BSB 7.0

BSBHRM413

SUPPORT THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEAMS AND INDIVIDUALS

Aspire
Learning Resources

BSBHRM413

Support the learning and development of teams and individuals

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1

Learning Resources

Aspire also has learning resources available in these areas:

- Foundation skills
- LLN and employability skills (non-competency)
- Community services
- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Allied health

BSBHRM413 Support the learning and development of teams and individuals, Release 1

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CONTENTS

Before you begin vii

Topic 1 | Contribute to needs development 1

1A Gather information on performance 2
1B Identify learning and development needs 8
1C Confirm learning plans meet individual and group training needs 17
1D Encourage self-evaluation and continuous improvement 24
Summary 29
Learning Checkpoint 1: Contribute to needs development 30

Topic 2 | Support implementation of learning and development 35

2A Develop collaborative learning plans 36
2B Select relevant learning delivery methods 43
2C Provide appropriate learning opportunities 49
2D Identify resources and time lines 57
Summary 66
Learning Checkpoint 2: Support implementation of learning and development 67

Topic 3 | Monitor and evaluate workplace learning 73

3A Monitor learning plans 74
3B Seek feedback about improvements 78
3C Assess and record performance and outcomes 89
3D Maintain records of competency 96
Summary 100
Learning Checkpoint 3: Monitor and evaluate workplace learning 101

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBHRM413 Support the learning and development of teams and individuals*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	▪ Uses structured approaches to set goals, monitor progress and adjust learning approaches for self and others ▪ Builds on knowledge and experience to facilitate interaction and learning with others
Reading	▪ Analyses textual information from a range of sources to identify organisational requirements ▪ Analyses information from a range of sources to evaluate performance
Writing	▪ Develops materials to suit the requirements of different roles and individuals in the organisation ▪ Maintains records using correct technical and organisational vocabulary
Oral Communication	▪ Uses vocabulary appropriate to context and to establish a supportive and learning environment ▪ Uses listening and questioning techniques to confirm or show understanding of different perspectives ▪ Selects and uses appropriate conventions and protocols when communicating with co-workers in a range of work contexts
Self-management	▪ Recognises and responds to explicit and implicit organisational procedures and protocols ▪ Understands how own role meshes with others and contributes to broader goals
Teamwork	▪ Recognises the importance of building rapport to establish effective working relationships ▪ Collaborates with others to achieve joint outcomes, playing an active role in facilitating effective group interaction ▪ Negotiates with others to achieve agreeable outcomes playing an active role in facilitating consensus in potentially contentious situations
Problem solving	▪ Uses logical planning processes to organise, implement and monitor learning and development needs ▪ Systematically gathers and analyses all relevant information and evaluates options to make informed decisions ▪ Evaluates outcomes of decisions to identify opportunities for improvement

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome		Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Contribute to needs development	1A	Gather information on performance	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1B	Identify learning and development needs	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1C	Confirm learning plans meet individual and group training needs	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1D	Encourage self-evaluation and continuous improvement	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 2: Support implementation of learning and development	2A	Develop collaborative learning plans	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2B	Select relevant learning delivery methods	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2C	Provide appropriate learning opportunities	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2D	Identify resources and time lines	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3: Monitor and evaluate workplace learning	3A Monitor learning plans	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3B Seek feedback about improvements	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3C Assess and record performance and outcomes	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3D Maintain records of competency	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic 1 | Contribute to needs development

1A Gather information on performance

1B Identify learning and development needs

1C Confirm learning plans meet individual and group training needs

1D Encourage self-evaluation and continuous improvement

1A Gather information on performance

Recent studies show that continued workplace learning is essential if organisations are to survive and remain competitive in today's global economy.

By establishing a culture of lifelong learning, an organisation can ensure that employees have the required skills and knowledge to continually improve the organisation's performance.

Developing and implementing an effective learning and development system starts by gathering reliable information to determine the performance of teams and individuals.

As a frontline manager, team leader, supervisor or team coordinator, it is your role to gather information to determine how team members are performing, based on several areas of performance that are relevant to their job roles. You will need to source this information from a range of reliable sources to ensure you are able to make outcome-based decisions about their development needs.

Focus on key areas of job performance

When gathering information about performance, focus on the key requirements of the team members' job roles. This may require you to review position descriptions to identify the specific tasks and competencies that team members must fulfil on a daily or weekly basis.

The following list describes a range of areas you could consider when identifying the actual performance of team members.

Task-specific skills

- Learning how to carry out a task; for example, writing a report, taking stock of inventory

Process skills

- Understanding and applying organisational processes; for example, processing invoices, completing a leave form

Interpersonal skills

- Improving interpersonal relationships; for example, communicating with team members, developing strategies to deal with conflict

Team skills

- Improving the way the team works; for example, setting goals, dealing with changes

Individual skills

- Improving the skills of team members; for example, time management, writing a business case, using a software program

Short-term skills

- Identifying skills needed in the short term; for example, operating a new piece of equipment

Long-term skills

- Identifying skills people need to achieve the long-term goals of an organisation; for example, developing interpersonal and negotiation skills to manage business contacts that might result in future projects

Priority skills

- Identifying skills needed urgently; for example, arranging compliance with updated work health and safety regulations

Generic skills

- Identifying how generic skills can be developed in team members' day-to-day activities; for example, communication, teamwork

Review position descriptions

Look at position descriptions to determine the required tasks and skills and knowledge each position requires. The criteria in a job description can help to establish the level of performance (desired competencies) for that position. A job description may also define the qualifications or experience a person must have to be considered for a position.

Be aware that situations change, and a person may be doing additional duties to those mentioned in their current position description. For this reason, position descriptions should be regularly updated. By matching the person's current tasks with those outlined in their position description, you should be able to see whether the role has changed and, if so, whether the person requires additional skills or knowledge to handle the new responsibilities.

Access reliable information sources

To determine the actual performance of team members, you must collect quality information from reliable information sources.

The best decisions about development needs can only be made with access to quality data that is accessed from reliable information sources. You will need to gather information that provides you with a clear picture as to how the team is performing across a range of areas that are specific to the team members' job role.

When sourcing information about the performance of team members, one piece of evidence from one source will never tell the full story, nor will it be reliable enough for you to make an informed decision about the team members' development needs.

To gather quality performance information, ensure the elements outlined below are evident:

Quantifiable	Based on numbers/figures, facts, ratios and percentages
Valid	Relates directly to the performance indicators
Current	Provides an accurate picture of what is happening right now
Authentic	Must be accurate and true
Sufficient	Have enough data to confirm actual results

Performance can be identified by completing direct observations, asking for feedback from managers, accessing performance reports from operational systems and collecting useful quantitative data from other sources such as customer complaints.

Performance data can be collected from a number of sources, including:
▪ direct observation, which is an effective way of discerning actions of individuals and gathering immediate and accurate data ▪ performance reports, charts and other data generated by the organisation's information systems ▪ formal surveys and feedback from supervisors and frontline managers ▪ feedback from customers ▪ regular discussions (formal and/or informal) with team members ▪ audits, which can identify areas of quality as well as areas of concern.

Observe current work practices and procedures

Observing team members on a day-to-day basis is one of the best ways to identify their individual learning needs. By watching how individuals handle their tasks, deal with others and follow procedures, and by looking at the quality of material they prepare and their ability to solve problems, you should be able to identify skill gaps or areas in which they could use further training. You should continually monitor complaint levels regarding your team's work and review any feedback received about your team's performance from stakeholders and other managers. Some ways of doing this follow.

Responding to team feedback	▪ Observations and feedback are often the impetus for you and the team to get together to discuss the situation and arrange an appropriate solution. Though no new skills may need to be learnt, the team could come up with new and improved work practices or ways to communicate more effectively. ▪ Keep notes on team performance so you have a written record you can refer to in group discussions and when making decisions. Provide sufficient information and evidence, such as completed work, to enable you to show the group exactly where the skill gaps are.

Example

Review documentation to determine current performance

Janine works as a sales team leader for a medium-sized contact centre. Her team has not been achieving their sales target for the past six months, and as a result she is planning to implement a new training program that will aim to increase the sales and customer service skills of her staff and boost the overall results of the team.

Janine has reviewed the position descriptions of the sales team to determine the key areas of performance, primary skills and responsibilities required of the roles. She has used this information to create an observation checklist that is going to be used to identify skill gaps and current competencies of her team.

Janine plans to spend an hour observing each of her team members as they take calls from customers. She will take notes using the checklist and mark off which competencies each team member demonstrates. Janine aims to complete at least three observations of each team member over the next month to ensure she gathers valid, sufficient and reliable evidence about their current competencies.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

Which of the following are relevant sources of information on employee performance?
Tick all that apply.

- ○ Position descriptions, including required skills, knowledge and qualifications
- ○ Direct observations
- ○ Performance reports, charts and other data generated by the organisation's information systems
- ○ Formal surveys and feedback from supervisors and frontline managers
- ○ Regular discussions (formal and/or informal) with team members

Question 2

List four performance areas you would need to collect information on to determine the training needs of an employee.

1B Identify learning and development needs

A learning need is an area within an individual's competencies that needs improvement. Learning needs may result from a lack of training, exposure or skills, or a poor or declining attitude in the person.

Learning needs will vary from one team member to the next and result from a lack of experience, poor training or lack of skills, or a combination of these. In some cases, the team member may have a poor attitude to a specific task or their job, which is preventing them from meeting the organisation's requirements.

Learning needs can be identified in various ways. Correctly identifying learning needs is important. If the identification is inadequate or wrong, you could end up providing ineffectual or inappropriate training. You need to ensure the information you collect is reliable, valid, unbiased and accurate.

Methods to improve the accuracy of a learning needs assessment
▪ Clarify your organisation's strategic plan so you know the skills required by staff. ▪ Look at job descriptions to determine the skills and knowledge each position requires. ▪ Conduct a workplace skills assessment to ascertain the skills team members currently possess. ▪ Match people's skills against the skills required for their role as outlined in competency standards. ▪ Observe people performing their duties to see firsthand where gaps lie. ▪ Arrange discussions and personal appraisal sessions.

Clarify the organisation's requirements

Team and individual development needs must be aligned with the requirements of the organisation to ensure the outcomes are going to deliver on what the business needs.

Before determining skills and skill gaps, you should have a sound understanding of the organisation's business plans, goals and objectives. You need to be able to identify long-term and short-term goals, and the accompanying skills the organisation needs to achieve them.

You then need to assess the skills you and your team need now and in the long-term to achieve the organisation's goals and, in turn, the team's goals. Identifying the skills and knowledge that are needed for the future is your prime purpose in this exercise. If you are unsure of anything within your organisation's strategic plan, you should clarify these issues with your manager.

Your ability to match the required skills and knowledge of team members with what the organisation requires is a key factor in successful organisational learning and development.

By being aware of current and future directions, you can ensure your team is skilled appropriately for the tasks they have to perform, well ahead of time.

Consider a range of questions
▪ What is the nature of the organisation?
▪ What is the organisation's vision for the next five years?
▪ Are any major changes in business operations or procedures planned?
▪ What skills are needed to function effectively within the organisation, now and in the future?
▪ What specific activities have been allocated to your team?
▪ What skills are needed to carry out team activities?

Example

An organisation's objective

EzyBuy's objective is for all customers to have the option of paying online for purchases. This necessitates an 18-month lead-in requiring the following actions:

- Research has to be conducted.
- Decisions have to be made about what software program to purchase.
- The program has to be installed.
- Employees have to be trained to use the system.
- Customers have to be informed and provided with instructions.

The business operations manager prepares a list of the necessary activities, the personnel involved, the skills possessed by those who will be handling the online ordering, along with the skills they need and the timelines for each task.

A plan is prepared that clearly defines what actions have to be taken and when they are to start and finish. Training employees to use the system is a key element of the objective, so plenty of time is allocated within the schedule. Management is confident that when the system is implemented it will operate smoothly.

Organisational policies and procedures

Organisational policies and procedures cover a wide range of subjects such as employment conditions, work health and safety, technical processes, communication procedures, performance reviews and security arrangements. Team members must follow the organisation's policies and procedures so they can consistently work within the organisation's requirements, and help both the team and the organisation operate in accordance with relevant business laws.

In their role, a team member may need to write a letter or a report; prepare a brief business case; help you prepare a contract; apply for sick leave; make travel arrangements; or request training. These tasks must all be carried out according to the organisation's policies and standards, and team members should fully understand the required procedure and the reason for a consistent approach. Teams function more effectively when they are not wasting time redoing work or constantly asking how to do something.

There will be times when you need to bring the team together to explain a new policy or process that has just been introduced. If you notice team members are following procedures incorrectly, such as filing documents in the wrong electronic file, you may need to refresh people's memories of existing procedures.

Organisational policies and procedures are introduced to employees during induction. Team leaders will need to induct new employees into the organisation by clearly explaining the organisation's policies and procedures, clarifying issues new employees are unsure of and explaining why this information is important. You might give new staff members a folder of relevant material – such as the policies and procedures manual, organisational forms and information – or make sure they are aware of where they should access the information.

To make effective decisions for learning and development, these policies and procedures need to be considered.

Policies and procedures	Purpose
Access and equity	Ensure that diversity is not a barrier to employees being able to access quality training. Training needs to be delivered according to the individual needs of employees, taking into consideration their age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, disability, and language, literacy and numeracy skills.
Anti-discrimination	Ensure that all employees are treated respectfully and are not harassed, bullied or excluded from any opportunities within the organisation because of attributes such as gender, age, disability, race or sexuality.

Policies and procedures	Purpose
Confidentiality	Ensure personal information, and the access and storage of records is kept secure. Most organisations will have rules about who is able to access confidential information, and have practices in place to maintain privacy, security and confidentiality, such as individual employee IDs, passwords and even data encryption.
Performance management	Ensure a system is in place that provides employees with: ▪ a clear understanding of what is expected of them ▪ ongoing feedback related to individual and teamwork performance ▪ development opportunities ▪ opportunities to address underperformance ▪ input into their career progression.
Work, health and safety	Ensure the health and safety of employees within the workplace. WHS must be considered at all points throughout the learning and development process, including when identifying suitable training opportunities. For example, if considering off-site training, the organisation will need to consider safe travel arrangements for employees, timing and duration of training (especially for night workers or shift workers) and infrastructure/facilities of training venues.

Conducting a workplace skills assessment

One of the most valuable and comprehensive methods of assessing the current skill levels of staff is to conduct a formal workplace skills assessment. This can complement other methods of identification such as observation, discussion and self-assessment.

Ideally this should be done regularly, although small organisations might do so on a needs-only basis. Some organisations hire an external consultant to perform organisation-wide workplace assessments. Conducting a workplace skills assessment takes time, and you should develop a plan that lists the tasks, who will be responsible for them, and the time line for carrying them out.

There are two parts to carrying out a formal workplace skills assessment: a skills audit and a training needs analysis. It is important to work collaboratively with the team, creating a comfortable atmosphere where everyone is encouraged to respond appropriately because they know why you are collecting the information and how it will be used to help them develop their skills and knowledge.

Skills audit

A skills audit provides an overview of the person's current job role, the nature of their work and how they perform it. Some audits also ask employees to record any training they have recently completed outside their current job that might benefit the organisation.

The most common way to conduct the audit is to develop a survey consisting of general questions relating to the position and job role, and a questionnaire listing a bank of skills and knowledge required by the organisation. Ask each team member to acknowledge which skills they have and how well they think they use them. The skills are generally grouped into categories. Some audits use broad headings such as technical skills and knowledge, administrative skills and knowledge, management skills and experience, and personal development. Others are more specific; for example, information technology (IT), administration, finance, research and planning, and teamwork.

When conducting a skills audit you must be clear about the purpose of the process and what you want your team to do. Be aware that the process is not entirely error-proof, as it relies on each person completing the audit honestly and objectively.

A skills audit identifies the following features.

Current skills	The skills and knowledge a person has at the time the audit is carried out
Competence level	The level of competence the person has achieved
Relevance	The importance of the person's skills and knowledge to their job role
Required skills	The skill level required by the person holding the job

Training needs analysis

A training needs analysis (TNA) focuses on the skills, knowledge and attributes that need to be developed, and the type of training most appropriate to fill the learning gap. A skills audit form is used to gather information when doing a TNA. Some forms also include questions on people's career paths and the training they need to assist them in this area. Depending on the organisation's requirements, you might divide the questions into those for the job, those relating to professional development needs and those that concern career paths.

Before you start, be clear about the purpose of the TNA, what type of questions you want to ask and how you are going to collate the responses.

A skills audit form includes the following information about candidates:
▪ whether they need training in a specific area
▪ what type of training they need
▪ how important they consider the training need
▪ how urgent the need is for training or development
▪ their training delivery and/or location preference
▪ their time preference for undertaking the training.

Example

Interpersonal skills training needs analysis

Here is an example of an interpersonal skills TNA form.

Interpersonal Skills TNA

Consider the following interpersonal skills you need in your work and tick (✓) the importance of each one. The levels of importance are:

VI = Very Important

I = Important

NI = Not Important

H = High

M = Medium

L = Low

Then rate the level of skills required (high, medium, low), identify if you need training (yes, no), the priority and training preference.

Example

Interpersonal skills training needs analysis

Technical skills, knowledge and experience	How important are these skills, knowledge and experience?			What skills level do you require?			Do you need training in this area?	Priority			Urgency within months	Preference (workplace, off-job conference)
	VI	I	NI	H	M	L	Y/N	H	M	L		
Telephone skills												
Working in a team												
Problem-solving												
Time management												
Negotiation												
Public speaking and presenting												
Stress management												
Customer service												

Aligning learning needs with organisational requirements

Before you prepare a learning and development plan, you need to be aware of any requirements the organisation has in relation to professional development, and ensure that all learning programs you implement are in line with such requirements.

You need a sound knowledge of your organisation's goals, objectives, policies and procedures. You also need to be familiar with equipment operating manuals and ensure these form part of any training program. If you identified customer service as an area requiring training, you need to be sure you are familiar with your organisation's customer service charter so the learning content of a training session matches the organisation's philosophy and culture.

The following lists a number of organisational requirements you should be familiar with when planning a learning program, and provides examples of what is required to meet these policies and procedures.

Policies and procedures
Policies and procedures detail the working conditions of the organisation and what is required of employees with regard to all aspects of their participation in the workplace. They also indicate organisational requirements for interactions external to the organisation, such as personal presentation, customer service and written documentation. Manuals also outline specific procedures such as how to operate equipment, how to process an order or an account, or how to handle customer complaints.

Goals, objectives, plans, systems and processes
Goals, objectives and plans are generally broader organisational directions. They set the direction of the organisation and/or team, and establish or define organisational culture. They provide information on sales targets, budgets, new products and new markets. Plans outline how the organisation and/or team will achieve its goals and objectives. Systems and processes generally refer to organisational structure and reporting processes.

Ethical standards
Organisations that value high levels of ethical standards have these written into their codes of conduct, policies and procedures. All their employees are expected to conform and abide by the requirements of these documents. Team leaders who set good examples and expect the same standard of their team members are important for the success of these initiatives. Organisations that operate with high levels of integrity tend to be trusted and respected by others, both internal and external to the business.

Quality and continuous improvement processes and standards
Quality checks in the development of products or services may be defined in the product quality manual or the customer service charter. Many organisations comply with the nationally accredited ISO Standards for Quality Management Systems and have policies or guidelines to ensure that the organisation maintains its status. This includes having guidelines or processes in place to ensure that internal quality checks or audits are carried out on a regular basis.

Defined resource parameters
These may be guidelines regarding recommended suppliers or how much a department may spend on supplies or products and services.

Practice Task 2

Question 1

Draw a line to match each component of a skills audit (on the left) to its definition.

» Relevance	» The skills and knowledge a person has at the time the audit is carried out
» Required skills	» The level of competence the person has achieved
» Current skills	» The importance of the person's skills and knowledge to their job role
» Competence level	» The skill level required by the person holding the job

Question 2

List four types of organisational requirements that you need to consider when identifying learning and development needs of individuals and teams.

1C Confirm learning plans meet individual and group training needs

A learning plan is a way of planning and documenting the learning and development needs and pathways of individuals and teams.

Learning plans may be called different things in different workplaces, such as a professional development plan, a personal improvement plan, a staff development plan or a training plan. A learning plan helps the employee and team leader determine, record and track learning activities; defines the knowledge and skills that need to be learnt or developed; and outlines the most appropriate way this development can be addressed. Sometimes specific learning needs will relate only to specific members of the group.

Once you have identified the learning and development needs of the team and its members, you need to develop a learning plan with team members.

A learning plan must be based on the following four foundations:
▪ the competency gaps identified in the TNA process
▪ business goals and strategies
▪ the learner's personal learning and development goals
▪ the specific learning opportunities that aim to address the learning needs of groups or individuals.

Example

Learning and development needs

The following is an example of notes relating to a team's learning and development needs made by a supervisor over a period of five months. While these notes serve as a record of the team's needs, they only form the basis for more detailed planning. In this example the team leader has noted whether the learning need is for a team or an individual, and what the priority is.

Learning and development needs plan Supervisor: Michelle Draper				
Date	**Name**	**Need**	**Priority**	**Possible training/ practice**
3 March	Hal Zeigler	New position as data-entry operator; needs to develop and extend existing skills	A	Provide added responsibility and practice.
8 March	Joe Vendy	Redesign of website; needs training in updating and maintenance	Long-term (18 months)	Web designer will train in-house.
9 April	Jo Rigg	Requested Microsoft PowerPoint training at performance appraisal; will be working on two major projects soon, involving many presentations	B	Research relevant course.
11 May	Stacy Weir	Good with customers but unsure when difficulties arise; consider sending her on a course	B	Appoint mentor or find suitable one-day course.
13 June	Team	Training in email etiquette	B	In-house
1 July	Team	Changes to customer management system; need training in new procedures	C	In-house

Individual and team learning plans

Learning plans are formal documents that need to provide records of an employee's professional competencies.

Many workplaces have a template for a learning plan that helps 'map' an employee's development needs. A number of workplaces also incorporate their work and development plans into their performance appraisal system. Employees typically update their plan each month or year as part of their formal review, depending on their organisational policies and procedures, and individual circumstances.

There is no industry standard for the content and format of a learning plan.

A learning plan should provide a record of:

- skill gaps
- how the gaps were identified
- priority for training or development, including long- and short-term needs and time frames
- the type of training required.

Information that you may use when developing a learning plan may come from a variety of sources.

Sources of information may include:	
▪ assessments of completed work	▪ notes on your observations
▪ TNA	▪ questionnaires and surveys
▪ third-party reports	▪ performance appraisal discussions.
▪ self-evaluation reports	

Confirming the team's needs in the learning plan

When confirming the needs of the team, consider whether training should be provided for the whole team or just one person – the latter option allows for the individual to transfer their learning to the rest of the group. This may be a budget consideration, or you may need to consider the time required to do the training.

Team needs may include skills that all members need to have to complete their tasks (for example, operating specialised equipment). Sometimes, training is focused on a newly introduced procedure. In other instances, the skills may be more general (knowledge and skills all staff should have). Examples of general skills are email etiquette and knowledge of organisational procedures. You may find that skills to improve overall work practices and team efficiency are required where your team needs a closer focus. Occasionally, training and skill development may require long-term attention, such as when an organisation decides to implement new delivery processes or produce a new product.

The learning plan for the team should include:

- learning goals
- the area or competency the required skill addresses
- the skills or knowledge needed
- the expected outcome from the training or development
- training options.

Ensuring learning plans meet individual and group training needs

Once learning plans have been developed, they must be analysed to ensure they meet the unique needs of individuals and teams. To ensure this relationship exists, you must review the content of the learning plan, and check that it is consistent with the learning needs of individuals and the team, and supports organisational goals. This process includes checking that training options are suitable and aligned with individual learning preferences and learning goals.

It is good practice to review the learning plan with key people involved in the teams' learning journey and seek their feedback to ensure the plans meet individual and group training needs. These people should include the learners and the manager/leader of the team.

Example

Learning plan for a team

EzyBuy came up with the following plan for a team to improve its teamwork skills.

Task/skill	Learning needs	Goal/outcome	Solution
Working in a team	To improve skills in cooperation, negotiation and conflict resolution (aligns with business objective 2.3).	Team members demonstrate they can work cooperatively with less time having to be spent on settling disputes. Members use strategies to negotiate and solve problems.	Two-day workshop on workplace cooperation Bradman Centre, 25 Willoughby Road, Brisbane

Accessing a learning plan template

Many organisations require employees to be accountable for their own learning and development. Such organisations often have procedures requiring staff members to take an active role in identifying their learning needs and researching appropriate solutions to create a learning plan. In this way, there is a strong motivation to learn.

In this situation, learning plan templates will be readily available to staff. Most organisations will have these stored on the company's intranet or server to be downloaded, completed and submitted to the supervisor or the HR department. Other organisations may treat learning plans as live documents, stored on a cloud-based platform, which can be regularly updated and accessed by relevant staff.

Example

Learning plan template

Tessa recognises that she needs advanced word-processing skills. Her manager helps her develop a learning plan using the organisation's template to record how she can achieve this. This is a copy of Tessa's completed learning plan.

Learning plan	
Name:	Tessa O'Mallery
Date:	23 July
Goal:	Develop skills to complete a range of professional business documents to workplace standards.
Identified need	Action
Competency or task	Produce complex documents.
Organisational objective	Produce quality material that enhances the image of the company.
Identified learning goal	Produce reports more efficiently, using the advanced tables, borders and referencing features in Microsoft Word.
Why is this learning important to you and your job?	I want to learn more about using Microsoft Word to help me with producing reports for work, and for my course in human resources. The skills will enable me to share the team's workload.
How will you accomplish this goal?	I will attend the formal Microsoft Word training sessions organised by my supervisor and practise the new skills that I learn at work and at home.
How will you demonstrate that you have attained your goal?	I will prepare reports efficiently and within designated time lines using these features, and I will share my newly gained knowledge with my colleagues. I will ask for feedback from my supervisor and colleagues.

Practice Task 3

Question 1

What is the purpose of a learning plan?

Question 2

Which of the following elements should you include in a learning plan? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Learning objectives and skill gaps
- ◯ Explanation of the TNA process
- ◯ Costs incurred by the proposed training
- ◯ Time frames and priorities for training
- ◯ Type of training required

1D Encourage self-evaluation and continuous improvement

A self-evaluation is a review by an employee of their own performance.

In a self-evaluation (or self-assessment), the employee responds to a series of questions that helps evaluate their own performance during the evaluation period.

As a manager, your job is to guide the employee through a process that allows them to focus on the key aspects of their performance, from daily targets and results areas to professional development.

Benefits of self-evaluation

If you encourage team members to regularly review their work performance, you may find that they have identified areas in which they need advice or extra training. Such personal reflection means that the team is taking responsibility for its own learning and professional development.

Self-assessment is a strong motivator because it allows individuals to take responsibility for their own development. Therefore, the main benefit of a self-evaluation is self-revelation. This helps a person take ownership of their learning and development, which in turn, acts as a powerful self-motivator in adult learning.

As with a skills audit, the need to be honest and open in an assessment is essential; otherwise the self-evaluation becomes meaningless.

After your team has completed an activity or project, regardless of its length or complexity, conduct a debriefing session that includes a reflection. The group is more likely to give considered views and suggestions for improvement if this is a regular activity after team projects.

Asking questions may help to highlight where training or development should be targeted and encourage your group to make suggestions regarding how needs can be addressed.

Questions to ask to develop the reflection process
▪ What did we achieve?
▪ Did we complete the activity on time? If not, why not?
▪ Was the activity completed within budget? If not, why not?
▪ What were the strengths of the group's performance?
▪ Were there any skill gaps in the group that consequently weakened the team's ability to achieve its goal? How did the group handle this?
▪ Did the activity run smoothly? If not, what aspects need improvement?
▪ How did the group handle unforeseen difficulties?
▪ What feedback did others give about the way the activity was conducted?
▪ Are there any specifically targeted training needs that have been highlighted by feedback or analysis of whether the team achieved its goals?

Encourage individual reflection

Individuals should be encouraged to self-evaluate their performance and identify areas for improvement. Employees should be given an opportunity to explain where they think they have performed well, the benefits their skills brought to the organisation, and the type of development they feel they need to improve their work or develop their career.

Some organisations encourage staff to identify their learning needs and ask them to follow this up by researching possible solutions. Individuals present their learning and development proposal to their manager in a learning and development plan.

Individuals can reflect on their performance, skill levels and development needs using:

- their position description; for example, has it changed and does the individual require new skills
- the performance appraisal process; for example, how well has the individual performed and what would they like to achieve in the future
- competency standards that match the individual's job role; for example, can the individual meet the performance criteria
- feedback from the team leader, colleagues, managers or clients; for example, negative feedback indicating a need for improved skills.

Support self-evaluation processes

If completed correctly, a self-evaluation process provides a great opportunity for employees to honestly critique their performance. It can lead to more self-awareness – knowing one's personal strengths and limits.

To assist team members with a self-evaluation process, the following need to be provided:

Instructions

The participants must understand what they are doing, how to complete the process and what it will be used for.

Explanation of the purpose

In addition to basic instructions, adults need to know the 'why' behind the 'what', including answers to the question 'What's in it for me?' By explaining the purpose and benefits of the self-evaluation, employees will take the process more seriously and have a better attitude.

Resources

Provide a checklist or other similar document that includes key questions and promptings to ensure the employee is self-evaluating their performance in the areas that are important. This means that the time and money invested in the process are not wasted.

Time

It is recommended to allow about two minutes for the person to read the instructions and get themselves ready, 30 seconds per question or prompting, plus an additional five minutes for personal comments and review.

Private place

Employees should conduct their self-evaluation in a quiet place without interruptions so they can devote their full attention and reflection to the process.

Example

Individual reflection

Jacob is one of four sales consultants working for an office supplies company. Every three months Ellen, his supervisor, asks each team member to read their position description, in particular the list of key result areas (KRAs) and duties, and then prepare a brief report on how they believe they have been meeting their responsibilities. She encourages them to think about the successes they have had, why they have been successful, the things they could have done better and what has prevented them from reaching any unachieved objectives. She also asks them to think about the type of training or learning that would help them perform better.

Because Ellen conducts this exercise at regular intervals and follows up on the reports, the team is relaxed with this approach. No one feels pressured, the reports are always completed honestly and accurately, and everyone knows that their evaluation will be taken seriously. Team members feel that, although it takes time away from their sales responsibilities, the assessment provides a valuable opportunity to stop and think about what they are really doing.

These exercises help Jacob realise that, although he feels confident with his communication and sales skills, he needs to know more about some aspects of his job. He had not realised just how important these learning gaps were to his performance.

Things that Ellen asks all her team members to think about:
▪ What was your biggest success? Explain why it was successful. ▪ How did you achieve your target? ▪ What things could you have done better? Explain improvements you will make next time. ▪ Are you unable to achieve some of your key result areas? What is preventing you from achieving them? ▪ What type of training or learning development do you think would help you perform better?

Practice Task 4

Question 1

What are four sources of information an individual can use to evaluate their performance?

Question 2

Which of the following are self-evaluation opportunities?

- ◯ Debriefing session after the completion of a project
- ◯ Personal reflection conducted at regular intervals
- ◯ Weekly team lunch
- ◯ Performance appraisal or review
- ◯ Planning session at the start of a new project

Summary

- Developing and implementing an effective learning and development system starts with gathering reliable information to determine the performance of teams and individuals.
- When gathering information about current performance, you will need to focus on the key requirements of the team members' job roles. This may require you to review position descriptions to identify the specific tasks and competencies that team members must fulfil on a weekly basis.
- Learning needs will vary from one team member to the next and will be a result of a poor attitude, lack of experience, poor training or lack of skills, or a combination of all of these.
- Team and individual development needs must be aligned with the requirements of the organisation to ensure the outcomes will deliver on what the business needs.
- There are two parts to carrying out a formal workplace skills assessment: a skills audit and a TNA.
- A learning plan is a formal document that outlines everything the employee needs to know and do to improve their professional competencies.
- When identifying team needs, consider whether you will provide training for the whole team or just one person, who can then transfer their learning to the rest of the group. This may be a budget consideration, or you may need to consider the time required to do the training.
- If you encourage team members to regularly review their work performance, you may find that they have identified areas in which they need advice or extra training. Such personal reflection means that the team is taking responsibility for its own learning and professional development.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Contribute to needs development

Part A

1. List four reliable sources of information you would need to gather to identify the learning needs of team members.

2. Outline how a workplace skills audit and TNA helps to identify and implement learning development needs.

3. Which of the following organisational requirements need to be met when planning for the learning needs of team members? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Policies and procedures
- ◯ Business goals and plans, systems and processes
- ◯ Access and equity principles and practices
- ◯ Legal standards
- ◯ Quality and continuous improvement standards

Part B

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Tina is a human resources officer at a medium-sized contact centre. The business employs five teams consisting of 8–10 customer service agents in each team. Each team has a standard set of performance targets they need to meet each week, which are broken down into individual key performance indicators (KPIs) for each team member.

The centre is currently undertaking a review of its learning and development system that identifies the current competencies and learning needs of all customer service agents. The aim of the process is to identify key areas of competencies that need to be developed in the frontline contact centre teams. Following this, the team members will be placed onto formal learning plans which will be monitored by the team leaders and the human resources team.

1. Which of the following statements about identifying learning and development needs are correct? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

a) To identify current competencies and learning needs, Tina would need to carry out a skills audit, and then a TNA on all team members.	» Yes	» No
b) To conduct a skills audit and TNA, Tina must collect a range of information about team members' current competencies, such as performance reports, feedback from team leaders and customer service feedback.	» Yes	» No
c) The learning and development needs of team members can be calculated by using last year's performance appraisal results alone.	» Yes	» No
d) To identify current competencies and learning needs, Tina needs to assess each employee's performance against set KPIs or KRAs.	» Yes	» No
e) Tina should conduct the skills audit in consultation with the team leader.	» Yes	» No

2. Which of the following actions can Tina take to confirm learning plans meet each team member's needs? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Discuss learning plans with each individual team member.
- ◯ Ensure the process aligns with organisational policies, procedures and plans.
- ◯ Dismiss the input of the learner when confirming objectives, actions and time frames.
- ◯ Provide all opinions about training activities, time frames and priorities.
- ◯ Come to a mutual agreement that is in line with organisational requirements.

3. List five questions that would help teams evaluate their own performance.

4. Draw a line to match each element in the self-evaluation process with its definition.

» Instructions	» Employees should conduct their self-evaluation in a quiet place without interruptions so they can devote their full attention to the process.
» Resources	» It is recommended to allow about two minutes for the person to read the instructions and get themselves ready, 30 seconds per question, plus an additional five minutes for personal comments and review.
» Private place	» Provide a checklist or other similar document that includes key questions to ensure the employee is evaluating their performance in the areas that are important. This means that the time and money invested in the process is not wasted.
» Time	» The participants must understand what they are doing, how to complete the process and what it will be used for.

Topic 2 | Support implementation of learning and development

2A Develop collaborative learning plans

2B Select relevant learning delivery methods

2C Provide appropriate learning opportunities

2D Identify resources and time lines

2A Develop collaborative learning plans

Individual learning plans should be developed in collaboration with each team member and through mutual agreement.

Developing the learning plan in collaboration with the team member helps build buy-in and ensures team members understand the need for each skill and how it will benefit them in their work. It is important to encourage them to contribute to solutions, including the types of training they should undertake to improve their skills. Finalise the plan together so both you and the employee understand your responsibilities.

Using a formal planning and collaboration process ensures the training directly addresses identified needs, and benefits the organisation as well as the individual. It also requires some action on the part of team members after the training has been completed.

Collaboration with team members means:

- engaging in meaningful two-way discussion
- asking open questions to uncover the individual's needs and motivations
- actively listening to the individual's concerns, barriers, needs and goals
- considering the input of the individual when developing objectives, actions and time frames
- providing the individual with opportunities to have a say as to how they want to plan their learning
- providing your advice and input in a non-controlling manner
- coming to a mutual agreement that is in line with organisational requirements.

Setting learning objectives

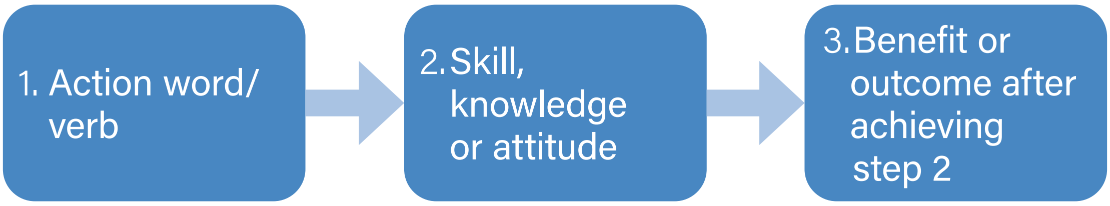
Learning plans must include the objectives that need to be achieved by each participant. The learning objectives are the goals that explain what needs to be developed by the team member.

Learning objectives should be set in collaboration with the team member and must support organisational goals, as well as the goals of any relevant learning programs that the team member is participating in.

When collaborating with team members, discuss and agree on the wording that can be used to describe the outcomes – which is the development of specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Avoid using jargon or complicated terms. Where possible, work with the team member to include words and statements that are simple and clearly explain what should be achieved by the conclusion of the learning plan.

The three key parts of a learning objective are:



Here are some examples of learning objectives:
▪ Develop product, service and industry knowledge to enhance customer satisfaction and improve sales results. ▪ Identify the dangers and effects of poor health and safety practices in order to avoid accidents and breaches of safety policies. ▪ Demonstrate use of problem-solving and communication techniques and act swiftly to resolve complaints and difficult customer service situations. ▪ Apply the safe lifting and manual-handling techniques to a range of situations to reduce the risk of injury.

Matching skills with competency standards

Competency standards describe the personal skills, attitudes, technical skills, knowledge and attributes required of an individual to effectively and efficiently undertake the day-to-day tasks and duties of their work.

One way to ensure training matches organisational, team and individual requirements is to match the training against the relevant competency standard.

Most industries in Australia have developed sets of competency standards for particular job roles within each industry. These are recognised by employers and vocational education and training organisations.

The range of competencies that address each position may include a combination of work-related soft skills and industry-specific competencies.

Work-related soft skills	▪ Work-related soft skills underpin a person's ability to enter and remain in the workforce. They include: – working well in a team – mixing with people of different ages, sexes and races – communicating effectively and solving problems creatively – collecting, analysing and organising information – planning and organising activities – using mathematical ideas and techniques and operating technology. ▪ School leavers entering the workforce are expected to be competent in all these areas and able to apply them to a range of situations and in different industries; for example, in retail, hospitality, construction, health, sports and recreation.
Industry-specific	▪ Industry-specific competencies are the skills required by a person working within a particular industry. For example, a person working in the automotive industry needs to have knowledge of engines, oils and car parts, and specific health and safety requirements; an administrative worker may need to know how to arrange meetings, operate office equipment and carry out reception duties. ▪ Competency standards contain a list of outcomes to be achieved and criteria for assessing the performance of individuals. They are nationally recognised and form the basis of training in each industry. When an organisation identifies a need for skill development, competency standards can provide the individual with a learning and development program that also leads to a formal qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). ▪ For example, the competency standard *BSHRM413 Support the learning and development of teams and individuals* can lead to qualifications such as Certificate IV in Human Resources, Certificate IV in Business, Certificate IV in Small Business Management or Certificate IV in Leadership and Management. ▪ Assessing skills against competency standards is easy and practical. By using the competency standard for your team's job roles, you can identify the skills the job holder possesses and whether there are any skill gaps.

The Australian Government's training website has information about a range of apprenticeships, traineeships and nationally recognised qualifications that Australian's can attain. Research the range of qualifications and competency standards relevant to your industry: aspirelr.link/training-gov

Planning team members' learning and development

Once learning needs and goals are established, you are ready to document team members' learning and development to ensure that they can clearly see what they will learn and why, how they will learn it and what follow-up actions are required.

Always refer to your organisation's template and forms when developing formal learning plans. These will usually be available on the company Intranet or network.

A learning plan should include detailed documentation that shows:

- learning goals/objectives
- skill gaps
- outline of the training needs analysis process
- skills and knowledge to be developed
- time frames and priorities for training
- the type of training required
- expected outcomes from the training.

Example

Learning plan

The following table shows an example of a completed learning plan.

Learning plan – Michelle Kennedy				
Task/skill	**Learning needs**	**Goal/outcome**	**Solution**	**Follow-up action**
Sales skills	Increase skills in objection handling and closing a sale.	Team members will demonstrate they can overcome a range of customer objections and proactively close a sale by identifying buying signals.	Compete the online sales training program and participate in three coaching calls with the team leader over a period of 2 weeks.	Team leader to monitor and review sales skills based on observing five calls. Provide feedback to learner following the observations.

Career paths

By continually developing new skills and knowledge, employees can advance their careers and maintain a competitive edge in their workplace and industry.

A career path is an extension of a learning plan. It is a journey taken to reach a person's career goals. It consists of learning and development opportunities that aid the individual's professional growth. Career pathways are developed by human resources professionals and/or managers in collaboration with the employee.

The process involves mapping out what the learner wants to achieve in the next 3–5 years of their professional career, and identifying learning opportunities to help the employee develop the required skills and experience to attain their desired role. Career pathways can be documented as part of a learning plan, or included in a separate document, called a career plan.

The process of planning a career pathway is outlined below.

Identify the career options with the employee	▪ Ask the employee to self-evaluate their skills, passions and areas of interest. ▪ Carry out behavioural/ psychological testing. ▪ Have open and honest discussions with employees to identify their 'fit' for other senior roles. ▪ Identify the vocational desires and match these to specific employment opportunities. ▪ Using the G+P+V formula: Gifts + Passions + Values = Career Path
Identify required competencies of the desired job role	▪ Identify required competencies of the target job role through research, discussion and consultation with people who currently work in those roles or have recently worked in the role.
Determine competency gaps	▪ Conduct a skills audit to determine current competencies, required competencies for the target job roles and any gaps that need to be addressed.
Create a plan to develop the required competencies	▪ Develop a strategic learning and development plan that describes the types of opportunities that the learner may undertake to address the competency gaps. ▪ Set time frames for completion. ▪ Identify other job roles that will help the learner to build experience, skills and knowledge required for their target job role.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Why is it important to collaborate with team members about their learning plans?
Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Improves working relationships
- ◯ Increases buy-in and understanding in the learning and development process
- ◯ Increases non-compliance rates of team members
- ◯ Decreases costs associated with training and development

Question 2

Which of the following are examples of developing learning plans collaboratively?
Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Actively listen to the learner's concerns, barriers, needs and goals.
- ◯ Consider the input of the learner when developing objectives, actions and time frames.
- ◯ Provide the learner with opportunities to have a say as to how they want to plan their learning.
- ◯ Hold firm in your opinions and advice regarding appropriate learning opportunities.
- ◯ Arrive at a mutual agreement that is in line with organisational requirements.

Question 3

List one competency standard that is relevant to the industry that you either work in currently, or would like to work in.

Question 4

What are five considerations you can make when developing a career pathway with a team member?

2B Select relevant learning delivery methods

A learning delivery method is the activity or process used in the learning program to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes of learners.

There are usually many delivery options to choose from, including on-the-job and off-the-job programs delivered formally or informally, individually, or in small or large groups.

You must be familiar with the wide range of delivery methods available. Not all options will be suitable for your purposes or your budget. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each option. Identify what the key considerations are, or the factors that will most influence you and your organisation when making a choice. Is the biggest issue finding time to release staff, the cost, the appropriateness of the course or the availability of quality training? For example, would on-the-job training be more efficient than sending staff to an external course? Would long-term coaching be more effective than a one-off training session? Would a highly recommended though costly consultant be a worthwhile investment?

How you select the most appropriate delivery method will differ between organisations and depend on a number of factors.

Factors affecting the most appropriate delivery method include:
▪ learning needs of the individual or team and the organisation
▪ identified learning goals
▪ abilities of the individuals
▪ identification of an appropriate delivery method
▪ preferred learning styles of the participants
▪ resources available
▪ priority of the skill development.

Learning delivery methods

Learning delivery methods vary considerably and depend on organisational requirements, the actual learning required and the available budget.

Training may be internally delivered or externally sourced, or a combination of both. Here are some common types of learning delivery methods, where training could be internally delivered.

Demonstrations

- An efficient way of passing on skills and knowledge is to show the learner how a procedure or function is carried out on the job. This might be done informally in a one-on-one situation at the point of training; for example, at the particular piece of equipment or during the actual process. The training can also be done during a more formal presentation to small groups.
- Demonstrations and presentations provide opportunities for the learner to ask questions and practise the required skills, and for the trainer to provide constructive feedback to improve the performance or behaviour. Training may be delivered by a person's supervisor, an experienced colleague, a consultant or an equipment supplier. It can take place at the person's workstation or somewhere else in the workplace; for example, in a meeting or training room.

Job rotation

- Job rotation, whereby individuals fill a role for a specific period then move on to another position, allows employees to learn and develop a broad range of skills and knowledge. It also provides the organisation with a flexible, multi-skilled workforce capable of moving into different positions or working across several areas or departments. Large organisations often have a formal job rotation or secondment program. Others use this method within their team.

Meetings

- Meetings are a valuable way of providing professional development and can be used to share information and offer suggestions regarding different ways of carrying out tasks, tips for better communication, referrals to network contacts or advice about the latest business practices. They can also be useful for clarifying problems, identifying possible solutions and developing a plan to resolve the problems.
- Think of creative and engaging ways to share information with your team. Sharing an article in a journal or newspaper that focuses on a problem or issue your team is having might be the catalyst for a valuable discussion; you can arrange a meeting with your team to talk about the situation and come up with some solutions.

Information sessions

- Some organisations set aside a number of days each year for the professional development of staff, as a whole unit, through information sessions. The purpose is to provide current information in an atmosphere that motivates staff, broadens their knowledge and encourages them to contribute to the activity. The agenda may include discussion on current trends in the industry, legislative updates that affect the organisation, information on competitors and their activities, and emerging business practices.
- Guest facilitators can be invited to lead staff in sessions that provide learning opportunities, improve attitudes or make people more aware of organisational procedures.

Induction programs

- You may be responsible for conducting an induction program for new employees. Inductions can be formal or informal, brief or lengthy; for example, some induction sessions take a day, while others are formal, week-long programs. Induction means introducing the new employee to:
  - the organisation
  - relevant staff
  - the use of business equipment such as the photocopier, printer and the telephone system
  - specific equipment they will be expected to use
  - the organisation's policies and procedures
  - the organisation's work health and safety guidelines.
- The type of induction training required will depend on the nature of your organisation and its activities.

External learning delivery options

While there are many ways to present learning opportunities within the workplace, there are also ways that staff can develop new skills and knowledge in situations that are external to the workplace. A selection of these external learning opportunities is presented below.

Off-site training sessions	▪ Formal training sessions can be arranged in the workplace. In-house experts or the organisation's training officers may run sessions, or you may decide to use the services of a consultant. ▪ Training can be conducted in any number of ways; for example, for a few hours, for a half or full day, or at regular times over a number of weeks. Training sessions can involve large or small groups where learning and discussions are facilitated to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved. Careful organisation of the information, resources and presentation materials will help you conduct a successful session.
Conferences and seminars	▪ In conferences and seminars, experts provide information through case studies, presentations, workshops and exhibits of new and innovative products and services. You should be aware of conferences and seminars on offer so you can identify those that could benefit your team. ▪ Your organisation may have a marketing department that keeps track of events relevant to the organisation. If not, download information from the internet or have your details listed on organisational databases that keep you informed about upcoming events. ▪ Note where the conference is being held, the cost and the content it proposes to cover. You may decide that you or a team member's professional development could involve presenting a session at the conference, rather than just attending.
Work placement opportunities	▪ Work experience and placement schemes are designed to provide active participation in an on-the-job learning program to help people develop workplace skills. These schemes can help both the individual and supervisor identify learning needs for improved performance. Exchange programs can also help identify ways of improving existing work processes. ▪ Some courses have a compulsory work placement component. If you have a team member who is undertaking work experience in another organisation, confirm the reason for the placement and the expected outcome and develop a list of questions they can ask their workplace supervisor. The success of a work experience program lies in the enthusiasm and dedication of the trainer, so prepare your team to ensure the experience is worthwhile for all parties.
Professional networks	▪ Being involved in professional networks allows individuals to share ideas and information within their organisations. News about industry developments, training sessions, conferences and seminars often comes through newsletters distributed by professional associations.

Example

Develop skills in Microsoft Office

Jemima work as an office administrator for a small building company. She has excellent customer service and organisation skills and has the ability to create professional Microsoft Word documents. Following a recent performance appraisal that involved a formal review of Jemima's work, her manager has identified that she needs to improve her knowledge and skills in Microsoft Excel, which is a key requirement for her job.

There are currently no staff with specialised skills in Excel employed in the business. Therefore, Jemima's manager enrols her into a two-day intensive course in Excel with a specialised accredited Microsoft training provider. The course covers the advanced Excel functions that she needs to produce professional Excel spreadsheets for the business.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

List five factors that should be considered when selecting learning delivery methods.

Question 2

Draw a line to match each term about learning delivery methods (on the left) to its definition.

» External training sessions	» Off-site events that include experts speaking on new and innovative products and services
» Job rotation programs	» In-house events led by managers and subject matter experts who provide current information in an atmosphere that motivates staff, broadens their knowledge and encourages them to contribute to the activity
» Conferences and seminars	» Individuals fill a role for a specific period then move on to another position, allowing employees to learn and develop a broad range of skills and knowledge
» Internal information sessions	» Structured in-house workshops that focus on building skills and knowledge in team members. These sessions may be run by in-house trainers, subject matter experts or external consultants.

2C Provide appropriate learning opportunities

A learning opportunity in business means that employees are provided with access to learning and development activities or situations.

At school, students are provided with formal, structured educational programs to help them learn. As adults, most learning occurs informally and unstructured either through on-the-job tasks, coaching, personal experience, observation and, in rare cases, formal programs like an accredited course or induction.

As a member of the human resources department or as a manager, your job is to provide a range of suitable learning opportunities to meet the different needs and learning styles of your employees. It is your responsibility to ensure that your team has access to suitable learning opportunities to meet organisational and individual objectives.

Once these opportunities have been accessed, you need to ensure that you provide team members with the support required to ensure the objectives of the learning program are achieved.

Organisational learning opportunities

Once learning plans have been developed and agreed to, learning opportunities can be implemented to target the required skills, knowledge or attitudes that need improvement.

Learning opportunities must be relevant to the learning needs of the individual and their unique preferences for learning. They must provide team members with new opportunities to grow in their current role, leading to short- and long-term benefits for the team and organisation.

Learning opportunities include coaching and mentoring.

Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching are both classed as non-traditional learning and development methods. They do not follow the standard classroom-based delivery style and both are heavily dependent on the level of engagement and initiative of the learner.

Mentoring and coaching are based on a one-on-one delivery model. In each situation, learning is achieved by the leader facilitating a process that enables the learner to think through an issue and find the answers themselves; rather than the leader telling the person what they need to do.

However, mentoring is different from coaching in many ways. Mentoring is viewed as a relationship that is more extended and personalised than coaching. It involves encouraging self-development, listening and questioning, sharing experiences and enabling the mentee to work things out for themselves.

Another key difference between coaching and mentoring is the areas of focus. Mentoring is less concerned with specific tasks and technical job skills; rather, it focuses on relationship building, leadership, and conceptual and problem-solving skills.

Neither method is better; they are both designed to suit the diverse learning styles and needs of learners.

Understanding the coaching process

Coaching is the process of training, developing and empowering a person to do a task. It does not follow the traditional training methodology of teaching, showing and telling; instead it involves supporting and guiding a person through a task and enabling them to follow a process to make sound decisions.

Coaching is a two-way procedure whereby the coach and learner are both committed to improvement. Coaching should follow a structured, well-defined plan with logical steps and clear outcomes.

In most workplaces, coaches are sought from within the organisation, although coaching has become a discipline in itself and many people have become coaching consultants. Coaching is an excellent way of using workplace expertise to improve the performance of staff when required.

Coaching gives the learner many opportunities:
▪ identifying a desired goal by clarifying the current situation and the learning skills the learner wants or needs to develop ▪ linking individual needs by identifying current workplace challenges and the skills required to meet these challenges ▪ establishing a time frame for acquiring necessary skills ▪ identifying and resolving development issues with the coach, such as time off for study, attending seminars or job rotation.

Coaching is a systematic procedure with specific objectives, so it is should be approached with commitment on the part of both coach and learner. The coach and learner must undertake a process, such as that shown below, to create a successful coaching program.

Coaching process
Identify the skill or knowledge need.
Identify the reason for the learning need.
Discuss the expectations of both parties regarding what the coaching program can achieve.
Determine the expected goal or learning outcomes of the coaching program.
Establish the time frame for the program.
Establish learning strategies.
Implement the coaching program.
Regularly monitor performance and review progress.
Evaluate the coaching program.

Skills required for coaching

To be motivated to take on the coaching role, a person must believe that another person will benefit from their assistance. Good communication is vital, as are interpersonal skills, extensive technical skills and knowledge in the area the learner needs to improve, expertise in training and assessment, and the ability to encourage workplace learning.

An important feature of coaching is to challenge the learner to take control of their learning and to remind them that they are responsible for asking questions. A good coach provides a safe environment where the learner can learn from their mistakes without feeling threatened.

Coaches are responsible for:
▪ providing encouragement and support ▪ giving guidance for achieving specific skills ▪ offering advice and suggestions ▪ giving constructive feedback ▪ empowering, guiding and motivating ▪ celebrating the learning achievements of the team or individual.

Mentoring

A mentor is someone with experience or expertise who acts as a role model or leader for less experienced staff, offering advice, information and friendship. Many people can recall at least one person who set them on a particular career path or helped them make a lifestyle or relationship choice.

A mentor may also offer emotional and psychological support, particularly to a new staff member who may be reluctant to share feelings of uncertainty with their manager or team members. The mentor listens to their concerns and provides encouragement. Generally, the mentor relationship is a long-term one.

The mentor role may also involve coaching and training. However, a good mentor does not provide the answers, but instead helps the learner find their own solutions to a problem. The relationship between the mentor and the learner fosters openness, trust and mutual respect.

A good mentor is someone who:

- leads, advises and is a role model
- encourages and guides the individual on a learning path
- supports and responds to the individual's needs
- is a trusted counsellor
- treats the employee with respect.

A successful workplace mentoring relationship:

- clarifies the goals of the organisation
- develops skills and knowledge (competencies)
- improves communication
- increases productivity and innovation
- encourages career development
- increases confidence
- shares experiences.

Example

Effective mentoring

Angela works in administration at the local council offices. She completed some subjects in office skills in Year 12 and now wants to further develop her skills and knowledge in the administration field. She wants to be an office manager one day, and realises that she will have to do some career planning to reach her goal.

Angela approaches her manager for advice on how to become an office manager. The manager advises Angela that she will need to do at least a Diploma of Business Administration and suggests that she start with the Certificate III in Business at night school or, alternatively, she can do the same course as a Level 3 Business Services trainee at work. The manager explains the learning competencies of the qualification and informs Angela that if she wishes to do a traineeship the company will support her learning and development.

Angela perceives her manager as a leader and role model and feels at ease seeking her advice. Angela's manager acts as a mentor and offers helpful career counselling. Because the manager knows the industry competency standards in business qualifications, she is able to provide Angela with the right information about what she could do to further her studies and pursue her career goal.

Techniques in effective facilitation

An effective coach or mentor is one who is able to connect with their audience and facilitate the learning process in the best way possible according to the learner's unique needs.

As a manager, you need a range of skills, knowledge and attitudes all working together to ensure the learner achieves their goals.

Effective facilitation techniques include:
▪ using your knowledge and experience when presenting new content ▪ ongoing effective communication ▪ rapport building through the use of interpersonal skills ▪ supervising, mentoring and coaching ▪ job enrichment; for example, participation in working parties or project groups ▪ giving constructive feedback on performance ▪ reviewing and evaluating performance ▪ providing formal and informal learning and development opportunities that meet learning needs and preferences.

Build rapport

Rapport is useful when coaching and mentoring team members because it will improve relationships, trust, communication and outcomes.

Rapport is found where people exist in a state of harmony, which facilitates communication between managers/HR professionals and team members. Rapport requires that everyone involved in the learning and development process is respected and comfortable with contributing their views and opinions, and willing to work together towards the learning and development goals.

Key rapport building tips:
▪ Use the team member's name. ▪ Take an interest in their 'story', including their journey as well as their goals. ▪ Smile and enjoy the discussion. ▪ Use language the team member will understand. ▪ Ask questions to learn more about the team member. ▪ Show active listening skills when the team member is talking. ▪ Offer your help and support.

Communication skills

Two of the greatest requirements for an effective coach or mentor are subject knowledge and communication skills. Together, these two requirements underpin training and facilitation, and must work hand-in-hand to ensure the learning process is effective. One cannot succeed without the other, as you need to communicate the right information in the right way.

For example, an outstanding communicator cannot explain the information their learner needs without a depth of knowledge in the subject. On the other hand, without outstanding communication skills, a depth of knowledge cannot be clearly shared.

Key communication skills
- Speak with enthusiasm and energy.   - Use positive and constructive terms.   - Choose words and phrases that the team members will understand.   - Clearly state the objectives of the session.   - Use positive body language, including a smile, relaxed arms and hands, lots of eye contact and an upright strong posture.   - Ask open questions to identify any concerns or issues participants may have with the learning content.   - Actively listen to the concerns and questions raised by team members, and provide a suitable response.   - Encourage team members who are struggling to grasp a subject.   - Be consistent, friendly and fair with your words, tone and body language.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

For each characteristic below, decide whether it best describes coaching or mentoring.

	Focus is on interpersonal, problem-solving and leadership skills
	A systematic procedure with specific objectives that is less personal
	Focus is on task skills
	A relationship that is more extended and personalised

Question 2

Which of the following are ways that you can use to communicate effectively and build rapport when facilitating training with team members? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Take an interest in their 'story', including their journey as well as their goals.
- ◯ Keep the team member on track by reminding them of their responsibilities in the process.
- ◯ Use language that you will understand.
- ◯ Ask questions to learn more about the team member.
- ◯ Use your knowledge and experience when presenting new content.

2D Identify resources and time lines

Every learning and development program requires resources and time to ensure they run to plan. A resource is defined as 'anything that can help you perform a task or achieve your learning objectives'.

Resources include written or electronic learning materials, equipment, IT software and time – all of which are vital in assisting the learner throughout their learning and development journey.

Identifying the resources that are needed will help you plan a suitable learning and development program. At this stage of the planning, consider all the options and identify the most relevant for your training and development purposes. Remember, there will be a cost for all these items, which may mean you have to compromise for a more cost-effective solution.

Resources that you will need to factor in are shown here.

Time

Consider the time taken to organise, promote and deliver the training and development. How much time is allocated to the training? Consider not only the training, but also the practice session, the monitoring and evaluation. If you are doing in-house training, think about the time the trainer and trainees are away from their normal responsibilities.

Budget

Consider all the costs involved. What is your allocated training budget? What will be the cost of human resources? Will you use in-house experts, draw on colleagues, hire a consultant or engage a guest speaker? Will there be venue costs? Will you use the organisation's training rooms, a meeting room at the workplace, the learner's own workstation or an off-site venue? Often it is desirable to take staff away from their usual working environment.

Support resources

Consider what training equipment and facilities are available; for example, training room, video, whiteboards, audio-visual equipment, computers and stationery.

Miscellaneous

Consider the options for participants during breaks; for example, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea; snack food, sit-down meals, buffet; self-catering or catering firm.

Organising resource requirements

A key part of a successful learning and development program is to organise the resourcing requirements for the participants.

When determining your resource needs, consider the following questions:

- What are the human, physical and financial resources needed to implement the learning plan?
- What is the time frame for the learning plan?
- What are the immediate and ongoing resource needs?
- What do we currently have available within our organisation?
- Is specialist external assistance needed to ensure an effective implementation?
- What are our limitations on existing resource use?
- What other training projects and operational tasks may impact on resource access?
- What budgeting and spending approvals need to be sought for each resource acquisition?

Identifying time lines

There are a number of critical time considerations in the design, development and implementation of a learning program. Many of these should be discussed in collaboration with the team or the individual. Some time lines may need to be negotiated. Here is a process list that you can follow when organising a learning program.

Confirm the priority	The first step is to confirm the priority for the learning; for example, whether the need is crucial and must be undertaken immediately, or whether it could be offered in a month, six months and so on.
Identify the length of training and/or development needed	Identify how long the training and/or development will take. For example, formal courses may range from half-days to extended programs of a year or more. Some courses may involve an initial two-day attendance followed by a session one day every week for the following month. Coaching or mentoring may be an ongoing process until the learning or development is achieved.

Plan for minimal disruption	Develop a training schedule to minimise disruption to work. For example, you might arrange a one-day training session where all members of the team attend or it might be more convenient for one or two team members to attend over several weeks. You may decide it is less disruptive to send one person to the session and then arrange for them to train the rest of the team in-house. Check the organisation's calendar to make sure you don't plan a session when all staff are needed at the workplace or during busy times for your industry.
Set the date	After considering the likely disruptions, set the date for the learning to commence and identify when it is likely to end. Even with flexible training and development situations, such as coaching, plan to record progress milestones. Follow any organisational procedures such as checking with your manager or the rest of the staff about when people are likely to be away from their workstation – who will be away; what training they are undertaking; what is the length of the training?
Plan lead-in time	Planning lead-in time means considering all the actions you and the learners have to take before the training or development takes place. For example, the learners may have pre-reading to do. There will be a number of administrative issues that you, or someone you delegate to, will have to consider to prepare for the session. These issues include organising all the resource requirements such as venue hire, catering and refreshments, program outline, presenters or trainers, support materials, name tags and equipment. You also need time to prepare notices, when appropriate, and promote the training session. Do not leave any of these tasks to the last minute and if you have delegated these responsibilities, make sure you do a final check before the training date.
Plan follow-up time	Your planning time line should include time spent in the initial training as well as time for practice, review and evaluation. Record the learning time line in the individual's learning plan and make sure all parties know and understand their commitment.

Identifying the budget

Make sure you are familiar with the training budget allocated to your team, as this will affect a number of the decisions you make when selecting an appropriate learning program.

Find out what training funds have been allocated for the year and how they have been assigned. For example, an organisation's training budget may allocate a certain amount for one or two external training sessions and an additional amount for ongoing in-house professional development of staff for the remainder of the year.

Determine what expenses will be incurred for the program. Sometimes, a training session that appears inexpensive at first may be impractical due to costs that were not initially considered; for example, travel expenses and accommodation costs. If you plan to delegate cost identification, it is useful to prepare a checklist for that person to make sure all items are covered.

Researching cost of training

There is a wide range of training options to choose from, and the cost of the assorted options is often the deciding factor. Research the various expenses and weigh the possible cost against the desired outcome, the time available for training and the number of people involved.

Compare different training providers, what they offer and at what cost. The training industry in Australia is very competitive, so it is worth doing some research. Do not settle for the cheapest program if it doesn't cover everything you need or if you aren't sure of the credentials of the trainers. Build up a file of potential training providers and the programs they offer. Courses and costs change regularly, so make sure the file is kept up-to-date.

These are some questions you can ask as you research the cost of training.

External training

- An external training program may be the ideal option but could the learning needs also be met by using in-house experts at a fraction of the cost?

Guest speaker

- Is using a guest speaker is more cost-effective than hiring a consultant?

Training quality

- Is it more cost-efficient to use a large portion of the training budget on a worthwhile, quality training program rather than trying to save money by using a program that is cheaper but does not match your quality standards or meet the team's needs?

It is not only the cost of the actual training that needs to be considered. It may be necessary to hire a venue and get your staff to the venue for the training. The trainer will come at a cost to your organisation, whether they are external or internally sourced. Below are some things to consider regarding additional costs.

Venue costs

Think about all the different elements involved if you are hiring an external venue. Is it cheaper overall to hire a venue for a full day rather than a half-day? Find out whether costs also cover the hire of equipment and catering or if these are additional charges. Are discounts offered? Have a list of questions prepared to ensure you don't overlook essential pieces of information.

Trainer costs

If the training is conducted in-house by a member of staff, do you need to calculate the cost of the trainer's time? Remember that although you are not paying a consultant, the staff member is still being paid by the organisation, so the time they are devoting to training, especially if it isn't part of their day-to-day duties, must be taken into account.

Find out what trainers and consultants charge. For example, do they offer a daily rate or charge by the hour? Hidden costs may include transport or accommodation, parking fees, refreshments and a thank-you gift.

Attendance costs

If you have selected an external training program, determine the attendance costs. Is there a discount for more than one member from the same organisation? It may be more cost-effective to send one person who will return to train the team. Also consider the costs in downtime if more than one person from the organisation is away at the same time.

If you are considering a conference or seminar, think about costs involved such as travel and accommodation – the more people attending, the greater the impact on the budget. Ask if there are 'early bird' registration discounts – if you register before a certain date, you might get a discount off the normal registration fee.

Resources

Consider all the resources you need for the type of training being offered:

- Do you need to hire equipment such as a whiteboard or audio-visual tools?
- Do you need to provide catering?
- What physical resources, such as notebooks, butchers' paper, whiteboard markers and pens, need to be purchased?
- Do you need to purchase learning and assessment resources?
- Do you need to develop learning materials? If so, how much time and labour hours will this cost?

Developing training materials

Employees need to feel supported in their personal development journey by having access to quality training resources and materials. At formal learning events such as tutorials and lectures, support materials form the infrastructure of an effective learning program.

They provide the learner with another opportunity to take in the required information (impacting the verbal/written learner) and ensure a lasting library of information that can be referred to when on the job.

Examples of materials you can provide to support your employee's learning and development may include:

- handouts
- PDF, PowerPoint, Word or video files
- news reports and articles
- website links
- textbook
- learner guide
- brochures
- manuals
- copies of policies, procedures or workflows.

Techniques for writing training materials

When developing training materials, you need to apply effective written communication skills including writing style, language, spelling and grammar to ensure the resources are of a quality standard.

Quality – in the context of training materials – means the content is relevant to the training program outcomes, easy to understand for every participant, accurate and up-to-date.

Care must be taken to ensure you spell-check, proofread and edit the materials, before they are distributed to trainers and learners. Errors, spelling errors and poor formatting can tarnish the quality of the learning program and impact poorly on the participants' experiences.

Techniques for writing training materials
▪ Consider the characteristics of the learner cohort, including their age, baseline knowledge and experience, language skills and literacy levels. ▪ Use terms, phrases and words that all participants can understand. ▪ Keep topics and content simple, succinct and structured. ▪ Use tables, bullet points and lists where possible. ▪ Format information, such as processes, into flow charts, diagrams and illustrations to break up the content and explain concepts in different ways. ▪ Use relevant case studies to explain concepts in a way that makes sense to participants. ▪ Check and double-check spelling, grammar and punctuation. ▪ Format the documents so they look professional and are easy to read. ▪ Reference any sources of information used in the learning content. ▪ Consult with subject matter experts to ensure the content is accurate and current.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Draw a line to match each term about resource requirements to its definition.

» Miscellaneous	» Requirements for the total length of the training, including follow-up and planning time
» Support resources	» Total costs involved including venue hire, trainer fees, learning materials and equipment hire
» Time	» Equipment and facilities are available; for example, training room, video, whiteboards, audio-visual equipment, computers and stationery
» Budget	» Options for participants during breaks; for example, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea; snack food, sit-down meals, buffet; self-catering or catering firm

Question 2

Which of the following actions will help manage time frames for a learning program?
Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Plan lead-in time by considering all the actions you and the learners have to take before the training or development takes place.
- ◯ Identify how long the training and/or development will take.
- ◯ Set an end date two months later than expected to allow for contingencies.
- ◯ Develop a training schedule to minimise disruption to work.
- ◯ Plan for time spent in the initial training as well as time for practice, review and evaluation.

Question 3

What considerations need to be made to confirm the budget for a training program?

Question 4

Which of the following skills would you need to apply when writing training materials? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Use terms, phrases and words that all participants can understand.
- ◯ Use tables, charts and bullet points and lists where possible.
- ◯ Check and double-check spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- ◯ Format the documents so they look professional and are easy to read.
- ◯ Copy and paste content from other sources without providing references.

Summary

- Developing teams and individuals is an ongoing process of observing performance, identifying learning needs and providing support for acquiring new skills.
- Once learning and development needs have been identified, and appropriate learning plans prepared, you are ready to develop a comprehensive learning and development program.
- The learning and development program must result in learning needs being successfully met and the learner being able to demonstrate they have gained the required knowledge or skill.
- The method of learning delivery must reflect the purpose of the program and its goals, as well as the budgetary resources of the organisation.
- There is a wide range of learning delivery options to choose from, including demonstrations and presentations, training sessions, informal training and learning, meetings, information sessions, conferences and seminars, and job rotation.
- The learning delivery method you choose should take into account the individual learning styles of the participants.
- It is important to build rapport and work collaboratively with the team, creating a comfortable atmosphere where everyone is encouraged to respond appropriately.
- Make the most of learning opportunities within your organisation by utilising in-house training and development departments, and coaching and mentoring programs.
- Clearly and accurately identify all learning and development resources that will be required for the learning program, including time, money, support resources and miscellaneous items.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Support implementation of learning and development

Part A

1. Draw a line to match each step about career planning (on the left) to how the step might be carried out (on the right).

» Create a plan to develop the required competencies.	» Determine desires, interests and current skillsets that match the target role.
» Determine competency gaps.	» Determine what is required in the target role through discussion, research and consultation with key people who have experience in the target role.
» Identify the career options with the employee.	» Use a skills audit to determine the competency gaps that need to be addressed.
» Identify required competencies of the desired job role.	» Document the time frames and types of opportunities that the learner may undertake to address the competency gaps.

2. Which of the following techniques should you use when facilitating a training session? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

a) Use your knowledge and experience to explain the learning content.	» Yes	» No
b) Use words and terms that you understand but will require the participants to research in order to understand.	» Yes	» No
c) Ask questions to determine whether the participants are understanding the content.	» Yes	» No
d) Actively listen to the questions and concerns raised by participants and respond appropriately, using accurate information.	» Yes	» No
e) Focus on building a rapport with the most engaged participants only and ignore those who are not taking part in the training.	» Yes	» No

3. Why is it important to develop the learning plan in collaboration with team members when facilitating their learning?

4. List five skills that you need to apply when writing training materials.

Part B

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Bettina works as a human resource officer at a large furniture retailer. She reports directly to the store manager, Brett. There are 25 sales and customer service staff employed in the business who work in full-time, part-time and casual employment arrangements. The store manager recently engaged a consulting firm to carry out an eight-week mystery-shopping exercise on the store, which revealed poor outcomes in terms of customer satisfaction ratings, with the key issues relating to complaints handling, sales skills and rapport building.

As a result, Brett would like all frontline staff to undergo a formal in-house learning program to enhance their sales and service skills. He would like the program to start in two months and include a weekly training session for all employees for at least 12 weeks. The program should be a mix of short 60-minute formal in-class training sessions using the boardroom, as well as on-the-job training that is specific to each team member's skill requirements.

Upon commencement of the program, Brett has asked that each team member have their own learning plan that documents their specific learning goals and skills that need to be developed over the 12-week period.

1. Outline five collaborative techniques that Bettina should use to ensure each employee has their own learning plan and is engaged in the process.

2. Using the training.gov.au website, identify an appropriate accredited training qualification that could be used as the competency standard for the training program. List the correct title and code of the qualification.

3. Which of the following delivery methods would be appropriate for this learning program? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

a) on-the-job coaching and mentoring	» Yes	» No
b) conferences and seminars	» Yes	» No
c) formal tutorials in a classroom setting	» Yes	» No
d) information sessions	» Yes	» No
e) Job rotations.	» Yes	» No

4. Which of the following costs would Bettina need to plan for? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Cost of a third-party trainer
- ◯ Catering costs
- ◯ Cost to hire an external venue
- ◯ Time required to develop training resources
- ◯ Costs of time away from standard sales and services duties

5. List at least four resources (other than costs) that Bettina would need to plan for.

6. Write two learning objectives for the training program.

Topic 3 | Monitor and evaluate workplace learning

3A Monitor learning plans

3B Seek feedback about improvements

3C Assess and record performance and outcomes

3D Maintain records of competency

3A Monitor learning plans

The success of any learning plan or program will be found in the outcomes, which are the application of the learner's skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Many learning plans and programs are well planned and implemented, but they are not monitored and evaluated once the learning activities are complete. As a result, continuous improvement cannot occur and the real benefits of the program are difficult to determine. In addition, it can be unclear as to whether the learner requires additional support following their training.

A learning plan and program can only be improved if you take the time to monitor and evaluate workplace performance. You will need to evaluate the success of training programs in terms of whether the participants acquired the desired skills, knowledge and attitudes.

The monitoring process

Monitoring processes are used when learning programs are being implemented to determine the performance of the team and the effectiveness of the learning they have gained so far.

Monitoring and evaluating workplace learning and performance must focus on identifying whether the learning plans and programs are on track to achieve their goals.

Learning arrangements aim to improve the competencies of team members by helping them achieve the goals that were set for them in their position description, industry competency standards and work plan. Monitoring and evaluation must also determine whether the learning program has helped the employee achieve team and organisational goals. You should be able to identify improved work performance and any changes in your team's attitude to work during the implementation of the learning program or plan.

Monitoring the effectiveness of learning programs and plans involves four key steps:

Gathering information about progress and performance of participants → Reviewing the information to identify the current situation or level of progress against expected goals and outcomes → Analysing the information to identify key issues and areas of improvement → Developing and implementing alternative strategies and solutions to improve learning programs/plans

Gathering key information

The first part of the monitoring and evaluation process is to gather information about actual competencies of the participants in the learning plan or program.

Accurate and reliable information is needed in order to make an informed judgement about the level of competencies being acquired by the team member as they are participating in their learning plans and programs.

Information about performance, knowledge and attitudes can be obtained through the following methods:

- direct observation of team members in a classroom setting or on-the-job
- having team members complete a set task under supervision
- reviewing work completed in class or on-the-job
- conducting formal assessments such as using role-play scenarios, standardised tests and verbal questioning
- gathering feedback from key people such as trainers, customers, team members and supervisors, as well as the participants in the program.

Consulting with key personnel

Consulting and communicating with stakeholders are critical in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Monitoring and evaluating learning plans and programs can often be a subjective process because it can be difficult to determine tangible outcomes in terms of the performance of team members. Monitoring arrangements should be carried out in consultation with key personnel to ensure you gain a variety of perspectives of the performance of team members.

Consultation is a two-way process involving the manager and the organisation's stakeholders. An effective consultation process should encourage stakeholders to participate in developing resource plans that meet the needs and limitations of the organisation.

Decisions about actual performance of learning plans and programs, as well as improvements of team members' competencies will be more accurate when the right people are involved. Most large companies, and many smaller ones, have key personnel you will need to consult.

Relevant personnel you may need to consult about learning program/plan outcomes include:

- other frontline managers and supervisors
- team members
- trainers
- specialist human resource staff, such as HR managers
- departmental managers
- other people with specialist responsibilities, such as those involved in workplace health and safety committees
- suppliers
- customers.

Frequency of monitoring learning programs and plans

Learning programs and plans should be monitored regularly throughout the implementation phase.

The purpose of the monitoring process is to determine whether plans and programs are effective in developing the required competencies of the participants, and to identify changes that need to be made to improve the learning program.

The frequency of monitoring processes depends on the length of the plan/program, number of learning activities being completed and the goals of the plan/program.

For example, if a learning plan with a two-year goal is developed, the plan and the performance of the participant should be monitored every three to six months. For a program that runs over four weeks, it may be monitored weekly.

Monitoring frequency and periods should be scheduled as part of the planning process.

Example

Monitor learning plans

Samantha works as a human resources officer for an insurance company. Part of her role is to provide learning and development support to the team leaders. Samantha meets with each team leader every quarter to discuss the personal learning plans of each of their team members. During the meetings, they discuss the progress of each team member, the types of learning goals and learning options that are being planned, and the outcomes that have been achieved. Samantha provides advice to the team leaders on how these plans can be improved, in particular, where team members are not showing signs of improvement.

These improvements include changes to learning goals and implementing changes to learning methods, to ensure the required skills for the job role are being developed

Practice Task 9

Question 1

Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order you would follow to monitor a learning plan.

- ◯ Analyse the information to identify key issues and areas of improvement.
- ◯ Develop and implement alternative strategies to improve learning programs/plans.
- ◯ Gather information about progress and performance of participants.
- ◯ Review the information to identify the current situation or level of progress against expected goals and outcomes.

Question 2

List four sources of information you can gather to determine improvements to learning programs and plans.

3B Seek feedback about improvements

Feedback helps you determine whether improvements are needed for future arrangements, whether the type of training and development should be offered to other staff members, and how cost-effective the training was.

Regardless of the learning situation, feedback in a variety of forms from all those involved allows you to review learning arrangements.

The information received from feedback can guide you in planning future learning activities. For example, positive feedback about a particular training provider means that you can be confident about using that provider again. If time set aside for learning a specific skill proved inadequate, you may need to look more closely at the training required and improve your planning, or negotiate with management to set aside more time.

Preparing to source feedback

When preparing to source feedback you should decide what it is you want to know, how you will obtain the feedback and how it should be recorded. Follow your organisational procedures at all times; for example, your organisation may have an official professional development feedback form that everyone who attends any type of training must complete, or you could develop a feedback form appropriate to your organisation.

A number of factors and questions need to be considered when you are sourcing feedback.

1. Pre-training

- Was the consultation about learning needs adequate before the training was arranged?
- Were learning needs identified correctly?
- Did the participants understand the content and structure of the program before they attended?
- Did the participants understand the procedures for following up a training session; for example, reporting back and evaluating?

2. Content

- Was the content relevant; that is, did the training address the participants' learning needs?
- Did the training meet the expectations of the participants?
- Was the amount of training sufficient for the content involved?
- Did the participants gain an understanding of the topic and benefit from the experience?
- Will the learning help the participants carry out their work?
- How will the participants transfer their learning to their job role?
- Will the learning help the participants achieve their goal; for example, better manage their time, use a software application, communicate more effectively?

3. Delivery

- Was the delivery format appropriate; for example, lecture, demonstration, conference, informal, on-the-job?
- Was the training delivered effectively? Did the presenter know and understand their material? Did they communicate with the group at a level that made the learning enjoyable and worthwhile?
- Was there sufficient variety; for example, use of a range of activities, guest speakers, discussion, time to ask questions, time to practise?
- Were support materials relevant and adequate?

4. Timing

- Was the timing of the program beneficial in terms of the participants' skill needs?
- Was the time (date and hours) of the session appropriate; for example, one day a week, a breakfast session, an evening class?
- Was the length of the training session appropriate?
- Did the program disrupt the operation of the team or the organisation?

5. Venue and facilities

- Was the training or learning environment suitable for:
  - the type of training or learning
  - the participants; for example, in terms of space, lighting, heating, training equipment, catering, parking?

6. Follow-up

- Have participants been given time to reflect on what they have learnt?
- Were participants expected to immediately apply or incorporate what they learnt from the program into their current work practices? If so, was their workload considered?
- Have participants had time to practise their skills?
- Have other learning gaps been identified as a result of the learning program?
- What amendments could be made to improve the training or learning?

Using various methods to gain feedback

Feedback can be obtained in a number of ways, including from formal questionnaires, structured discussion or debriefing sessions, informal discussion and third-party reporting.

Before taking part in any training program, participants should understand they are expected to evaluate the program and the learning and report back to the organisation.

Make sure everyone is clear about:

- ❑ the purpose of the feedback
- ❑ the types of questions you are asking and why you are asking them
- ❑ how you will record their observations
- ❑ what you will do with the feedback.

Questionnaires and surveys

Questionnaires and surveys must be developed carefully. People prefer surveys that are easy to understand and quick to complete. A poorly constructed set of questions can cause the respondent to provide incorrect information and discourage them from answering the questions sensibly and accurately.

Be clear about how the person should complete the form. For example, do they need to circle an answer, write brief notes, tick a box or provide a rating? Do they need to provide their name and other details? If you ask them to comment on an issue, leave plenty of room for their response. Always provide space at the end of the survey for respondents to make additional comments if they wish.

If your organisation does not have feedback forms, you will need to develop questionnaires yourself. The more practice you have in preparing questionnaires, the better you will become at asking specific and useful questions. Ask colleagues to read your first draft and give you feedback about its clarity and whether responses will provide you with the data you require.

Example

Professional development survey

Here is an example of a professional development survey that you may be able to use for your team.

Professional development survey	
Name:	Date: / /
Program or course name:	
Organiser or institution and location:	
Commencement date:	Completion date:
Course objectives and content	
Were the course objectives clearly stated?	No Yes
Were the objectives achieved?	No Yes
Were the topics presented relevant to your work?	No Yes
Did the course meet your expectations? Explain why it did or did not.	No Yes

Professional development survey

Course presentation	
Were the concepts and techniques explained clearly?	No Yes
Were you encouraged to actively participate during the course?	No Yes
Were your individual questions and problems discussed to your satisfaction?	No Yes
How would you describe the trainer's knowledge of the subject? If you rated the presenter as poor or fair, explain why.	Poor Fair Good Excellent
Training materials What training materials were you provided with, and where will these be located in the organisation for reference by all staff?	
Course evaluation List the new skills or knowledge you gained from this course.	
How will the skills or knowledge you gained through participation in this course be applied to your job role and help you improve your work performance?	
How will the organisation benefit from your participation in this training activity?	

Professional development survey

Do you think the course was good value for money?	No	Yes
Would you recommend the course to others?	No	Yes
Other comments		

Structured and informal discussions

Setting time aside to discuss the training or development that has taken place is one way to obtain feedback. Feedback can be obtained in a number of ways, some of which are more structured than others. For example, you might run a debriefing session if your team has attended a conference, discuss the results of a coaching program with both the coach and the individual, or call a meeting to review a training session conducted by an external training provider.

Here are some ideas you can use when getting information from post-learning discussions.

Structured discussions

Prepare yourself for sessions with a set of questions, and inform participants of what is expected from them at the session. You might like to distribute your questions before the meeting so everyone knows what is required and can prepare. Encourage honest responses and be prepared for both positive and negative feedback. In this way you are more likely to conduct a productive session.

Informal discussions

You can learn a lot from informal discussions with people after they have returned from a course, from chatting with a coach or mentor, or by asking questions as you observe people putting their new skills and knowledge into practice.

Keep a notebook handy and record any observations or comments. You may need to follow these up in a formal discussion with those involved.

Third-party reports

Feedback from people involved in the initial training and the results of the training can help evaluate the learning program. If the session was a formal, structured session, such as work experience, coaching or a job exchange, your organisation may have forms that the trainer or representative of the host organisation is required to complete.

Feedback from the coach or trainer can tell you:
▪ whether there was sufficient time to transfer the skills or knowledge to the participants ▪ how well the participants handled the learning situation ▪ whether the course was too advanced for their abilities ▪ how well the program was structured and delivered from an administrative point of view.

Using feedback to improve learning programs

Analyse all the feedback you receive. Sort it into relevant categories and prepare action plans to improve future learning programs. You may be required to prepare and submit a formal report to your manager or it may be your responsibility to make decisions about future programs. Keep your team informed of results and explain how you will use the feedback.

Arranging a learning program that satisfies the needs of all participants can be a challenge. Negative feedback about a session may result from a clash of learning styles or different approaches to training, rather than from any fault of the trainer or learner.

Feedback should help you establish whether the style of the learning program was beneficial to the participants and whether it would be suitable for the future needs of the individual, group or organisation.

Constructive feedback helps you decide whether others would benefit from the same program. Negative feedback will direct your attention to areas of the program that need to be improved. Positive and negative feedback are also useful to the trainer.

Improving future training programs

Feedback regarding the key elements of the learning plan should be discussed with key personnel. The feedback should cover elements such as cost, training options used, training provider performance, length of the program and learning materials.

For example, gathering feedback about the length of the program helps establish whether the training allowed the participants suitable time to develop and use the skills or knowledge in their work. Feedback on the timing of the sessions will provide insight as to whether the program has had a flow-on effect; that is, whether participants must spend a considerable amount of time catching up on work after attending the session. When this occurs, people may get frustrated with the additional burden created by training. They may resent the training and avoid transferring the knowledge and skills they have learnt to their current work.

Discuss any quality or workload issues with people and identify suitable solutions to this problem; for example, payment of overtime, employment of temporary staff or sharing the workload across the team to cover the absence of team members.

Giving feedback to team members

Managers, coaches and trainers must provide constructive feedback to team members about areas of performance relating to their training.

The technique of providing constructive feedback to highlight progress and performance areas for improvement is a valuable management skill. There may be times when you have to bring positive feedback to reinforce improvements and progress, as well as negative feedback to team members. While positive recognition can be done publicly, any negative feedback or correction should always be done in private, to avoid embarrassing the team member.

Key principles of giving feedback:
▪ Remove emotion before providing feedback. ▪ Begin with positive feedback regarding areas of improvement and positive performance that the individual is meeting. ▪ State the areas of performance where the individual has not met the agreed standards. ▪ Ask if there are any reasons for the individual’s lower performance and actively listen to their response. ▪ Ask the individual for suggested methods of meeting performance standards in the future. ▪ Negotiate approaches for improvement over the coming period. ▪ Agree to and set the new performance standards. ▪ End with a positive comment. This may be congratulating the individual on their useful suggestions or highlighting other areas of outstanding performance.

Negotiating changes to learning plans

As part of the monitoring and review process, managers may need to negotiate changes to learning plans and programs with team members, as well as other key personnel.

Negotiation is a careful exploration of your position and the other person's position, where the aim is to find a mutually acceptable decision that gives you and the other party a positive outcome. The goal of any negotiation is to meet business requirements and maintain a healthy working relationship with your key stakeholders.

Negotiation skills help to achieve win-win outcomes for the business. It is a valuable tool for managers in the workplace, in particular, when you have to deal with budget and resource conflicts and other operational constraints.

When a need to change learning plans and programs has been identified, the best approach for negotiation is to explore the situation, using an assertive interpersonal communication approach to find a solution that is acceptable to both parties.

Assertive negotiation skills required to negotiate variations to learning plans and programs
▪ State your needs in a clear and objective manner. ▪ Stay on track – what does the business need from this situation? ▪ Be empathetic towards the other person's needs and interests. ▪ Be an active listener. ▪ Negotiate with a spirit of cooperation. ▪ Be prepared to give in order to receive. ▪ Offer a solution that meets the other party's needs, but puts the needs of the business first. ▪ Use open and honest communication. ▪ Take responsibility for your communication as well as any mistakes or offences made. ▪ Remove your emotions from the discussion, ensuring they do not impact on the words or tone used in your message.

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Which of the key principles do you need to follow when seeking and giving feedback about learning programs? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Gather feedback during and at the end of the program.
- ◯ Prepare key questions to ask students.
- ◯ Ensure feedback is balanced between positive performance and areas for improvement.
- ◯ Identify key people you will gather feedback from.
- ◯ Provide at least five pieces of negative feedback that the team member must address.

Question 2

What are four methods of seeking feedback from participants that can help identify areas to improve the learning arrangements?

Question 3

List four principles you can use to negotiate changes to learning plans and programs.

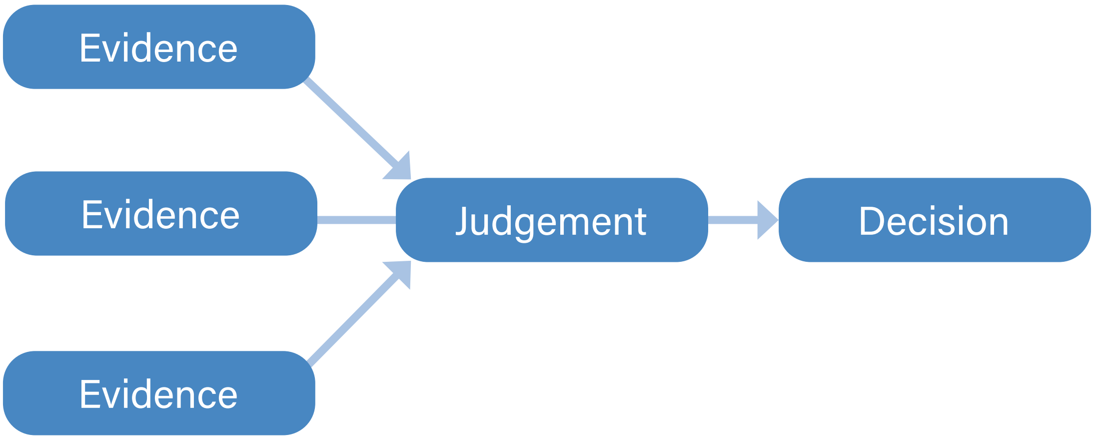
3C Assess and record performance and outcomes

Assessment is the process of collecting evidence to make a sound judgement of the learner's competence, and deciding whether they are competent or not yet competent.

Assessment is the process of making a judgement on whether a person has the required competencies – skills, knowledge or attitudes.

Assessing performance to identify progress and achievements can be done in a number of ways, including through observation, formal assessment tools and informal discussion.

The assessment process is illustrated below:



The importance of the assessment process

The success of any learning program will be found in the application of the learner's skills, knowledge and attitudes. Many learning programs and plans are implemented; however, participants are rarely assessed. As a result, continuous improvement cannot occur and the real benefits of the program cannot be identified. In addition, it is difficult to identify whether the learner requires additional support to perform effectively in their job.

Assessment is also the team member's opportunity to prove they are competent to perform specific tasks to standard.

Types of assessment methods

A range of assessment methods can be used to assess different outcomes. The types of methods you use to assess a team member should be dependent on what you are assessing and where you are conducting the assessment.

The following table explains the common types of assessment methods and when they can be useful.

Type of assessment	Description	When it can be used
Assessment questions	These are written or verbal questions that participants need to respond to. Their answers must meet a pre-determined standard.	To assess knowledge and, in some cases, attitudes and skills
Scenarios	This is a fictitious event that could occur in a relevant workplace. It usually describes the commencement of the event, the actions of key parties involved and the outcome. Following the scenario, the participant must answer some questions to show how they would handle the situation positively.	To assess knowledge and, in some cases, attitudes and skills
Projects	This is based on building something as part of a set task. Projects are non-routine activities that are not commonly observable. Evidence in the form of completed workplace documentation, photograph or report may be submitted as evidence for completion of the project.	To assess knowledge and, in some cases, attitudes and skills
Practical observation	Participants complete a specific job task that includes a series of activities demonstrating the required skills and behaviours in a simulated or live workplace environment. These tasks must be observed.	To assess attitudes and skills
Portfolio of evidence	Participants collect and attach copies of appropriate workplace documents that they have completed throughout their learning program or employment.	To assess knowledge and skills
Third-party report	Participants demonstrate competencies based on practical skills and knowledge over a period of time. These competencies are a based on a combination of routine and non-routine tasks that are readily observable by a direct supervisor.	To assess attitudes and skills

Assessing performance through observation and informal discussion

Observing and working alongside the team and asking members how their work is going will give you a sense of their progress and level of performance. Observing them as they go about their day-to-day activities is a simple and accurate means of measuring their level of competence. For example, if a team member has recently attended a course on organising and prioritising their workload, you should be able to see their improved planning abilities in the way they approach their tasks; the way their workstation is organised; whether work is now completed on time and whether they use their time productively.

Asking questions helps you ascertain whether the required skill or knowledge has been gained. For example, you might ask a team member who has had training in advanced spreadsheets how this is helping them in their daily work, and to show you an example of the work they are now doing using their spreadsheet skills.

During an informal discussion you might discover that a team member has had no time to practise newly learnt skills because they have been too busy attending to their daily tasks. You need to address this immediately; for example, you might discuss setting aside one hour per week for them to practise.

Assessing performance through demonstration

Asking team members to demonstrate their new skills and knowledge can indicate whether the skill or knowledge has been gained. Always give learners clear instructions and a time line for completing the task.

Perhaps an individual was sent to improve their customer service skills, but after watching them for a while you realise they have not improved. The feedback form they completed may have indicated the course was too advanced for them. Strategies to overcome the problem include researching more appropriate courses, providing in-house training and appointing a coach or mentor.

The person may still need practice, so don't be disappointed if they can't display a new skill immediately. This may not be the fault of the learning program but could simply indicate the need for sustained practice. Two examples of assessing learning through demonstration follow.

Running meetings	Prepare presentation
Someone who attended a session on running meetings could be asked to: ▪ lead a team discussion ▪ chair a meeting ▪ take meeting minutes.	Someone who has been trained in preparing electronic presentations may be asked to develop a presentation for you.

Recording learning outcomes

After you have analysed the information you receive through observation, discussion, checklists and feedback, you should record the outcomes of the training or development program. Were the short- and long-term goals met? Would you repeat the training for another group?

The method of recording and reporting learning outcomes varies between organisations. Some require formal documentation while others rely on word of mouth, observation and personal record-keeping. For example, employees undertaking a degree or diploma course may be required to provide proof of their results within a week of receiving them.

Recording of outcomes from learning programs may occur through:
▪ copies of original training briefs ▪ feedback evaluation forms ▪ meetings with individuals ▪ team meetings ▪ formal reports ▪ copies of applications to attend ▪ copies of confirmations of enrolment ▪ formal performance appraisals ▪ a skills assessment and recognition of competencies process.

Filing records of outcomes

All documents must be filed electronically or in a paper-based system. You may need to refer to them at a later date to clarify issues regarding your organisation's learning program, the training accessed, employee qualifications and other points.

Reports don't need to be lengthy. Just record a brief outline of the training conducted, how well it achieved its objective, an indication of whether the trainee's performance has improved and whether further learning gaps have been identified.

Reports from performance appraisals help you keep track of a person's progress and the action you have identified for further training or development. Follow up any action that was identified in a previous appraisal. For example, if training in using a software application was identified as a priority, you need to note the program selected, when the training took place and how effective it was.

Keeping records of progress is valuable for planning future training or identifying areas for further development. For example, ongoing support and future learning programs may be necessary to ensure the individual, the team and the organisation continue to be successful and productive.

Example

Training progress report

This is an example of a training progress report.

Monthly progress report

Name: Naomi Fox

Date: 6/3/19

Successes:

Has successfully produced a range of documents in line with organisational requirements, including memorandums, emails and business letters.

Action items:

Over the next three months will need to practise producing more complex documents; for example, reports and forms.

Date of next meeting: 3/4/19

Date competency achieved: ____ / ____ / ____

Signed:

Excerpt from performance appraisal

This section should reflect new goals and challenges, training opportunities and areas for improvement (include courses, reading, extra responsibilities, etc.).

Areas for action	Action to be taken (training, reading, etc.)	By when (dates)
Develop desktop skills.	Attend introductory desktop publishing course at IT Skills, Level 3/135 King Parade.	3–4 May
Develop planning and organisational skills.	Attend seminar for administrative assistants at Parkside Convention Centre.	21 June
Extend communication and presentation skills.	Appoint Deborah as mentor.	Ongoing

Practice Task 11

Question 1

Draw a line to match each term about assessment methods to its definition.

» Scenarios	» The participant is required to build something based on a set task. The task must be non-routine and not commonly observable.
» Practical observation tasks	» Participants demonstrate competencies based on practical skills and knowledge over a period of time that are readily observable by a direct supervisor.
» Projects	» A fictitious event that could occur in a relevant workplace. The participant must answer some questions to show how they would handle the situation positively.
» Third-party report	» Participants complete a specific job task that includes a series of activities demonstrating the required skills and behaviours in a simulated or live workplace environment. These tasks must be observed.

Question 2

List four types of assessment records that need to be retained.

3D Maintain records of competency

Records of achievements should be documented and filed appropriately in your organisation's system.

Competency records can include observation and third-party reports, certificates, statements of attainment, statements of attendance and written reports. All of these record that a person has attended a training or development course.

In some instances, it is a legal requirement to retain a copy of progress reports and records. In the case of a trainee undertaking training in the workplace, such documents are useful for an audit to verify that training has taken place.

Records include:

- written observation reports
- information from performance appraisals
- copies of certificates obtained from training sessions
- copies of checklists that record skills; for example, a skills audit or training needs analysis
- records of processes undertaken to recognise prior learning or current competency
- copies of documents used in programs for formal qualifications
- reports of evidence provided to verify competence, such as photos of a project that has been constructed.

Maintaining records of competency

Records are defined as evidence of a business activity or transaction. They must be completed and retained to verify that the learning process has taken place. Records are important in learning and development processes, decision-making and maintaining organisational knowledge.

Keeping track of all activities within an organisation is important. If achievements are not recorded, other supervisors or managers may have difficulty determining what type of training has been done or whether an employee is competent in a particular area. For example, a newly appointed supervisor would find it useful to be able to access the files and identify the action agreed on at a team member's last performance appraisal or the type of training they had completed to fill a skill gap.

Another reason for keeping records is to verify that training has taken place and the cost involved for financial auditing purposes. Organisations must account for the money they have budgeted for and spent, and need to know whether the training budget has been used or exceeded.

Documents must be stored in keeping with any statutory regulations as well as your organisation's confidentiality and security policies and procedures. This can mean that documents are filed and locked in a particular cabinet with access given only to designated personnel. If documents are stored on a network, a password is usually required for access.

Evidence of competency

Training records should primarily provide evidence of the person's competence as assessed by a qualified person in a position of authority, such as a qualified trainer or manager.

Records and reports should include the following information:
▪ the learner's participation in and completion of any learning and development activities (formal and informal) ▪ the date of training and who delivered the program ▪ the type of training received ▪ how the learner was monitored ▪ assessments including competency achieved or not yet achieved, date of assessment and name of the assessor ▪ any continuous improvement processes that arose from the training ▪ the qualifications and experience of the trainer/coach or mentor.

Following organisational policies and procedures

Competency records and reports should be kept private and confidential in the learner's personnel files in the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), or equivalent record-keeping system, in accordance with your organisational policies and procedures.

If electronic records are used, steps should be taken to ensure that the information is updated and processed correctly to avoid loss or incorrect access of information.

Maintaining accurate records and reports

When completing learner competency records and reports, you will need to check that each document is clear and complete so that they are of a quality standard. You need to confirm that each field has been filled in, names are spelled correctly and the right dates are written.

Incorrect, missing or out-of-date information will have future impacts for the business; for example, administration staff, managers and HR staff will find it difficult to get their job done to the right standards and within designated time frames if they are using records that are poorly written. Furthermore, records that have been identified as having missing information can be difficult to resolve.

Care must be taken when updating information that is to be stored in the organisation's record-keeping system. High levels of accuracy have positive impacts on a business; in particular, assisting staff in sourcing and understanding important information, and contributing towards making informed business decisions.

Inaccuracy can mislead and frustrate staff and is generally caused by lack of attention to detail, unsatisfactory communication skills and poor literacy skills.

Common mistakes to avoid when completing learner competency records and reports include:
▪ too much information causing confusion and frustration due to time taken to read the information at a later stage ▪ spelling mistakes ▪ repeated words; for example 'and and' ▪ poor grammar ▪ important words left out of a sentence ▪ not enough information or leaving out important details ▪ an incorrect and/or inaccurate account of what actually took place due to bias or lack of attention to detail.

Example

Retain records of competency

Paul works as an office administration manager, and is responsible for five administration staff. Paul provides monthly coaching to his staff that focuses on various areas of their job role as part of his commitment to their ongoing development.

To ensure there are adequate records retained of each coaching session, Paul will complete a coaching record which is then saved on the employee's file. The record will include the date and time of the session, key topics, follow-on points from previous sessions, and any issues that need to be explored further with additional, more specialised training.

At the end of each session, Paul and the team member will both sign off on the coaching record to acknowledge the work that has been completed.

Practice Task 12

Question 1

Why is it important to document and maintain accurate records of competency?

Question 2

Which of the following statements relate to maintaining accurate records of competency? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Follow your organisational policies and procedures.
- ◯ Check spelling and grammar.
- ◯ Fill out all required fields.
- ◯ Leave out personal information and key dates.
- ◯ Provide subjective information about the skills of the team member.

Summary

- Monitoring and evaluating workplace learning is important for identifying the value of learning and development programs to the organisation, in terms of meeting learning needs and cost-effectiveness.
- Learning arrangements can be evaluated in terms of pre-training support and information, program content, delivery, timing, venue, facilities and follow-up.
- When evaluating the learning arrangements, it is essential to collect feedback from a number of sources such as questionnaires, structured discussion, informal discussion and third-party reports.
- Learning programs also need to be evaluated in terms of whether the program has improved the performance of individuals and the organisation by meeting identified learning needs.
- When evaluating the effectiveness of learning programs, feedback can be collected through observation and informal discussion with learning participants, demonstrations, self-assessments, peer assessments and formal performance review sessions.
- The information gathered from evaluating learning arrangements and programs must be recorded by the organisation to determine whether the learning program was successful in meeting learning needs.
- As organisational learning and development is an ongoing process, future learning plans and programs must be modified to meet the changing learning needs of individuals and the organisation.
- Records of employee achievements and competency must be maintained in accordance with organisational policies and procedures.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Monitor and evaluate workplace learning

Part A

1. Which of the following apply to maintaining and storing records of competency? Tick all that apply.

   - ◯ Records of competency should be accessible to all team members so they can monitor their own and others' performance.
   - ◯ Documents should only be kept for a period of 12 months.
   - ◯ Documents must be stored in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.
   - ◯ Records must be checked for accuracy.
   - ◯ All required fields must be completed in each record of competency.

2. List four types of information that need to be recorded when completing competency records.

3. List four principles of giving feedback to team members.

Part B

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Mandy works as a receptionist for an accounting firm. Her role consists of engaging with customers over the telephone and in person in the reception areas. At times, Mandy can be quite abrupt and impersonal, particularly when she is busy with other administrative tasks. These issues relating to her customer service skills have been raised with her supervisor, Tim, on a number of occasions. Tim has received numerous complaints from customers, as well as other staff who have witnessed Mandy's poor attitude in the reception areas.

Tim has developed a learning plan, with Mandy's input, to help her improve her customer service skills. The plan involves a monthly 45-minute coaching session with Tim, as well as a formal online customer service training program that is being paid for by the firm. The learning program will run for three months and Tim is committing to assessing Mandy's performance once a month. At the end of the program, the objective is for Mandy to develop effective customer service skills that will enable her to build quality relationships with all customers.

1. Outline a process that Tim should follow to monitor the progress of Mandy's learning.

2. List three methods Tim can use to gather feedback about Mandy's progress over the three-month training period.

3. At the halfway point, Mandy has attended all of the required coaching sessions but is not yet demonstrating improvements in her customer service skills. Make two recommendations to improve the training program.

4. List two ways Tim can negotiate changes to Mandy's learning plan.

5. Which of the following assessment methods can Tim use to determine whether Mandy has the required competencies? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

a) Observation task	» Yes	» No
b) Project	» Yes	» No
c) Third-party reports	» Yes	» No
d) Written questions	» Yes	» No
e) Scenario	» Yes	» No