

Policy

Training

We are committed to developing the skills of our employees and recognise that training can benefit us and our staff. Staff should receive training appropriate to their role, subject to business need, operational and budgetary considerations.

Managers are responsible for identifying and monitoring staff training and development needs on an on-going basis. Employees who wish to undertake any form of training relevant to their role should raise the matter informally with their Managers in the first instance.

Most requests for training will be discussed in your PDA or PDA review or informally with your Manager. We recognise that employees may still have a wish to further develop their skills. Eligible employees have a statutory right under section 63D of the Employment Rights Act 1996 to request time off work for study or training. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework within which we can consider those requests.

No-one who requests time off under this policy will be subjected to any detriment or lose any career opportunities as a result.

The Partnership shall indicate in an Individuals contract, if they are expected and required to retain an up to date continued professional development or professional qualification/membership in order to undertake their duties.

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to employees. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants or self-employed contractors. Some employees aged 18 or under are subject to special laws on education and training, and may not be covered by this policy, depending on their age and qualifications. Further information about training for young employees is available from the Practice Director.

Personnel responsible for this policy

The Practice Director has overall responsibility for the effectiveness of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. Day-to-day responsibility including on-going review of this policy has been delegated to Managers, and any questions about the content or application of this policy should be addressed to them.

All Managers have a responsibility to lead by example and to promote our aims and objectives with regard to training. To facilitate this process, Managers will be given appropriate training and are encouraged to seek advice from the Practice Director on any issues raised under this policy.

When can staff request time off to train?

To be eligible to make a formal request under this policy, you must:

- Be an employee;
- Have worked for us continuously for 26 weeks at the date your request is made;
- Have made no previous formal requests under this policy in the last 12 months.

We will ignore the fact that a request was made less than 12 months ago in the following circumstances:

- If we agreed to the earlier request but the training was cancelled or you were unable to start it because of unforeseen circumstances that were not your fault; or
- If you withdrew the earlier request because it was not valid.

Recording training on timesheet

All training is to be recorded on the time recording system (Focalpoint) as follows subject to approval by the Practice Manager:

- One day training course or college attendance, 7.5 hours.
- Half day training course or college attendance, 3.75 hours.
- Lunchtime training/CPD, 0.5 hours.
- Attendance of evening seminars/lectures by relevant professional bodies, 1.0 hours.

All training entries on the timesheet system must describe the training undertaken; otherwise training time may be rejected.

For all other training, including online, distance learning and project related training, hours to be agreed with the employees manager or the Practice Manager prior to undertaking the training.

The practice reserves the right to use this information for data analysis and reporting of training to external organisations.

What type of training is covered?

Any type of study or training can be requested under this policy. It does not matter how or where it takes place. For example, it could be:

- Training provided in the workplace;
- A one-day training course provided by an external training provider;
- A part-time college course;
- An online training module (e-learning);
- A distance learning course.
- Training under agreement (ICE approved training scheme)

The study or training does not need to lead to a formal qualification. The only limitation is that it must be for the purpose of:

- Improving your effectiveness at work; and
- Improving the performance of our business.

Making a formal time off to train request

To make a formal request under this policy you should submit it in writing to your Manager. Please include the following information:

- A statement that the request is made under this policy or under section 63D of the Employment Rights Act 1996;
- The date of the request;
- The subject matter of the study or training;
- Where and when it would take place;
- Who would provide or supervise it;
- What qualification (if any) it would lead to;
- How you think the study or training would improve your effectiveness at work;
- How you think the study or training would improve the performance of the business; and
- If you have made any previous application under this policy, the date of that application and how it was made (for example, whether it was by e-mail or letter and who you sent it to).

If we agree to your request without the need for a meeting, we will tell you in writing.

We will treat your request as withdrawn if:

- You tell us you are withdrawing the request;
- You fail to attend two meetings under this policy without reasonable cause; or

- You unreasonably refuse to provide information we need to consider your request.

In those cases your Manager will write to confirm that your request has been treated as withdrawn. You will not normally be able to make another formal request for 12 months from the date of your original request.

Meeting

Your Manager will arrange to hold a meeting with you at a mutually convenient time and place, usually within 28 days of receiving your formal request. The meeting may also be attended by the Practice Director.

If the person who would ordinarily hold the meeting is on annual leave or sick leave at the time of your request, the meeting will be held within 28 days of their return or within 8 weeks of your request, whichever is sooner. If necessary you should contact your Manager, who will appoint someone else to hold the meeting.

The meeting will be used to discuss your request and, if appropriate, explore any alternatives.

You may bring a colleague to the meeting as a companion if you wish. Your companion may speak during the meeting and confer privately with you, but should not answer questions on your behalf.

If your chosen companion is unable to attend at the time set for the meeting, you should contact your Manager and we will try to rearrange the meeting. If the meeting cannot be rearranged within seven days of the original date, we may suggest that you bring a different companion or come alone.

We will tell you our decision in writing within 14 days of the meeting unless we agree a longer time limit.

If we agree to your request

Where we agree to all or part of your request we will give you a written and dated notice containing the following information:

- Which part of your request is agreed;
- If any part is not agreed;
- The subject of the agreed study or training;
- Where and when it will take place;
- Who will provide or supervise it;
- What qualification (if any) it will lead to;
- Any changes to your working hours in order to accommodate the agreed study or training;
- Whether you will be paid for carrying out the study or training;
- How any tuition fees or other direct costs of the agreed study or training will be met.

In some cases we may suggest changes to your request. For example, we may suggest a different course of study or training, or we may suggest an alternative time or place. These may be discussed at the meeting or may require discussion afterwards. The written notice of our decision will set out any changes that you have agreed to. We will ask you to sign and return a copy of the notice to show your agreement.

We do not have to pay you while you are taking time off for study or training requested under this policy, unless this is necessary in order to comply with minimum wage legislation. However, in some cases we may agree to pay you for some or all of the time off.

We do not have to pay the costs of study or training requested under this policy (including any associated costs such as travel expenses). However, in some cases we may agree to meet some or all of those costs.

If we reject all or part of your request

Where we reject all or part of your request, we will give you a written and dated notice containing the following information:

- Which part of your request is rejected;
- If any part is agreed;
- Which of the grounds for rejection set out below applies and why; and
- The appeal procedure.

We may reject your request for any of the following reasons:

- That the proposed study or training would not in our view improve your effectiveness at work and the performance of the business;
- The burden of additional costs;
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- Inability to recruit additional staff;
- Detrimental impact on quality;
- Detrimental impact on performance;
- Insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work;
- Planned structural changes; or
- Any other reasons that the Government sets out in future regulations.

Appeal

You may appeal if we reject all or part of your request. Your appeal must:

- Be in writing and dated;
- Set out the grounds on which you are appealing; and
- Be sent to the Practice Director no more than 14 days after you receive the written notice of our decision.

We may decide to uphold your appeal in full without a meeting. In all other cases, the Practice Director will arrange for an appeal meeting to take place within 14 days of receiving your appeal, unless we agree a longer time limit. The meeting will be held at a convenient time for all those attending and you may bring a colleague as a companion.

The appeal meeting will be held by the appropriate Senior Managers and/or Partners. Your Manager and the Practice Director may also be present.

We will tell you the outcome of the appeal in writing within 14 days of the meeting, unless we agree a longer time limit. That decision will be final and you will not be able to make another formal request until 12 months after the date of your original request.

If we uphold your appeal, we will give you the information set out in this policy.

If we reject your appeal, we will explain our reasons to you in writing.

If we need more time

There may be exceptional occasions when it is not possible to adhere to the time limits in this policy. For example, we may need to delay holding a meeting or notifying you of the decision. Your Manager will ask for your agreement to extend the time limit, and will confirm in writing any agreement reached. In many cases this will be in your interests as it will enable the appropriate person to consider your request properly.

Changes to agreed study or training arrangements

You must tell us in writing immediately if:

- You do not start the agreed study or training for any reason (for example, if it is cancelled);
- You do not complete the agreed study or training; or
- You undertake (or wish to undertake) a different course of study or training.

You should also tell us immediately if you become aware of any changes to agreed study or training, including changes to the timing or content of the course.

ICE approved training

We may offer an ICE approved training agreement to trainee graduate engineers and technicians. The training agreement provides support to trainees through initial professional development (IPD) and to a professional qualification. Our training scheme is applicable to for anyone wishing to become either a chartered (CEng) or incorporated (IEng) engineer.

This is a formal agreement between the trainee and the practice and sets out the responsibilities and commitment of everyone involved in the training scheme.

A trainee is required to apply and transfer to graduate membership of the ICE. It is recommended that this application is completed within 12 months of graduation/commencement of employment with the practice.

We will approve each trainee onto the ICE training agreement and pay the appropriate registration fee.

Once the training agreement is registered, the trainee will be mentored either a practice supervising civil engineer (SCE) or appointed delegated engineers (DEs) for the duration of the training agreement.

The SCE confirms (on behalf of the practice) that:

- The practice will provide trainees with opportunities to complete the ICE Training Scheme, either within the practice and/or by secondment to other organisations
- The practice will provide a training structure to review the trainees' progress against the attributes – an initial assessment meeting, an annual review of progress, and plans and confirmation of completion

The trainee confirms that they will:

- Make full use of the opportunities available and their SCE's advice to develop as a professional engineer
- Record evidence of their experience against the attributes using IPD Online and through attached documents as required by their SCE or DE
- Maintain their membership of ICE

For the duration of the training agreement trainees are expected to record their experience using the ICE's IPD Online or equivalent approved system. The SCE and DE can access trainees' records and sign-off achievement levels for each attribute as they progress.

There's no time limit on a Training Agreement but we retain the right to terminate an agreement if the trainee is not performing to the required standard.

For further information on the ICE Training scheme reference should be made to the ICE Training Scheme and Guidance (available from the ICE website).

Where appropriate we may suggest that a trainee also applies for student or graduate membership of another professional institution, such as the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE). Normally it is recommended that such applications are completed within 12 months of graduation/commencement of employment with the practice. The IStructE sets similar minimum standards to the ICE in terms of Initial Professional Development (IPD) Core Objectives for Technician, Chartered and Associate Membership. Details can be obtained from the IStructE website. There is no timescale for completing IPD.

We do not formally administer a training scheme/agreement with the IStructE; however the IStructE will accept the practice's ICE training agreement under their 'Accredited Training Scheme Route'. This means that provided a trainee is registered with an ICE approved training agreement then this will be accepted by the IStructE.

Alternatively, the trainee can follow the IStructEs own 'Individually Managed Route' if they wish, but this will not be formally controlled by SWH in the same way as the ICE training agreement is.

Undergraduate sponsorship

We may offer and enter in to a sponsorship agreement with undergraduate (student) studying and MEng/BEng degree (or equivalent) in Civil and/or Structural Engineering at accredited Universities.

The terms of the sponsorship agreement will be agreed and signed by the student and the practice SCE before its commencement.

This sponsorship may last for up to 4 years of study and will require the student to gain work experience at one or more of our offices during their summer vacation(s).

The continuation of sponsorship will be subject to satisfactory completion of work experience and academic progress.

The student or practice may terminate the sponsorship subject to the terms of the agreement.

On completion of the sponsorship scheme we may offer long term employment to the student upon their graduation. If the Student refuses an offer of employment the practice reserves the right to request the final year of sponsorship to be refunded.

Partner Responsible	Last Review	Next Review
Ian Llewellyn	March 2021	March 2022