

FW

Solutions

••• work-based learning

LEARNER HANDBOOK



EARLY YEARS, EDUCATION & RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE



WHO WE ARE

FW Solutions is a specialist training provider delivering programmes in Early Years, Education, Residential Childcare and Leadership and Management.

FW Solutions has been operating since 2008 and supports employers and learners in the regions of North and West Yorkshire and the North East of England.

We are a quality driven company who pride ourselves on supporting our learners and employers to achieve their aspirations and chosen qualifications or apprenticeships.

Our Vision and Mission

FW Solutions' vision is to be the preferred provider in the North for employers, learners and local Government delivering exceptional work-based learning that supports the needs of our stakeholders. The vision for our learners is to achieve outstanding results that make significant impacts on their lives.

Our mission is to deliver an outstanding learning experience leading to positive outcomes for our learners, employers and in turn our local community and economy. We hold our shared values at the heart of everything we do.

OUR SHARED VALUES

FLEXIBILITY

FW Solutions has a flexible approach to teaching and learning. Learning can be done through a range of media and can fit around a busy schedule making continuous improvement accessible for everyone. Our flexible approach can also support the equality and inclusion of learner and employer needs. FW Solutions has an internal flexible working policy to ensure a good work/life balance for our employees.

SUCCESS

At FW Solutions we are committed to everybody's success; learner's success is celebrated through completing a qualification or Apprenticeship which ultimately leads to a successful career. Employers succeed in up-skilling and motivating their workforce. FW Solutions successfully deliver training, demonstrated by the quality of results achieved by our learners.

INTEGRITY

FW Solutions has a strong ethos of all staff adhering to moral and ethical principles which is embedded in all we do. Honesty, fairness, equal opportunities and advice and guidance are core to how the company operates. This has a positive impact on learners, employers and all other stakeholders.

NURTURING

FW Solutions nurture each learner to follow their own aspirations and reach their full potential, both in life-long learning and in their own personal development and life skills. We pride ourselves on our exceptional Information, Advice and Guidance team who are readily available for support and encouragement.



APPRENTICESHIP LEARNER JOURNEY

APPLICATION
INFORMATION, ADVICE
AND GUIDANCE
INITIAL ASSESSMENT

TEACHING,
LEARNING AND
ASSESSMENT

PROGRESS REVIEW AND
SMART TARGETS

GATEWAY
END POINT
ASSESSMENT

ACHIEVEMENT AND
PROGRESSION

INFORMATION
ADVICE AND
GUIDANCE

COURSE
ENROLMENT
INDUCTION

ON AND OFF THE
JOB TRAINING

APPLICATION
INFORMATION, ADVICE
AND GUIDANCE
INITIAL ASSESSMENT

TEACHING,
LEARNING AND
ASSESSMENT

PROGRESS REVIEW AND
SMART TARGETS

ACHIEVEMENT

FURTHER TEACHING,
LEARNING AND
ASSESSMENT

PROGRESSION

INFORMATION
ADVICE AND
GUIDANCE



ADVANCED LEARNER LOAN JOURNEY

ACCEPTANCE BY
THE STUDENT LOAN
COMPANY
COURSE
ENROLMENT

INITIAL LIABILITY
POINT



Programme Planning Meeting

After you have been signed onto a course by an Engagement Officer, you will receive enrolment details by email. Your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator will contact your employer within two weeks to arrange a date for your Programme Planning Meeting.

At your enrolment meeting, you should have registered your details on the FW Solutions website (fwsolutions.net) to be able to access the Learner Hub. Within the Learner Hub you will find the following:

- Learner FAQs
- Study Area
- Learner Journey Log
- Learning Style Questionnaire
- Learner Voice

The study area is to assist you with your course as well as provide you with useful information and resources.

At your Programme Planning Meeting your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator will give you an introduction to VQ Manager, our e-portfolio where you upload and access your work. VQ Manager is a web-based program that allows you to interact with your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator — www.vqmanager.co.uk

Throughout your programme of study, you will meet with your Teaching and Learning Coordinator (TLC) at your workplace. You will agree dates for future tutorials and assessments with your TLC. You will also agree on ‘remote’ tutorials in between face to face visits. These online visits will take place using a platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams and since the COVID-19 pandemic, have supplemented traditional visits to allow extra teaching time with your TLC. It is vital that you note the dates agreed. If you are unable to make any of the appointment dates, it is essential that you let your Teaching & Learning Co-ordinator know so that another learner can be given your appointment. You should also notify us of any changes in your personal circumstances, for example change of address, change of name or if you are planning to change employer.

Getting Started

Your course is made up of a number of Guided Learning Hours, i.e. "on the job" and "off the job" training. On the Job: is when you are working in your appointed job role at your setting Off the Job: is learning within your normal (contracted) working hours but separate to your normal day to day duties For apprentices it is very important that you log the time you spend training 'off the job' on VQ Manager as we must evidence your minimum number of hours as agreed at the start of your programme. This must be at least 20% of your working hours.

Your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator will set you assessment plans on VQ Manager to provide you with a structure and to monitor your progress over the duration of your course. Your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator and your Manager will review your progress every 8 weeks, and this will be recorded on VQ Manager.



Types of Evidence

During your programme of study, you will compile a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates your knowledge, skills and behaviours (attitudes). Here are the types of evidence you and your TLC might record.

OBS Observation

Carried out in the workplace. This is a very important method of assessing your competence and allows your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator to see you demonstrating your skills. Your TLC may attend meetings where you are an active participant. If this is the case, you should seek permission from the person leading the meeting.

PD Professional Discussion

Carried out in the workplace. During a professional discussion you will have the opportunity to provide information which proves competence and knowledge. This is a discussion with your TLC which will be prepared for in advance of your meeting. Professional Discussions are digitally recorded and uploaded into VQ Manager.

WT Witness Testimony

There will be instances when your TLC will not be able to see you demonstrate your skills, therefore a Witness Testimony is helpful to provide independent verification that the standard has been met. A Witness Testimony can be provided by a manager or qualified colleague. The witness can provide a written account of the occasion which they believe proves your competence and must be signed and dated by the witness.

Q&A Questioning

Your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator will not be able to observe you in every situation. Questioning can be used to establish how you would deal with a theoretical situation and detailed answers should be given to show a full understanding of the standard required.

Written Questions

You can often provide written answers for areas where you are asked to 'list' 'describe', 'state' or 'explain' something. You can simply create a Word document detailing your answers and upload the document to VQ Manager.

Personal Statement/Reflective Account

A written account which you feel proves your competence but for which a different method of assessment would be difficult. Personal Statements should be a detailed account of the incident demonstrating that you have a full understanding of the criteria for which competence is being claimed. Your employer should also support this with a witness testimony (see above).

You should discuss with your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator which types of evidence are acceptable for the End Point Assessment of your apprenticeship standard as there are different requirements for each Standard.

What your evidence means

Your evidence must meet the following requirements:

VALID

Relevant to the qualification for which competence is claimed.

AUTHENTIC

Produced by you.

CURRENT

Sufficiently recent to create confidence that the same skill, understanding or knowledge persists at the time the evidence is claimed.

RELIABLE

You can consistently perform to this level.

SUFFICIENT

Your evidence fully meets the requirements of the qualification. You are likely to find that on some occasions the evidence you provide for one criterion meets criteria in another area. You are encouraged to become familiar with all the learning outcomes for your programme of study so that you can recognise when this situation arises. When submitting evidence please specify all criteria which you believe your evidence meets.

Timescales/Deadlines

At the start of your course, you will also be given a 'planned end date'. The length of this will depend upon the route and level of your chosen apprenticeship or qualification. It is important that timescales are adhered to so that you progress in line with the individual learning plan you will have agreed during your first meeting with your TLC. Failure to meet end-point assessment dates may have implications on your achievement.

End Point Assessment

Learners working towards an apprenticeship standard will take part in an end-point assessment. Once your employer agrees that you are competent at your job and ready for end-point assessment, you will be tested on your knowledge and practical capabilities. This will be carried out by an independent assessment organisation chosen by your employer and the assessor must be independent of the training provided by FW Solutions and your employer. You will usually be graded Pass, Merit or Distinction but if you do not pass this end-point assessment you will not achieve your apprenticeship.

People involved in the delivery of learning programmes

Teaching and Learning Coordinator (TLC)

This is the allocated person who will support you in your workplace. They provide the teaching and learning required to ensure you have the necessary knowledge, understanding and practical skills to complete your apprenticeship or qualification. They will also support you with the English and maths aspects of your apprenticeship and they will support you to improve your Digital Skills. They will assess any work completed and provide you with constructive feedback and regular updates to support your progress.

Internal Quality Assurer (IQA)

This person, sometimes called an Internal Verifier (IV), is responsible for ensuring the work undertaken by all Teaching and Learning Coordinators meets the required quality standards. They may occasionally accompany your TLC and observe planned teaching and learning or assessment sessions. It is important to remember that they are checking the quality of the work undertaken by your TLC and not making judgements on your work.

Subject Verifier (SV)

The Subject Verifier is employed by the Awarding Body i.e. Pearson, ProQual or NCFE to ensure FW Solutions is meeting the required quality standards. They typically attend FW Solutions' Head Office twice per year and may ask to meet with you or speak with you to discuss how your course is going and whether we are providing the appropriate support. Any meetings would be agreed and planned in advance.

End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO)

End Point Assessment is the name given to a series of tests an apprentice must take to prove their ability to do the job they have been training for. These tests take place at the end of an apprenticeship following a period of training and development often referred to as the practical period. This is organised by your training provider but conducted by an end point assessment organisation.

English and Maths Support

All learners, regardless of apprenticeship or qualification, must take initial assessments to determine the current level that you are working at. These are completed before your first meeting, on an online system called NCFE Skills Builder. You should have completed these initial assessments already before receiving this learner handbook.

If you did not achieve maths and English GCSEs at Grade A*-C or Grades 9-4, FW Solutions will deliver English and maths sessions alongside your apprenticeship. You will learn through a combination of online tutorials on Skill Builder and tasks set by your TLC or our Functional Skills specialist. During your apprenticeship, you will take Functional Skills tests in English and maths where appropriate. These tests are carried out in your workplace or a designated testing centre using an online platform.

If you have achieved Grade A*-C or Grades 9-4, you will not take Functional Skills tests, but we will continue to teach you English and maths skills to ensure your literacy and numeracy remain at a good level. This will be embedded into your chosen programme.

Learners working towards stand-alone qualifications (for example, those funded by an Advanced Learner Loan) do not have to take Functional Skills tests, but we will continue to embed maths and English into your programme to improve areas of weakness in literacy and numeracy.

FW Solutions Employees

FW Solutions have a highly qualified and competent staff team. All TLCs have minimum qualification criteria in place to ensure a high standard of delivery to our learners:

- All TLCs have experience working in the sector that they are delivering.
- All TLCs hold relevant occupational qualifications, teaching and assessor qualifications.
- IQAs hold occupational qualifications, assessor qualifications and IQA qualifications.
- All managers hold management qualifications.
- All employees are Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checked every three years.
- In addition to this, a robust programme of continuous professional development training (CPD) and networking is planned for all employees.

Health and Safety

Effective health and safety management is integral to the overall management of learners at FW Solutions and we are fully committed to ensuring that health and safety is planned, organised, controlled, monitored, reviewed and resourced.

The health and safety of learners is a fundamental value for FW Solutions to ensure that learning takes place in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. In addition, we consider that safe learning is essential to maximise learner's experience and achievement.

FW Solutions have an explicit commitment and primary 'duty of care' for health and safety of learners. We have a clear expectation that this duty will be fully met together with our legal and contractual obligation. Competent people will be appointed to assist us in meeting our statutory duties including, where appropriate, specialists from outside the organisation. Every employee must co-operate with us to enable all statutory duties to be complied with.

Our Health and Safety policy is available to view on our website.

Safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults

Child Protection is about recognising abuse & neglect and acting on it. Safeguarding is about keeping children, young people & vulnerable adults safe. In simple terms, Child Protection is re-active and Safeguarding is pro-active.

FW Solutions aims to safeguard learners from:

- Sexual abuse or inappropriate relationships
- Grooming
- Physical & emotional abuse or neglect
- Domestic violence
- Inappropriate supervision by staff/volunteers i.e. 'Bad Practice'
- Bullying
- Cyber Bullying
- Self-harm, risky behaviour
- Unsafe activities & environments
- Accidents e.g. road/home
- Crime
- Fear of crime
- Exploitation including financial abuse, sexual exploitation, forced marriages
- Immigration issues
- Potentially unsafe environments e.g. parks/playgrounds
- Homelessness & unsuitable housing
- Victimisation due to race, sexuality, faith, gender or disability

The Government has a scheme in place to eliminate the chances of recruiting known abusers into the education sector. The DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) is a way of checking the background of anyone applying for a role in education. A particular threat that is facing learners is cyber-bullying/harassment. Cyber bullying is when a young person (under the age of 18) is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or targeted by another young person using the internet, mobile phones or any other type of digital technology. If a person is over the age of 18, these actions are defined as cyber-harassment. Any learner wishing to report an incident about another learner or work colleague should in the first instance speak to their TLC. Our Safeguarding policy is available to view on our website.

Prevent Policy

Building resilience in our young people and the promotion of fundamental British Values is at the heart of preventing radicalisation. We do this by providing a safe place in which all learners can discuss issues, and we aim to give them and their employers the knowledge and confidence to challenge extremist beliefs and ideologies.

FW Solutions is required under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. We take this duty seriously and we responsibly carry out four key actions: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies. If a member of FW Solutions staff or an employer deem a learner to be 'at risk' under our Prevent Policy, we will refer to the Channel Programme, which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

In terms of training, staff have received training to familiarise them with the Prevent Duty and have undertaken WRAP training (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent). In terms of PREVENT POLICY – PREVENTING RADICALISATION internet safety, we ensure suitable policies are in place to keep learners away from extremist materials.

We recognise that we play a vital role in keeping learners safe from harm, including from the risks of extremism and radicalisation, and in promoting the welfare of learners in our care.

Our Prevent policy is available to view on our website.

Equality and Diversity

Equality of opportunity means working to ensure that no learner or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, age, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, care responsibility, HIV status, trade union activity, political or religious belief or because of where they live.

FW Solutions endeavours to:

- Promote good relations among employees and learners and create conditions which contribute to the full development and potential of all its members.
- Create an environment which promotes equality of opportunity in education and employment, free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation of any kind.
- Create a climate where employees and learners are empowered to have the confidence to challenge acts and behaviour which contravene FW Solutions', and its associated organisations', equality and diversity policies and the law.
- Equally respect all employees, learners, and users of its services.
- Judge fairly and appropriately each applicant for a job vacancy, promotion, or training.
- Support and reward learners and staff fairly.

Learner code of conduct

FW Solutions is committed to providing first class learning with a responsibility to all learners to provide professional standards of teaching within a safe and motivating learning environment.

As part of this, learners must also accept and undertake various responsibilities. These form the basis of a Code that every learner must observe. The Learner Code is important as it aims to ensure that everyone works within an environment that is safe, secure, and conducive to learning.

Unacceptable behaviour is defined as – 'any behaviour which impacts negatively on teaching and learning'. Whilst staff are urged to be sensitive to learners' individual circumstances, it must be emphasised that there are no exceptions in the application of the responsibilities outlined in this Code of Conduct.

LEARNER CODE OF CONDUCT

RECOGNISE AND OBSERVE

FWS's and your employer's policies and procedures

CONSIDERATE

Allow others to learn and work without interruption or disruption

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Follow all the Health and Safety procedures required by your employer and FW Solutions

RESPECT

Show respect to others and not intimidate anyone

PUNCTUAL

Attend training sessions punctually and always be on time for work

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Know and follow the emergency evacuation procedures

EXAMPLES OF MISCONDUCT

ABUSIVE LANGUAGE

INTIMIDATING BEHAVIOUR

DELIBERATE MISUSE/THEFT OF EQUIPMENT

CHEATING

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

MISUSE OF THE INTERNET

PLAGIARISM



Agreed break in learning or changing employer

Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to suspend or withdraw a learner from their course due to personal or business circumstances, such as maternity leave or termination of employment, redundancy etc. In the first instance, you should contact your TLC who will discuss it with you and if a break in learning is agreed, will complete a Change of Circumstances form with you and your employer.

If you decide to leave your current employment, we can continue training in your new place of work, providing it is agreed with the new employer and you are carrying out a similar role

The Learner Voice

The Learner Voice is about considering the perspectives and ideas of learners and respecting what everyone has to say. It is about giving learners the opportunity to express their opinions and providing appropriate ways to listen to concerns, interests and needs.

We encourage you to provide us with feedback throughout the duration of your course to let us know how you are finding the learning process. If a particular way of learning is not working for you or you have any suggestions to make, we endeavour to put changes in place to help you. In your learner hub you will record your feedback every month on your progress and you can add any other observations you wish to record. You can also access the learner Facebook page with any questions or comments so that we can keep in touch with your views, needs and concerns. Many FAQs can be answered on our FAQ page on our main site on the IAG page.

If you have agreed to be contacted by the ESFA, you will receive an invite to a yearly quality survey called 'FE Choices'. This is an important performance measuring tool that the Government use to improve the education and training sector and we will encourage you to complete the survey should you receive it.

We also have a written complaints procedure which is documented on your commitment statement (apprentices) and on our website. Please refer to your employer's policies for any work-related concerns.

Information, Advice and Guidance

FW Solutions Ltd strives to provide all learners and potential learners with accurate and up to date information and advice that enables them to make informed choices about their learning. Our staff are impartial and signpost people to the most relevant and appropriate source of information, advice or guidance.

You will find interesting and useful information on our Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) section of the website, the Student Welfare section of the Learner Hub and there is a section entitled Learner Mental Health and Well-being in your study area.

We listen to what our learners say about our service and make improvements as appropriate. Your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator will guide you through your learning and help you make the right choices for your course of study. At the end of your course your Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator will discuss progression routes and career pathways with you.

Have a look at our social media accounts (you can follow the links from our home page www.fwsolutions.net) for study tips and events.

Contacts

Training/Funding/ Employer queries:

Rebecca Warden, Business Development Director 07713536672

Website/Technical Support:

Sinead Finnerty, Marketing Manager 01423 536672

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Nicola Balmforth, Teaching & Learning Co-ordinator 07841199172

SEN-Co:

Please call head office: 01423 536672

Equality and Diversity:

Sandra Hardy, Managing Director - 01423 536672

All other questions:

Administration Team, Head Office - 01423 536672