) must be approved for use before they are published or printed. Artwork for approval should be submitted by email to: marcomms@sds.co.uk.
- you should allow one working week for approval of your marketing materials though this will be turned around as quickly as possible.
- promotional material must always include the name, address and telephone number of the ITA approved learning provider supplying the learning.
- the eligibility criteria for ITA funding should be clearly stated and the outcomes of the course should be clearly stated (for example what qualification is attained). If a test or examination is required at the end of the course in order to attain the qualification, you must state clearly whether or not the cost of this is included in the price of the learning.
- the ITA Approved Provider marque must not be used to imply an endorsement or accreditation of a particular training provider's general service.
- you must ensure that any promotional materials or activities fully comply with the wider

rules and regulations governing ITAs, as outlined in the Learning Provider Registration Agreement and associated documentation.

- a copy of the marque will be provided to you once your ITA Approved Provider status is confirmed. The marque can be used on promotional materials for courses which are included on the ITA database.

Any ITA Approved Provider whose promotional materials do not meet these criteria will be asked to withdraw them with immediate effect. Failure to do so or failure to comply with the other requirements outlined in these guidelines may result in your suspension or deregistration as an ITA Approved Provider.

Direct marketing

You may choose to market your services directly to individuals and again there are criteria we expect you to meet:

- if your representatives make direct approaches to individuals it must be clearly stated which learning provider they work for. Some means of identification, such as a business card or leaflet, giving the name, address and telephone number of the learning provider must be provided to the individual being approached. This requirement is particularly relevant to any work undertaken by intermediary organisations such as third-party marketing companies.
- a fundamental principle of ITAs is that individuals have a personal choice in deciding their own learning. Your marketing materials and marketing practices should not attempt to influence individuals unduly in their choice of where or how they undertake their learning.
- in line with the above principle you should not target employers in an effort to generate 'bulk' ITA participation. Employers explicitly must not make applications for ITA funding for their staff without the individuals knowledge and consent.
- a further principle is that individuals take responsibility for their own learning. To achieve this it is essential that individuals make any personal financial contribution that may be payable, directly to the learning provider.

In light of these principles, examples of activities which are not acceptable include:

- implying that ITA funding can only be used in conjunction with your course.
- implying that the learning is free. You should not offer incentives to cover the cost of any learner contributions, such as credit vouchers, refunds/pay backs of fees or part fees, expenses, free or subsidised software or hardware or free additional courses.
- overly aggressive marketing tactics. All complaints received from individuals will be fully investigated and appropriate action will be taken.
- pressurising or misleading individuals into applying for an ITA.

- directly marketing ITA funding to employers as a means to train staff at a reduced (or no) cost to themselves.
- asking learners for their personal details and proof of eligibility unless they are registering for a particular course which they have personally selected and are committed to undertaking. Such practices may be considered as potentially fraudulent and will be treated accordingly.
- using Scottish Government brand marques on any of your ITA marketing materials.
- implying that the Scottish Government endorse any of your courses, products or services.
- implying that any of your marketing activity is being undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Government.

In addition, the following marketing activities or practices will not be acceptable:

- anything which brings Skills Development Scotland or the Individual Training Account programme into disrepute or restricts the information provided to potential learners and which prevents them from making an informed decision about their learning could be considered as potentially fraudulent.

Training providers who undertake such activities can be suspended or deregistered from the scheme.

Further information

If you have any queries about the information contained within these guidelines or are unsure on any point please contact the training provider helpline on 0141 285 6100.