

WeST Learning Institute Staff Development Policy

1 Policy Statement

WeST Learning Institute operates as an outreach arm of the Westcountry School's Trust (WeST) and its policies adhere to those of WeST but include points specific to adult education and training. This document sets out the Learning Institute's commitment, policy and practice relating to staff development. The Learning Institute is committed to the support and promotion of staff development and training for all its members of staff. It aspires to create and maintain a culture of 'lifelong learning' for all members of staff, as well as learners in all its programmes.

2. Aim

Staff development refers to the development of the individual's potential and career in terms of knowledge, skills, personal abilities, competencies and understanding, in line with the aims and objectives of the Learning Institute. It embraces a wide range of learning experiences, both within and outside the workplace, and is a continuing process that can help individuals:

- to achieve agreed strategic, operational, team and individual objectives;
- to help individual members of staff to acquire knowledge and skills which will enable them to fulfil their current responsibilities more effectively; to respond positively to change; to extend their range of performance;
- to help the Learning Institute benefit from highly effective teamwork;
- to support the continuous personal and professional development of members of staff by helping them to develop skills and/or gain qualifications which will equip them better for future career development;
- to enable staff who acquire new skills or knowledge to find appropriate opportunities to use them in their employment with the Learning Institute; to identify and develop their potential; to increase their job satisfaction; to improve their self-confidence, motivation and initiative.

This Staff Development Policy, its procedures and practices are all designed to increase and develop the skills and knowledge of staff. In doing so, the effectiveness of both staff and the institution as a whole will be raised which will, in turn, enable the Learning Institute better to achieve its aims.

3. Funding for staff development

Where there are financial implications, priority for funding will be given to those training and development initiatives which are work-related and most closely allied to the Learning Institute's strategic plan. Further explanation of the financial and other support available is described in section 10 below. All issues relating to access to funding support is the responsibility of the Deputy Director who reports to the Director and the Learning Institute Governing Board.

4. Diversity and equality

Opportunities and access to development and training will be provided to all members of staff irrespective of gender, ethnicity, age, disability or full/part time status. The impact of this policy will be monitored in relation to the participation of employees by gender, ethnic origin, grade level, age, disability, and full/part time status. The requirements of the data protection policy will be observed in the operation of this policy. If any member of staff feels that s/he is not being treated fairly in

terms of access to development, they should raise the matter in the first instance with the Deputy Director. They may subsequently refer the issue to the Director and/or to the Governing Board.

5. Responsibilities

The Deputy Director of the Learning Institute has overall responsibility for staff development and will manage the process. The Deputy Director will present at regular intervals to the Learning Institute Governing Board quality reports to inform and support rigorous challenge and questions on Learning Institute performance.

Staff development is the joint responsibility of: the individual member of staff; the Academic and Professional Programme leaders; course leaders; senior staff; line managers; and the Learning Institute as a whole through the framework for staff development and a high performance culture it establishes, and through its providers of training and development.

Individual staff members have the responsibility to:

- keep themselves informed about developments in their own field or area of work;
- reflect on their current role and how it may develop, their future career aspirations and identification of their own training and development needs;
- use the staff development and supervision scheme to discuss their development needs with their line manager and those of their team to establish priorities;
- take advantage of and benefit from training and development to help them to meet agreed needs;
- share learning outcomes with colleagues and the institution by reporting, evaluating and disseminating newly-developed knowledge and skills.

Each line manager and senior leaders have the responsibility to:

- help staff to develop their performance and effectiveness;
- play an important part in the identification and provision of training and development for their staff through the appraisal scheme and in other more regular/informal ways;
- assess the development and training needs of their staff regular intervals;
- evaluate the effectiveness of training and development undertaken by their members of staff to the individual, team and institution;
- ensure that as far as possible training and development needs are met where these are identified within the improvement plans or where they can be clearly linked to the aims and objectives of the programme.

5. Induction

Induction programmes are held throughout the year designed to introduce new staff to the Learning Institute. Induction includes briefing on policies with particular reference to equality, conflict of interest, safeguarding, Prevent and health and safety. Induction for all staff includes completion of currently online training in safeguarding and Prevent. All academic staff and other staff as appropriate start with a 'buddying' support role which moves into increasing levels of responsibility. The support tutor continues to give support throughout the first whole cycle of the relevant programme(s).

6. Access to further qualifications

The Learning Institute offers access to a number of nationally-recognised and university-approved further qualifications for its staff. These include, through a partner university, access to a Post

Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher

Education. All staff have access to apprenticeships relevant to the new roles they take on. These include ones in education and training, and in business leadership and administration. These courses may be a condition for some new appointees.

7. Appraisal

All staff take part in the Learning Institute's Appraisal Scheme. It aims to:

- provide constructive feedback on an individual's performance to date;
- set clear work objectives that are mutually agreed through two-way discussion and planning of the individual's role and responsibilities in the context of their professional development and the department/Learning Institute plan;
- hold individual members of staff accountable for the quality and effectiveness of their work;
- identify and plan ways in which an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities can be developed in relation to work objectives and, where possible, career aspirations.

Each line manager should be aware of all training and development needs identified. Responsibility for meeting these needs lies jointly with the individual, the reviewer (usually the line manager), the Academic and Professional Programme Leaders and, where appropriate, the internal providers of staff development such as apprenticeships. It is the intention of the Learning Institute to maintain a system of supervision for staff which will augment the staff development process.

8. Continuing professional development

Staff at all levels are expected to engage in continuing professional development. Needs should be identified on an ongoing basis and through the appraisal process and discussed with the line manager. Professional development needs (knowledge, skills, competencies, understanding) can be met in a number of ways. In addition to internal sources of support there are many external organisations that can provide staff development, both within and outside the higher education and work-related learning sectors. Methods that can be used to meet staff development needs include:

- work-based learning through the experience of doing one's job, reflecting on that experience, discussing it with a manager, mentor, coach, colleagues, receiving feedback on one's performance;
- reviewing and evaluating one's performance, being coached and supervised;
- participation in working parties or project groups, or involvement in other activities which are outside the individual's normal job responsibilities, and therefore enhance or enrich that person's professional life;
- job shadowing, particularly for those either new to the Learning Institute or about to take up a senior position.

WeST Learning Institute is also committed to job rotation. Staff as appropriate may also participate in courses or conferences, undertaking a qualification, open or distance learning, secondment, placement, shadowing, exchange visit, or, where possible, study leave.

9. Required training for all staff and governors

WeST Learning Institute follows the strategy for all WeST employees, governors and trustees of requiring regularly updated training in the following areas:

- Safeguarding and child protection, including safer recruitment for relevant staff, governors and trustees
- Prevent training

- Equality and diversity training
 - Professional conduct and conflict of interest
 - (specifically for governor and leaders) Good governance training including briefing on Nolan Committee Standards in Public Life.

The Deputy Director ensures that relevant training programmes are made available, that a register is kept of compliance by staff and WeST Learning Institute governors, and that action is taken where directed training has not been undertaken by staff and governor. Processes and sanctions for staff compliance are covered by the WeST Staff Code of Conduct and WeST Staff Disciplinary Policy. Those for governors are noted in WeST governance policies.

Specific training is put on for relevant staff, governors and trustees for their specific understanding of responsibilities in contracts and to external partners. These include, for example:

- Strategy, processes, outcomes, quality measures and reporting for the making of awards such as apprenticeship end point assessment through Ofqual; associated reporting of key data in event notifications in the case of malpractice or maladministration, or serious conflicts of interest; submission of Statement of Compliance to Ofqual.
- Strategy, processes, outcomes, quality measures and reporting for the degree franchise contract with university partners; associated reporting of key performance and quality data.
- Self-assessment review and quality improvement planning in apprenticeship delivery, apprenticeship end-point-assessment, teacher education, and undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

10. Outcomes of training and development

After participation in any form of training or development, it is expected that the member of staff concerned will discuss with the line manager what has been learned or gained and how this can be applied in the job and, where relevant, disseminated with the organisation. All training and development undertaken should also be discussed as part of the appraisal process.

11. Guidance for applying this policy

Staff development needs that are identified as work-related and have a direct link to the Learning Institute's strategic plan will normally be supported by the Learning Institute though funding for fees, associated travel and subsistence, and time to attend such events. The types of programmes and the support are described below.

11.1 First degree level qualifications – as part of its commitment to lifelong learning, the Learning Institute will support any member of staff, in any occupation or grade, to achieve a qualification at undergraduate level. This need not be related to the role they are employed within. Any member of staff who does not have a first degree level qualification will be able to study for a first degree in the Learning Institute, and course fees will be waived or reduced for the duration of the programme dependent on funds being available. Full and part time employees can also discuss with the line managers the temporary re-arrangement of their working hours in order to accommodate any additional study time required. Such re-arrangement will be agreed providing funds and appropriate cover are available at the discretion of the Deputy Director. Support for subsequent study will be discussed and agreed with line managers as part of the appraisal process.

11.2 External short courses, programmes and seminars - where attendance is job related and has the endorsement of the Deputy Director, support will be provided by the Learning Institute for the person to attend such programmes. This will be in the form of payment of programme fees, and reimbursement of any related travel and subsistence costs. Time will be made available within the normal working week for the person to attend the programme. Part time employees who attend

during their 'non-working' hours may be permitted to take off a compensating period in lieu of the time spent at the event at the discretion of the Deputy Director.

11.3 External Conferences - attendance at conferences/summer schools is recognised as a significant activity in ensuring continuing professional development for academic and support staff. The time to attend will be taken as part of the normal working week. Part time employees who attend during their 'non-working' hours may be permitted to take off a compensating period in lieu of the time spent at the conference at the discretion of the Deputy Director. Employees who are supported to attend external staff development events, including conferences, will be expected to agree and deliver a means of dissemination to others in the Learning Institute. This should also be included as part of the appraisal process.

11.4 Staff development forming part of an on-going CPD requirement and agreed in advance by the Deputy Director will be funded, and travel and subsistence costs will be refunded. The time to attend will be taken as part of the normal working week. Part time employees who attend during their 'non-working' hours will be permitted to take off a compensating period in lieu of the time spent at the conference at the discretion of the Deputy Director. Support for subsequent CPD events will be discussed and agreed with line managers as part of the appraisal process.

11.5 Academic and professional programme staff - a higher degree is a normal requirement for appointment to an academic post, but an individual may be provided with support towards this level of qualification at the discretion of the Deputy Director. Support for subsequent years of study will be discussed and agreed with Heads of Departments as part of the Appraisal process.

11.6 Other professional staff and programmes leading to a relevant professional qualification - the Learning Institute is committed to the development of its administrative staff. It is an area for investment priority as the Learning Institute expands and the need for professional advice and services increases. Programmes that lead to directly relevant professional qualifications will normally be supported by the Learning Institute where there is a clear and direct link to the Learning Institute's strategic plan and at the discretion of the Deputy Director. These programmes might be provided as day/block release, distance/e-learning and may also include visits to other organisations and to mentors. The support provided may include refunding of course fees and time off to attend courses. Part time employees may be entitled to a number of days pro rata to the full time equivalence. Normally support for succeeding years will be given only where the individual shows satisfactory progress in their studies and has passed the appropriate exams/assessments for that year.

11.7 Apprenticeships for all staff – the Learning Institute will normally support staff members undertaking apprenticeships where they meet the relevant eligibility criteria and the need is identified within the strategic plan.

11.8 Research and scholarly activity – it is a contractual requirement that all staff working on academic and professional programmes undertake scholarly activity to support their role. This may include reading and personal study, attendance at conferences and courses, and active membership of research groups and special interest communities. The Learning Institute is developing a number of institutional research themes. All members of staff including administrative staff will be invited to engage in these as reader, reviewer, data collector or researcher/research leader as appropriate. Dependent on available funding study time may be given beyond that within academic professional contracts to engage in research.

12. Policy review

The WeST Learning Institute Governing Board is responsible for the annual review of this Policy.

