

Guide to the Learning through Work Certificate

Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education

Introduction

The Learning through Work Certificate aims to provide university recognition for informal learning and personal development gained when students are involved in part-time or temporary fulltime (paid/unpaid) work which is not part of a Professional Training programme or necessarily related to their subject or programme of study.

The pilot project is being used to trial and evaluate the procedures and supporting guidance. We are looking for up to 30 undergraduate students who are working during the summer vacation and who would like to receive some form of recognition for the learning and personal development they gain. This Guide introduces the scheme, explains the requirements and the procedures for making your informal learning explicit to yourself and to others.

The skills you develop and gain recognition for can be incorporated into your CV and you can use the learning and development gained towards a Lifewide Learning Award www.surreylifewideaward.net

This pilot will run between June-October 2010 and there are 30 undergraduate places available on the scheme.

Requirements

To join the programme you will be making a commitment through a learning agreement to evaluate and make explicit the learning, personal and professional development you gain through a minimum of 100 hours of work experience. There is no upper limit to the amount of experience you can include.

In order to receive University recognition for your learning and personal development, you will need to document your experiences and your evaluation of the learning and personal development you have gained in a **Reflective Diary (hand written or word document) or online Blog**.

Four techniques are used to help you understand, evaluate and reveal your learning and personal development.

- 1) Completion of a skills and experiences self-evaluation questionnaire and personal development plan
- 2) On-line resources to help you appreciate the nature of learning through work (in contrast to learning in an educational environment)
- 3) Your construction of an ongoing reflective diary or blog to record and make sense of your experiences and the learning and personal development you are gaining from them
- 4) Reflective account – to connect, synthesise and integrate the learning you have gained from your experience.

You may include other methods of recording your experiences and demonstrating your learning such as digital images or audio or video recordings for example.

The Certificate encourages you to focus on key aspects of personal development that are generic to all work situations and which are important to being an effective professional. These are incorporated into a capability statement (page 3). The Certificate also recognises more specific skills that are a necessary part of your capability to fulfil a particular role.

1 Skills and experiences questionnaire & personal and professional development plan

At the start of your engagement with the Certificate you will be invited to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire and personal and professional development plan (Appendix 1). This will help you reflect on and evaluate your existing work relevant knowledge and skills, and encourage you to plan for your further development. Your completed questionnaire and development plan should be attached to your Learning Agreement with the Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education. Once you have completed this questionnaire you can register for the Certificate.

2 Reflective diary or blog

Your reflective diary or blog is the means by which you will:

- Demonstrate the self-reflective habits necessary to be an effective professional
- Reveal how you have managed your personal and professional development
- Document the experiences and specific situations through which you have developed yourself

You can create your reflective diary as a handwritten notebook, a word document or a blog. Hand written diaries are good if you have to work in the field (for example if you are in a place where it is difficult to use a computer or has no internet access) but the material is not so accessible and there is always the chance it might be lost.

We strongly recommend that you make regular (at least weekly) entries to your reflective diary. You will not meet the requirements for the Certificate unless you demonstrate that you have developed the habits of a reflective learner and show how you have practised what you have learnt.

3 Developing your knowledge and understanding of learning in the work environment

We have provided a number of articles aimed at deepening your knowledge and understanding of how people learn through work – where learning is a bi-product of working not the aim of working. You can access these from the **Work Certificate webpage** and we expect you to utilise some of the theories when you reflect on your own experiences. These readings will help you make more sense of how, what and when you are learning in the work environment.

<http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/content/learning-through-work-internship-certificate>

4 Reflective account showing how capabilities and values have been developed

The reflective account (no less than 2000 words) provides you with an opportunity to integrate the learning and personal development you have gained through your work experiences. Your account will draw upon your reflective diary and any other documents, media or artefacts you have used to illustrate and illuminate your personal and professional development process. **Appendix 2 provides further guidance on the structure and content of the account. Please use this form to prepare your account.**

Capability statement

The Certificate encourages you to maximise the learning, personal and professional development you gain from your work experience. Underlying the scheme is the idea that you are developing your capability for being a professional. Professor Michael Eraut, who has studied how professionals learn through work defines capability as ***what you bring to a situation that enables you to think, interact and perform effectively***. For this reason we are interested in how you develop your capability for dealing with situations and creating new situations in the particular work role you are undertaking. The capability statement identifies the areas of development that we would like you to be aware of while you are engaged in your work. In addition you will add any other capability that you believe is necessary for your work role.

The Certificate encourages you to develop and demonstrate your capability for managing and evaluating your own development for your role in the workplace.

- 1 **Managing your own development:** the attitudes, skills and behaviours that motivate and enable you to take responsibility for, plan and engage in experiences that enable you to develop yourself. In successfully completing the Certificate you will have demonstrated that you have:
 - taken responsibility for, thought about, planned for and engaged in your own personal and professional development, taking advantage of the opportunities available to you
 - reflected on and evaluated the learning, personal and professional development you have gained through your work experiences
 - documented your experiences and what you have learnt from them, and gathered and organized evidence of your learning and development in your reflective diary or bog.

The Certificate emphasises the importance of developing capability to deal with situations (particularly new and challenging situations).

- 2 **Being able to deal with situations: solve problems work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity:** your reflections will show how you have worked with challenge and uncertainty, engaged with problems in a range of *work* situations. These stories will reveal how you have understood and analysed a situation, decided what to do, found things out in order to decide what needs to be done, done things and learnt through the experience. In short, how you have made things happen. Your stories will not necessarily reflect success, in some cases stories may reveal how you have had to overcome significant setbacks and demonstrate your resilience in the face of failure.

The Certificate encourages you to think about these important generic dimensions of capability to deal with situations and make things happen.

- 3 **Being able to develop the knowledge you need to deal with the situation:** to be able to find out what you need to know in order to do what you need to do.
- 4 **Being creative and enterprising:** you need to be creative, enterprising and resourceful to invent new solutions, adapt to changing circumstances in novel ways and create new opportunities for yourself.
- 5 **Being an effective communicator :** to make things happen you need to be an effective communicator, to be able to communicate in ways that are appropriate to the situation, to be able to communicate to different audiences using different media.
- 6 **Being able to work with and lead others:** your reflections will reveal how you have worked and developed relationships with other people and taken the initiative in helping others make good decisions and actions.
- 7 **Behaving ethically and with social responsibility:** your reflections will provide a vehicle for showing how you have dealt with ethical issues – how you have decided what is right or wrong, considered the values of others which are relevant in your activities, and tried to do the right thing.
- 8 **And any other capabilities that you feel you need to be effective in your work role.**

Through your engagement with the Certificate you will also have the opportunity to demonstrate qualities and dispositions that are important to being an effective professional including:

- **Your will to be an effective professional and to behave professionally:** what are the hallmarks of being an effective professional?
- **Your values:** your reflections will reveal the values you invest in the enterprises you contribute to and the value you add to the enterprise.
- **Your confidence:** your reflections will reveal how your confidence has developed as a result of encountering and dealing effectively with situations, accomplishing new things and coping with significant challenges

How does this view of capability relate to the employment skills that employers are seeking?

Employability skills have been defined after extensive collaboration with business by the CBI. They are a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy. <http://highereducation.cbi.org.uk/policy/employability/what-are-employability-skills/>

Employability skills include:

Self-management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning.

Teamworking – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.

Business and customer awareness – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty

Problem solving – analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.

Communication and literacy – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy - including listening and questioning.

Application of numeracy – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae).

Application of information technology – basic IT skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines.

Underpinning all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a **positive attitude:** a 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen. Employers also value **entrepreneurial (or enterprising) graduates** who demonstrate an innovative approach, creative thinking, bring fresh knowledge and challenge assumptions.

The capability statement that underlies the Learning through Work Certificate has the potential to address all of the above.

Your personal and professional development plan

Creating a plan helps you organise your thinking about your own development and how you might access and integrate the opportunities available to you. The **Personal Development Planning Framework** (below) identifies the key areas of capability that are being developed through the award, the opportunities that already

exist in your life for practising and developing further these capabilities and encourages you to highlight additional areas for personal development that you identify for yourself.

Personal & Professional Development Planning Framework

Aspect of Capability	Current activities/experiences in my work environment through which I can develop and demonstrate my capability	Any additional activities I could undertake in my workplace to help me develop and demonstrate my capability
Managing my own development		
Being able to deal with situations, solve problems, work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity		
Being able to find out what you need to know to do what you need to do		
Being creative and enterprising		
Being a good communicator		
Being able to work with and lead others		
Behaving ethically and with social responsibility		
<i>Other areas for personal development which are important to my role me, and which are not included in the above</i>		

Reflective capacity a key capability for being an effective professional

In order to make our perceptions of learning explicit we have to:

- Be aware of what we are doing and if possible record (usually in words but photos, videos are also suitable) the incidents and stories that illuminate different aspects of the experience and what you have learnt.
- After the event, think about the particular situation to reflect on it and make better sense of what happened recording what you have learnt in your portfolio

In writing about your personal experiences, reflecting on what happened and how you felt, it is important to think critically and try to analyse and evaluate reasoning, actions, feelings, responses and emotions in a way that helps you to benefit and grow from the experience. All too often when writing about life experiences we tend towards describing the situation or to describing the situation and how we felt about it, without analysing the processes taking place and reflecting on why we feel the way we do. Here are some examples of different levels of reflection:

Purely descriptive. “I went to a meeting today which was complete garbage, there was really no point in my going, what a waste of time, I should have gone to the pub instead.”

Descriptive with some feelings about the occasion. “I went to a meeting today and found it very exasperating to say the least. My team have not made any decisions about job changes and I am really stressed as we have to give a presentation soon. I had some ideas which I really tried to put across but they just kept interrupting, going on about how well the Test Match is going. I just got fed up in the end there was really no point in my being there, what a waste of time, I should have gone to the pub instead.”

Stepping back and reflecting on the dialogue. “I found the total lack of any attempt at decision making by the team totally exasperating. I guess because I am a little fixated about deadlines it concerns me more than it does others that we are rapidly running out of time before we have to present our findings. I had come up with a great idea to get us moving forward then failed to make myself heard over the two or three loud members of the team that can be quite intimidating when they are together. I am actually a bit shy and had I not been so stressed about the approaching deadline I probably would not have even said anything at all.”

Learning from the event through critical reflection. “ Because meeting deadlines is important to me I found today’s team meeting banter exasperating. I was also very annoyed with myself for not being more assertive in putting forward my ideas which I am sure would have progressed our decision making. With such a self-assured group it takes a lot of effort for someone like me who is much less self-assured to get my point across, and my natural inclination in such circumstances is to withdraw into the background and let them get on with it. Having sat and thought about it I think my strategy will be to email each member of the team and suggest that at the next meeting we go around the table and get ideas from each person before we start discussing options and those with the loudest voices take over.”

Perhaps you can think of another strategy for dealing with this situation?

An employer who read this story said I would have responded differently, ‘I would circulate some thoughts before hand and go into the meeting being prepared to hold my own after preparing well for the discussion.’

Sometimes sharing your possible solutions to a situation with someone else will help you develop another perspective on the situation and help you make a decision about what to do.

These simple prompts may help you reflect on any situation.

- What was the situation and what is significant about it?
- How did you respond to the situation and why did you decide to respond in this way?
- What happened and why?
- What did you learn from the experience?
- What might I have done differently?
- Have you shared the situation with someone else to gain other perspectives and possible ways of dealing with it? If you did, what did they think?

After thinking about the situation and your response in this way, and recording your thinking about your informal learning you will have become more aware of your learning and made your learning visible to yourself and others. This enhanced self awareness of your own abilities and the way you deal with situations is valuable personal knowledge for your enhanced CV and for discussions with future employers. Its also valuable knowledge for encouraging you to try something different next time you encounter a similar situation.

Registration Procedures

When you have read and familiarised yourself with the guidance:

1 Complete the Registration Form (Appendix 1). You will find a word version of this Form on the Learning through Work webpage.

<http://www.surreylifewideaward.net/content/learning-through-work-certificate>

2 Send your completed registration form to sceptre@surrey.ac.uk. **Mark your email ‘Work Certificate’.**

Procedure for submission and review of your evidence of learning and personal development

When you have completed 100 hours of work, your **reflective diary** and your **reflective account** you can submit them to the scheme organiser for review.

The reflective account needs to be submitted as a word document.

Your reflective diary can be submitted either as:

- 1) a word document
- 2) a hard copy handwritten diary or scrapbook
- 3) or you can provide access to an online blog

You will also need to submit a **work participation form** signed by a work supervisor or manager indicating that you have fulfilled the 100 hr obligation.

After scrutiny by the scheme organisers the following judgements will be made.

Pass sufficient evidence to demonstrate capability development
Fail insufficient evidence to demonstrate capability development

In the event of a fail decision feedback will be given on how to improve the submission.

Further information

If you have any questions about the Certificate please visit the '**Work Certificate**' webpage at: www.surreylifewideaward.net or contact : Professor Norman Jackson norman.jackson@surrey.ac.uk. You will find podcasts which provide more information about the scheme on the same webpage.

Appendix 1

Guide to the Learning through Work Certificate

Surrey Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education

REGISTRATION FORM

You need to complete this questionnaire, personal development plan and learning agreement in order to register for the Certificate. For the purposes of research into the effectiveness of this way of learning, the results from lots of questionnaires may be aggregated anonymously into a report. No individual will be identified in this report.

Name
Email address
Mobile
Department
Course/Subject

1 Information about the work context

	Comments
a) Who were you working for? And how long have you been working for them?	
b) What sort of work were you doing? What are the typical situations you will encounter?	
c) What are your responsibilities?	
d) Who are you working with (colleagues, clients, customers?)	
e) Did you receive any training for your role?	

2 Type of work/internship experience

	√	Comments
A few hours over several days of the week		
One or more full days within the week		

One or more days at the weekend		
Mainly evening work		
Intensive work during the vacation		
Other (please describe)		

3 Your reasons for work/internship. Please tick all the boxes that apply.

	√
Need to earn some money	
My parents expected me to	
For the experience	
Good for my CV	
The job relates to my interests/passions	
I would like to pursue a career in this area	
Other (please describe)	

4 What are the main experiences and skills you believe you will gain from your work experience /internship? Please tick √ a box and add comments Personal & Professional Development Plan

Opportunity	1 No new learning	2 Some new learning	3 Much new learning	4 Capability and values statement
Finding and applying for a job				4
Experience of being interviewed				5
Learning about how an organization/business works				3
Dealing with challenging situations at work				2 & 3
Applying classroom learning				4
Gaining valuable work experience				1
Developing valuable technical skills eg computer systems at Travis Perkins				8
Learning professional behaviors				2
Developing communication skills Verbal/oral skills Listening Written eg reports/ Design eg posters Use of media eg photographs/video				5 5
Develop and use IT skills				8
Learning how to work with colleagues or in a team				6
Learning how to interact with customers or clients				1, 2 & 6
Learning about being managed				2
Learning how to manage others				6
Learning how to manage yourself eg turning up on time				1
Learning about business skills and practices.				1 & 2
Coping with and managing emotions				9
Learning how to negotiate with and persuade others				5
Clarifying future career goals				1
Being given challenging responsibilities				4
Being creative and resourceful to make things happen				4
Experience of being enterprising				4
Self-confidence				10

5 Please show how you intend to develop the capabilities that are promoted through the Certificate

Aspect of Capability	Current activities/experiences in my work through which I can develop and demonstrate my capability	Additional activities I could undertake in my workplace to develop and demonstrate my capability
Managing my own development		
Being able to deal with situations, solve problems, work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity		
Being able to find out what you need to know to do what you need to do		
Being creative and enterprising		
Being a good communicator		
Being able to work with and lead others		
Behaving ethically and with social responsibility		
<i>Other areas for personal development which are important to my role me, and which are not included in the above</i>		

REGISTRATION

I have completed the self-evaluation questionnaire and personal / professional development plan. Please register me for the Learning through Work Certificate

Name

Date

Learning through Work Certificate Reflective Account

NAME

Date

Please use this form to complete your account and send it to the scheme organiser

sceptre@surrey.ac.uk. The reflective account provides an opportunity for you to bring together the learning you have gained through your work experience. The focus is on things that you have learnt that you believe will be useful to you when you enter your chosen professional field and more generally what you consider to be useful skills that will make you employable or self-employable. We are looking for a coherent account of about 3 sides A4 (up to 2000 words, single space Arial 11pt). We do not want a checklist of responses to the questions.

1. CONTEXT:

Description of the work you have undertaken, your responsibilities and the organization (about 500 words)

Organisation

- Who were you working for? What does the organization do?
- What sort of work were you doing? / What were your responsibilities?
- What sort of people did you work with? (colleagues, clients, customers)
- How was the work organised? What did you learn about being part of an organisation

Challenges

- What were the main challenges you encountered and why?
- What sort of problems/issues did your encounter and how did you overcome them?

Approximate amount of time (hrs) spent in the work environment a minimum of 100hrs is required

2. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: (at least 1000 words)

a) Please complete the skills and experiences checklist (item 4 below)

b) What were the most important things you learnt and developed? Relate your development to the capability statement. Be comprehensive and give examples of specific experiences/situations through which you learnt these things. You can draw directly from your reflective diary/blog.

Capability and Values Statement Prompts

- 1 Managing and evaluating my own development
- 2 Being able to deal with situations, solve problems, work with challenge and take advantage of opportunity
- 3 Being able to find out what you need to know to do what you need to do
- 4 Being creative and enterprising
- 5 Being a good communicator
- 6 Being able to work with and lead others (including working with clients and customers)
- 7 Behaving ethically and with social responsibility
- 8 *Other areas for personal development that are important to my role me, and which are not included in the above*
- 9 How your values have been involved in your work and how they have been influenced
- 10 The confidence you have gained

3. BEING AN EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL? (about 500 words)

What does it mean to be an effective professional, and how have your views been shaped by this work experience? Illustrate your account with specific examples of situations where you felt you behaved in a professional way or examples when you realized you were

not able to perform in a manner that you believe was appropriate (learning from experiences that were not successful is as important as learning from situations that are).

4. SKILLS & EXPERIENCES CHECKLIST

Please indicate with a ✓ the experiences and skills and personal development you actually gained and add comments to explain

Opportunity	1 No new learning	2 Some new learning	3 Much new learning	4 Capability and values statement
Finding and applying for a job				4
Experience of being interviewed				5
Learning about how an organization/business works				3
Dealing with challenging situations at work				2 & 3
Applying classroom learning				4
Gaining valuable work experience				1
Developing valuable technical skills eg computer systems at Travis Perkins				8
Learning professional behaviors				2
Developing communication skills Verbal/oral skills Listening Written eg reports/ Design eg posters Use of media eg photographs/video				5 5
Develop and use IT skills				8
Learning how to work with colleagues or in a team				6
Learning how to interact with customers or clients				1, 2 & 6
Learning about being managed				2
Learning how to manage others				6
Learning how to manage yourself eg turning up on time				1
Learning about business skills and practices.				1 & 2
Coping with and managing emotions				9
Learning how to negotiate with and persuade others				5
Clarifying future career goals				1
Being given challenging responsibilities				4
Being creative and resourceful to make things happen				4
Experience of being enterprising				4
Self-confidence				10

CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION

1 Reflective diary or access to blog

2 Reflective Account

3 Work Participation Form

Please email your reflective account to sceptre@surrey.ac.uk. Mark the subject of your email Work Certificate