

# **Professional Development Award In Learning Centre Operations**

## Background

The Scottish University for Industry has a core mission to drive demand for lifelong learning and up skill Scotland's people to develop greater competitiveness and a stronger economy.

To do this requires a complete rethink of the ways in which people learn, and the methodologies and approaches, which best facilitate learning.

SUfI's key aims are:

- to stimulate the demand for lifelong learning amongst businesses and individuals
- to promote the availability of, and improve access to, high quality and innovative learning opportunities, in particular through the use of information and communications technologies.

These aims are carried forward through a range of activities under the brand **learndirect scotland**

The **learndirect scotland Pledge to Learners** offers wider access to information about learning; makes sense of the learning which is already available; sets the standard for learner support and gives reassurance to learners that their interests will come first, and that they will be able to shape their own learning agenda in the context of social and economic objectives.

Learners and practitioners are at the heart of the Quality and branding procedures that SUfI has introduced. This commitment to learners can only be delivered by building relationships with providers who share this vision and want to bring about change through learning. SUfI works closely with partners who provide a safe, welcoming and supportive environment where learners can make guided choices about, what, how and when they learn. Research undertaken by SUfI has shown that those involved in delivering that pledge to learners welcome the opportunity to develop their skills appropriately and to have that recognised within a national qualification framework.

The first stage of developing this qualification is the **Professional Development Award in Learning Centre Operations**. This programme has been validated by SQA as a level 2 award.

## The Rationale

The Professional Development Award (PDA) is aimed at learning centre assistants/administrators who work under supervision in a range of learning centres including outreach centres, community based centres and workplace centres. The learning centre assistants/administrators would normally be involved in providing general support to learners and supporting the daily operation of the learning centre. They would not be expected to provide tutoring or specialist support, guidance or counselling.

The PDA will provide recognition that the learning centre assistants/administrators have the key skills required to support learners. For some potential candidates the PDA will represent a target to aim for and may be their ultimate aim. For others the qualification will be the first step towards a range of career options within learning centres.

The PDA will also:

- assist with identification of training needs
- provide a benchmark for measuring staff against national standards
- support the achievement of the SUfI quality indicators

This is the first qualification in Scotland specifically developed for learning centre staff. It is designed to become part of a skills framework for learning centres that will provide suggested progression routes and links to specialist units and qualifications including existing HN units and SVQs and possible new PDAs (Learning Centre Administration and Learning Centre Management).

Potential progression routes include:

- guidance
- counselling
- library and information services
- training and development
- tutoring
- learning centre management

## Outcomes

At the end of the PDA the candidate should be able to:

- access and interpret information from local and national sources
- provide relevant information to meet learner needs
- assist the learner to access learning programmes and further advice or support
- promote learning opportunities and the learning centre
- introduce the learner to the learning environment
- assist the learner to use the IT facilities and access learning resources
- provide encouragement and support to the learner during learning programmes
- maintain the systems and records required to ensure the efficient running of the learning centre eg systems for tracking resources, bookings and attendance, learner records and provider paperwork

These cover the main functions required by all learning centres. Some staff may have additional duties but the above functions will be core requirements for all learning centre assistants/administrators.

The skill areas covered by the PDA include communication, customer services, administration, information technology and basic promotional techniques. These should provide the candidates with transferable skills and knowledge, which should improve their chance of employment and career progression.

## Access

There are no formal recommended skills and qualifications required to access the PDA and the individual units – the main requirement is that candidates are currently working in a learning centre. It is also recommended that candidates have access to the SUFI integrated learning system. (This will be accessible by all **learndirect scotland** learning centres)

The PDA is designed to be delivered and assessed in the workplace and to reflect normal work activities - the majority of the assessment evidence will be generated from existing workplace records. This should provide maximum flexibility in the pace of learning and assessment – the tutor/assessor will first assess the current skills of the candidates and identify appropriate training options to assist them to develop the skills and knowledge

required by the unit. The candidates will then be able to work through training options and assessment requirements at their own pace with the support of the tutor/assessor. As much evidence as possible should be gathered through the use of ICT and online assessment, thus reducing the need for visits and allowing for maximum flexibility. This use of non-paper evidence can include screen grabs, before/after scenarios, screen bookings, live data authenticated by manager or witness testimony transferred by email to tutor, and guidelines should identify the range/number of entries for each piece of evidence.

## Structure

The PDA incorporates three new workplace assessed units:

1. provide initial information for learners
2. provide support for learners
3. maintain the learning centre environment

The units are designed to be delivered and assessed in an integrated way. A summary of evidence requirements will be published in advance of formal start of the programme.

The units are equivalent to SVQ units at level 2.

## Further Information & Entry Details

Entry to the programme will be available later this year and full details of that will be released soon.

If you are interested in receiving early copy of new information as it is released please call or email to:

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