

PODCAST 1 Transcript

Introduction to the Learning through Work Certificate

SLIDE 1

This podcast introduces the University of Surrey's Learning through Work Certificate which is being piloted between June and October 2010.

Background

The employment world is so competitive these days that students need to offer much more than just a degree. The Learning through Work Certificate is intended to help you gain recognition for the learning and personal development you gain while you are engaged in paid or unpaid work or completing an internship. The Certificate promotes a number of key capabilities that are important to being successful and fulfilled in life. These capabilities are particularly important to helping you gain employment or run your own income generating enterprise.

Engaging in the self-evaluation and reflective learning process that underlies the Certificate will enable you to become more aware of the skills you have learnt through work and contribute to your competitiveness in the job market. The Certificate can be highlighted in your CV but more importantly, it is the new awareness of your own capability and the dispositions that make you employable, that will enable you to present and market yourself in the competitive world of job seeking.

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Demonstrating you are employable

Most graduates want a job when they complete their degree so demonstrating that you are employable is important. When you apply for a job employers don't just want to see that you have a good degree, they want to see evidence that you have the skills and capability necessary for the workplace. While the university provides you with opportunities to develop lots of skills that will be useful in employment – demonstrating that you are employable can only come from you showing that you have been employed and have been effective in the work place.

Animation 1

Employers everywhere want to see certain skills developed and demonstrated in work situations. There are many such lists but the one that informs the Learning through Work Certificate was produced by the Confederation of British Industry. The CBI employability skills include a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that everyone needs to be effective in the workplace. These include:

1 Self-management

- your willingness to work, to do what is required and see a job through from start to finish
- your readiness to accept responsibility and take initiative,
- your organizational and time management skills

- your flexibility to adapt and your resilience in the face of adversity
- your willingness to improve your own performance by listening to feedback and reflecting on the situations you encounter.

2 Teamworking

- your ability to respect and work with other people to get a job done, to form productive working relationships with the people you work with so that goals can be realised
- to contribute ideas and to discussions
- to willingly co-operate and support, negotiating/persuading,

3 Communication and literacy

- Your ability to communicate with other people clearly and fluently in conversation and in writing using language that is appropriate for the situation
- And your willingness and ability to listen and respond in an appropriate manner
- Your ability to ask questions, negotiate, persuade, present and pitch ideas

And linked to your communication skills

4 Use information technology

- Your ability to use computers and other information technology
- Your ability to find things out using the internet
- To present information through word processed documents, spreadsheets, powerpoint and other graphical means
- To organize information on databases
- To competently use digital visual and audio information
- To participate in interactive websites that enable the exchange of information, influencing and discovery

5 Business and customer awareness

- Your awareness and understanding of how organizations and businesses work
- And the basic drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty

6 Problem solving

- Your ability to assess and respond to situations in the work environment
- To analyse facts and situations, make good decisions and apply creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.

7 Application of numeracy

- Your ability to use numbers and maths appropriate to the work environment and tasks you have to deal with for example in measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae.

Underpinning all these attributes, you must have **positive attitude**: a 'can-do' approach, a willingness to learn, a readiness to take part and contribute, an openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen.

Employers also value people who are **entrepreneurial or enterprising**. People who can see new opportunities for making the business more effective and profitable, people who adopt

an innovative approach, who can think creatively, who bring fresh ideas and who are willing and able to challenge assumptions. People who through their thinking and actions add value to the business enterprise.

Taken together your attributes and dispositions and the confidence with which you apply them make up your capability 'everything you bring to a situation to deal with it effectively'.

The Surrey Learning through Work Certificate embraces all these dimensions of employability and more within its core capability statement. It is all about helping you to develop and demonstrate your capability for employment. The Guidance document and Podcast 2 provide further information on the capability statement.

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Who is it for?

The Learning through Work Certificate is available to all undergraduate students but because we are evaluating the procedures and materials, the number of places will be restricted to 30 on a first come first served basis.

The award is open to undergraduates at any level although we anticipate that it will probably be mainly of interest to level 1 and 2 students. It might help you prepare for your placement or give you the edge in gaining the placement you want.

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What does it involve?

The Certificate is based on an assumption that you are already engaged in part-time or vacation fulltime work. You will need to be in a job that gives you at least 100 hours of work experience. The additional time you will need to invest to gain the award relates to time you will document your experiences and evaluate the learning and personal development you have gained from them. Over a period of time this might amount to 15 to 20 additional hours.

To meet the requirements for the Certificate you will have to do four things

1 Complete a Registration Form

You will be invited to provide details of your work and complete a self-evaluation questionnaire and personal and professional development plan. This will help you reflect on and evaluate your existing work relevant knowledge and skills, and encourage you to plan for your further development. Once you have completed this questionnaire you can register for the Certificate.

2 Maintain a reflective diary or blog to document your learning

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

- Demonstrate the reflective habits necessary to be an effective professional
- Reveal how you have managed your personal and professional development

- Document the experiences and specific situations through which you have developed yourself

You can create your reflective diary as a handwritten notebook, a word document or an online blog.

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

3 Develop your knowledge of learning in the work environment

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

4 Prepare a reflective account of your learning and personal development

The reflective account (up to 2000 words) provides you with an opportunity to summarise and integrate the learning and personal development you have gained through your work experiences. Your account will draw upon your reflective diary and any other documents or media you have used to illustrate and illuminate your personal and professional development process.

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How do I start?

You will need to read the Guide to the Learning through Work and familiarise yourself with the requirements and the capability statement.

If you think you have understood what is expected of you **Complete the Registration Form**. You will find a word version of this Form on the Learning through Work webpage.

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

If you do not understand something please email the scheme organiser Professor Norman Jackson at sceptre@surrey.ac.uk.

Animation

One final point to note

The Certificate is part of the Surrey Lifewide Learning Award scheme which recognises that students are gaining learning and personal development from many different part of their lives

while they are at University. When you have completed your Learning through Work Certificate you can include this in your portfolio for the Lifewide Learning Award.

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We hope you will see this as a valuable and worthwhile opportunity to make your own higher education experience more complete and join the scheme