

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Purpose and scope

The company is committed to ensuring that you have access to coaching, learning, development and training opportunities that enable you to have the confidence, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to carry out your role within the business, and to develop your talents in ways that fit with the company's culture, values and strategic objectives.

The company considers it appropriate to base the majority of training and development opportunities on the requirements of the business. Therefore, decisions about investment in your training and development will always be made having regard to the needs of the business as well as your individual needs.

The company regularly reviews its level of investment in your training and development to ensure not only that adequate resources are being provided, but also that training and development activity is delivering a benefit to both you and the business.

The company aims to ensure that you:

- Understand what your work role involves
- Are developed to enable you to achieve your work objectives
- Have the confidence, skills, attitudes and behaviours to be able to fulfil your current role in the company effectively and enjoyably
- Have the confidence, skills, attitudes and behaviours to be able to progress your career in the company effectively and enjoyably
- Receive open, data-based feedback in relation to your performance and are proactively helped to understand your development opportunities

The company believes that effective training and development benefits you and the group as a whole and contributes to the achievement of business objectives. These benefits include:

- Building high performing and effective teams that prosper and grow as the company prospers and grows
- Enabling the company to fulfil its strategic objectives
- Ensuring any company statutory/contractual obligations are met
- Generating and maintaining revenue
- Enabling effective responses to and management of legislative changes
- Ensuring quality of service provision
- Enabling you to meet your responsibilities in completing continuous professional development required by relevant professional bodies
- Enabling management development for you if you have people management responsibilities
- Collaboration and innovation between teams and divisions
- Responsive leadership aligned to 'Leading the Blakemore Way'
- Increased motivation and job satisfaction for individuals
- Professional development
- Greater understanding of the company's culture and values

Policy objectives

The main objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that you are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands of the company so that the group achieves its strategic objectives
- Facilitate your professional development and/or personal development by assisting you to broaden, deepen and thereby further enhance your existing skill base
- Provide a working environment where continuous learning and development takes place to help you in your role, increasing motivation and enhancing retention
- Ensure that you are encouraged to enhance your development opportunities wherever possible, both inside and outside the workplace

Responsibilities

The company believes that training and development is a continuous process. There is an expectation that you will keep abreast of developments within your own area of expertise, supported by learning opportunities available to you.

The responsibility for identifying training and development needs and carrying out agreed training and development activity is shared between your line manager and you. The company will encourage and support appropriate training and development, and reasonable time and financial support may be allocated where appropriate (see Study Leave Policy).

Line managers are responsible for providing support and guidance in relation to the training and development of those reporting to them, particularly in relation to the identification of training and development needs through Performance Development Reviews (PDRs) and Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and making sure that appropriate action is delivered as a result.

All managers are responsible for assisting colleagues in identifying learning needs and for ensuring that they review these on a regular basis. Managers have an important part to play in encouraging/facilitating their team's involvement in training and development activities, both as participants or organisers, and in providing guidance/feedback with regard to the skills and knowledge required for colleagues' current roles.

Managers should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of learning for colleagues who have undergone training and development and should seek feedback on any training, including quality and cost effectiveness.

Managers should also ensure that colleagues have the opportunity to implement the skills that they have gained through training and ensure that feedback on training is shared with the company through the L&D department.

You are expected and encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for your personal development in relation to your work, within the framework of support provided by the company. This includes analysing your own skills, aptitudes and potential development needs, as well as having a positive attitude and proactive approach to development.

The Board are responsible for actively ensuring training and development strategies align with the business needs to meet its business objectives, and for ensuring that resources are made available for this purpose.

The Learning & Development department has a facilitation role in relation to training and development. This includes:

- Providing the tools to support training and development, i.e. a learning management system (LMS)
- Advising and encouraging individuals and those with line management responsibilities on training and development matters
- Coordinating the delivery of certain training and development activities that are organised centrally
- Sourcing and recommending potential development solutions
- Managing the centralised budget for training and development and ensuring consistency of allocation
- Maintaining records with regard to the development of colleagues
- Providing feedback to providers on training effectiveness to improve development solutions

The company will continuously monitor and evaluate its training and development offer and activities to review and improve provision. You are expected to participate in the evaluation of training and development.

Equal opportunities

The company is committed to ensuring equality of learning opportunity. You will never be excluded from learning on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and/or civil partnership, pregnancy and/or maternity, race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origin), religion or belief, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, membership of the traveller community or any socio-economic status. If you are a part-time and/or fixed-term colleague, you will also have equal access to learning and development opportunities appropriate to your role.

Learning & development opportunities

There are many different types of training activities that may contribute to your development, and you are encouraged to consider the range of opportunities available to you.

Some activities are undertaken with the specific aim of enhancing skills and/or imparting information. Examples of these include attending a seminar or training course, undertaking a qualification, reading, work-shadowing and mentoring.

Where possible, development activities will draw on the knowledge and skills of existing colleagues. This has the advantage of allowing advice, guidance and on-the-job training to be given in a way that is directly applicable to the work context and highly relevant to the other colleague.

Various people may be involved in supporting the development of others, in particular your line manager, colleagues, networking contacts, mentors, etc. Development by these means may take many forms, for example, one-to-one discussions, seminars, secondments, hands-on demonstrations, team meetings and coaching.

Core learning

The company provides a range of training and development opportunities for you. These include:

- Training relating to the enhancement of skills for your current role. As mentioned above, this can include internal and external courses providing technical or specialist training relating to the skills that you require for your role, i.e. job shadowing, mentoring, coaching, a secondment etc.
- Training leading to a professional or academic qualification. The company encourages anyone who wishes to do so to pursue continuous professional development and, where appropriate, to gain further qualifications
- Training with the purpose of promoting or increasing your skills, knowledge or responsibilities that may not be specific to just your current role

There are specific areas of learning that are essential for you and cover a rolling programme of needs that have been identified as part of a continuous programme of learning and development. Core learning will therefore cover the following areas:

- Induction
 - New colleagues are given a timely programme of induction, including introduction to all policies for the company. This is an essential part of colleague learning and development, and integration into the working environment. An effective induction process is important for settling new colleagues into the business and also ensuring the smooth transition of those who move to roles in other departments/teams
- ICT (information and communication technologies)
 - It is important that you are given opportunities to enhance your ICT skills base. The company is committed to ensuring that you have competent grounding in the use of ICT in the wider context of your professional roles. You are encouraged to become familiar with the intranet, internet, email, other electronic facilities and computer software packages at your disposal, as well as the appropriate policies. Relevant initial information and training will be provided on commencement of your role or when any technology changes occur
- Health, safety, wellbeing and culture
 - You will receive general health and safety training, and where applicable job-specific training. Training is provided for fire wardens, first aiders, mental health first aiders and health and safety co-ordinators at each of the company's key locations
 - You will receive coaching and training that will ensure that we live the values of the Blakemore Way. This includes a programme that provides colleagues with regular opportunities to learn about our environmental and equality, inclusion and diversity strategies

Access to learning & development

The extent to which a training and development activity can be supported by the company will depend on a number of factors, including:

- The relevance of the development need to achieving the strategic plan
- Financial costs, including hidden costs, for example, the amount of work time required to complete the development activity
- Any additional cover required and the impact on you

- The amount of development support that it is reasonable for any one colleague to undertake in a given period
- Availability of funds in the training and development budget
- Parity with similar applications