



NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

May 2018

Review date: April 2021

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1.0 Policy Goal

In order to achieve its mission the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC), strives to provide a supportive learning culture. This strategy is intended to facilitate and secure the learning and development of all NIPEC employees. It is also intended to emphasise the ethos of continuous improvement and highlight NIPEC's commitment to lifelong learning. As a result of implementing this strategy, NIPEC aims to support appropriate learning opportunities for all employees, in partnership with each employee assuming responsibility for his/her own learning and development. NIPEC is keen to create a learning organisation culture.

2.0 Policy Aims

NIPEC mission is to further promote the highest standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person-centred services.

To enable NIPEC carry out its remit, it has a core number of employees based at Centre House, Belfast with a number of Service Level Agreements in place with the Business Services Organisation and other agencies to cover outsourced activities.

NIPEC aims to support staff so that they:

- Contribute towards NIPEC's achievement of its Corporate Plan and Business Plan objectives
- Maintain and develop the required standards of competence for their role and function
- Enable them to demonstrate learning and ongoing competencies as part of the modernisation of the health service
- Fulfil their own personal potential.

3.0 Learning and Development responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring that training and staff development needs of staff meets the organisations aims and objectives rests with the Chief Executive. Each member of staff also has an individual responsibility to play a proactive role (in collaboration with their line manager using the annual staff development appraisal process) in identifying and meeting their learning and development needs.

4.0 Principles of Learning and Development Strategy

NIPEC believes in the importance of lifelong learning for the growth and development of all staff and for the organisation itself. While priority in training will be given to meeting the learning and development needs of the individual as they relate to NIPEC's business aims, this will include encouragement and support for the personal and professional growth of each member of staff. The Policy applies to all employees and is aimed at maximising staff resources and potential to ensure that the following principles are met:

- a. All staff are encouraged to adopt the concept of lifelong learning and accept personal responsibility for assisting in their development.

- b. All staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable them to play a positive role in achieving the objectives of the organisation and to carry out their jobs to the required standard.
- c. All professional staff are facilitated in maintaining progress towards meeting their post registration learning and development requirements for registration.
- d. The organisation is able to respond effectively to the modernisation environment within which it operates.
- e. Induction training is provided for new staff and for those transferred to new sections.
- f. Staff are encouraged and assisted in achieving their potential and to use the annual staff appraisal process with their line manager to review their learning and development needs.
- g. Training in equality is provided to all employees.
- h. Information, instruction and training are provided to ensure the health and safety of all employees.
- i. All learning and development activities supported by NIPEC will be evaluated.

5.0 Equal Opportunities in Learning and Development

As an equal opportunities employer, NIPEC recognises the importance of learning and development in realising equal opportunities and this is incorporated in all aspects of provision.

6.0 Modernised Learning and Development

NIPEC has a modernised view of learning and development and both values and recognises a range of learning and development activities through which each member of staff may gain knowledge, skills and confidence to develop competencies demonstrated in the carrying out of their daily duties. Appendix 1, page 8, describes different categories of learning activities to help guide learning and development planning.

NIPEC also has identified within the Online Portfolio website - <https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net> - a range of activities. As part of these learning and development activities is the use of reflection/evaluation.

7.0 Assessing Learning and Development Needs

Each line manager will with the employee identify the learning and development needs of his/her staff.

The identification of needs will usually arise from the staff appraisal meetings where the employee and their line manager will discuss and agree the employee's progress towards meeting the organisational objectives, the competencies of the post as identified from the Agenda for Change KSF post outlines and their personal development needs.

NIPEC's in-house procedure for staff undertaking a learning and development activity is outlined in Appendix 2, page 17.

Based on this information a training plan will be produced for the organisation. This will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Business Team.

The Learning and Development budget will be allocated according to identified priorities and reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and the Business Team.

In order to achieve the agreed outcome each learning and development activity may require different approaches and resources. These may include:

- Work place learning internally within the organisation.
(Examples: role modelling, reviewing and evaluation, looking at systems and procedures, servicing meetings, IT training)
- Outside the work place learning.
(Examples: external working groups, project work)
- Formal learning, either structured or unstructured.
(Examples: Structured - courses, qualification, programmes; Unstructured - conferences, networking, visits also learning and development activities as shown on the NIPEC 'Online Portfolio' website)

As far as possible, NIPEC will pursue effective and efficient methods of resourcing learning and development activities. These may include:

- E-learning
- In house delivery
- External delivery
- Distance learning
- Supervision learning.

Whichever learning activity is required the line manager must explore the most effective and efficient way of undertaking the activity.

8.0 Learning and Development Resources

In order to achieve the aims stated above, NIPEC is committed to providing, within resources, relevant learning and development opportunities for all levels of staff. The learning and development needs will be derived from annual personal development plans completed as part of the individual objective setting activity. In determining the resources, a balance should be maintained between the needs of the organisation and the needs of the individual.

The following are the resources available within NIPEC which are required to implement the strategy. The resources are divided into three categories, namely Human, Time and Financial.

8.1 Human Resources

NIPEC will endeavour, where possible, to avail of the internal experience, knowledge, skills and expertise of existing staff in order to meet organisational as well as individual development needs.

However NIPEC does acknowledge that certain development initiatives will need to be sourced from external providers. In such cases NIPEC will take all appropriate steps to ensure that the most cost effective and efficient provider is sourced.

8.2 Time

NIPEC will aim to provide working time opportunities for staff to undertake learning and development activities and also support time out of roles to undertake identified activities.

8.3 Financial Resources

NIPEC has considered the financial implications of implementing this strategy, the costs of which are absorbed into and form part of, the NIPEC annual budget and planning process.

Within this annual budget plan for any given year, allocation of resources will be identified for:

- Personal skills training and development (these may be addressed informally or through an external training provider).
- Study leave for academic study (this form of training and development is associated with job specific training).

Employee learning and development initiatives offered as part of each employee's professional development, as well as those courses which form part of an individual's job role. Examples may include professional development conferences and seminars, which may be addressed internally or through an external training provider.

9.0 **Evaluation of Learning and Development Resources**

9.1 Individual's Evaluation

All learning and development activities supported by NIPEC and undertaken by staff will be evaluated as part of an employee's performance review process with their line manager. A summative evaluation questionnaire will also be completed for specific structured course provision and forwarded to Head of Corporate Services. This will facilitate the provision of information regarding the quality of the training. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix 3.

9.2 Organisation's Evaluation

This strategy will be evaluated on an annual basis, against the objectives set at 2.0 and 4.0 above, taking into account the further development needs of the organisation in the light of changes arising from organisational or legislative matters.

10. **Equality and Human Rights Screening**

This policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 and of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance states that the purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that the greatest resources can be devoted to these.

Using the Equality Commission's screening criteria and NIPEC's Human Rights screening template no significant equality or human rights implications have been identified. The policy will therefore not be subject to equality impact assessment.

Signed: _____
Chief Executive

Date: _____

Categories of Learning Activity

INTRODUCTION

Continuous learning underpins the competency development of all members of staff in NIPEC. A learning resource has been developed by NIPEC as part of the Development Framework (DF) project to help nurses, midwives, and their employers to maximise the learning opportunities available both within the work-place and within more formal educational settings. This has been modified for use within the NIPEC organisation. The NIPEC Internal Learning Activities Resource acknowledges a diversity of learning situations, activities and opportunities. The learning activities developed by the DF Project Group, and amended for use within NIPEC is not an exhaustive list and will be kept under review as we become aware of other appropriate activities.

NIPEC has also given consideration to the following factors:

Broadening the Traditional Concept of Learning

NIPEC wishes to broaden the traditional concept of learning and education to ensure that learning is viewed as an everyday activity to maximize the learning opportunities for all members of staff. It is recognised that day to day activities in the work-place provide diverse and rich learning experiences for staff much of which is not generally acknowledged as learning. This can range from the everyday activity of working with a colleague to more active learning activities such as those provided through Working Groups or special initiatives or events. It is essential that learning in the work-place is valued as highly as formal learning resulting in awards or qualifications.

This learning activities resource which was developed for the NIPEC DF project has been amended to facilitate learning and development of staff within NIPEC with the objective of promoting a more flexible and responsive approach to meeting NIPEC's corporate and business objectives. The learning activities resource includes: a description of categories of learning and a summary description of various learning activities in each category.

Planning and Identifying Learning and Development Needs

The NIPEC Internal Learning Activities Resource should be used as part of the NIPEC Learning and Development Strategy in line with personal objective setting and personal development planning. The aim should be to maximise the use of the diverse range of learning situations experienced within and outside the work-place. Having identified an area for learning or development, learning activities should be selected relevant to the situation, the needs of the individual staff member and the organisation.

Learning and Development Portfolio

NIPEC wishes to promote and support the maintenance of an individual Learning and Development Portfolio for all members of staff. In-house sessions will be arranged for all staff members to illustrate the development and maintenance of individual portfolios.

Learning Style

Some consideration may need to be given to the learning style of the staff member to determine the most effective form of learning. Other issues required to be addressed such as work-place needs, including resource implications and time-frame for implementation. These considerations will help in selecting a range of possible options from the learning activity resource and ultimately facilitate the final decision. Some helpful information and a tool to

determine your learning style can be found on the NIPEC's Online Portfolio website <https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net>

Organisational Arrangements to Support Learning Activities

Organisational arrangements to support staff undertaking any learning or development activity may differ depending on available resources and organisational needs.

CATEGORIES OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES

A wide range of learning activities are identified which may be helpful to NIPEC staff in meeting identified learning and development needs. A number of learning categories have been identified to describe the context for learning (adapted from the Learning and Development Needs Toolkit, Office for Health Management, 2003).

The three categories of learning identified are:

1. ***Learning in and through the work-place*** achieved through working and learning from and with experts and colleagues
2. ***Self-directed learning*** achieved through the endeavours of the individual
3. ***Formal learning*** achieved through structured learning opportunities.

To provide further assistance each of the learning activities briefly summarised below has been allocated to one of the categories although there will be some overlap.

CATEGORY 1: LEARNING IN AND THROUGH THE WORK-PLACE

Learning in the work-place is part of every day activity. Some aspects will be subconscious and some more conscious and deliberate. This learning can be dynamic but is sometimes a subtle form of learning which may not even be recognised as learning at the time, but on reflection is seen to be highly valuable and leads to significant personal and professional development. This learning may take place in the individual's own work-place or may take the form of experiencing practice in other work situations such as site visits. Learning through work-place experience can include opportunities to learn from individuals who are recognised as experts in their field. Learning from and with others with whom there is a shared purpose or goal also provides rich learning opportunities. Learning in and from the work-place setting is invaluable and must be viewed as an essential form of learning that can assist NIPEC achieve its Corporate and Business objectives. Reflective accounts of the learning and application to the role of the staff member should be recorded in the individuals Personal Development Plan and portfolio if applicable.

Possible learning and development activities in and through the work-place:

Role Modelling

Role modelling is a powerful learning activity, which happens when a person serves as a model in a particular role. It is essential that good role models are selected who demonstrate excellent practice and/or inspirational leadership. Learning through role modelling is often not a conscious activity but occurs as a direct result of working with others and learning from their actions. Role modelling is a powerful learning tool since learning can take place within everyday work situations through watching others at work. Analysis of behaviours, both good and bad aids learning.

Mentoring

A mentor is a person who has acknowledged expertise who provides guidance and support to an individual (mentee) to help them achieve their potential. This is achieved through a process

of relationship building with the mentee and takes place over a period of time. The purpose of the mentoring process is to enable individuals to recognise their own skills and capabilities and maximise on development opportunities.

Professional Supervision

Professional Supervision is a formalised system of professional support and development of staff which enables individual practitioners to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for their own practice and enhance consumer protection and safety of care in complex clinical situations (DOH, 1993). Supervisees are helped through a process of self-reflection and problem-solving to maximise their own professional potential.

It is recognised that there are a number of supervision type models available to professional staff, such as action learning, peer supervision, critical companionship and reflective practice. Essentially they employ similar principles to that of professional supervision, namely, individual and group responsibility for learning, reflection, respect for each other, applying a structured format, reporting and evaluation of impact.

Induction Programme

This is provided for employees new to the organisation or to a new role to orientate them to the organisation and their role and responsibilities for the post and includes identifying professional, technical and personal development needs as appropriate and begins the process of devising a personal development plan. The induction programme is facilitated by a more experienced member of staff to ensure that the new employee is provided with the information and learning opportunities required to enable them to do the job.

Appraisal

Appraisal is an on-going process designed to improve the performance of the individual and also to facilitate their development and help maximise their potential within the organisation. Appraisals allow the staff member to examine their work and plan for future development. Every individual needs to be aware of their role and their job description within the organisation, to know how they are performing and appraisals enable this. It is a two – way process, the individual being appraised must engage in self appraisal in addition to the appraiser offering their assessment.

360 degree feedback

360 degree feedback is a tool that provides systematic collection and feedback on performance of individuals or groups. The feedback is provided by a variety of people who have a stake in the individuals or groups performance, thereby providing an all round perspective on the performance of the individual or group. This can involve the person's line manager, their fellow workers and those they line manage. Feedback from a variety of sources is an effective method in providing a wider picture of performance and development needs. 360 degree feedback allows the individual or group to understand how others perceive their effectiveness, and to utilise their strengths to their advantage and identify areas for further development.

Coaching

Coaching is a person-to person process that helps individuals to change their working practices and improve performance at work. The coach will be an acknowledged expert who has the necessary skills to facilitate the required learning. Coaching is designed to help individuals develop rapidly and is a short-term, time-limited approach to learning that is highly goal orientated. Coaching is a tool that helps to enhance staff performance at work and as such is relevant to professional development.

Buddying

Buddying is a process of support provided by a more experienced colleague in the workplace who adopts the role of a 'professional friend'. It denotes a supportive relationship as the "buddy" helps with the development of competence and skills on an on-going basis with the purpose of promoting confidence and self-assurance.

Shadowing

Job Shadowing is a learning experience that helps an individual to gain useful insights into other people's jobs. The benefits gained include insights into the roles of others and improved working relationships within an organisation. It may be used as a component of a course or as part of work experience designed to aid professional development. Clear objectives should be established for the shadowing experience and a reflective account written to describe the learning achieved.

Visits

Visits to specific or other work-related areas can be valuable learning experiences with the objective of observing best practice in one's field of interest or work. To maximise usefulness, the area needs to be carefully researched, so that an appropriate choice is made and a programme of learning negotiated with the host area so that learning needs can be accommodated and met. An account of the visit and the learning achieved should be drawn up and shared with colleagues at base for consideration of any changes that could be implemented in the work-place.

Secondment Opportunities

Secondment is the opportunity to undertake other jobs of work within one's field of employment and involves release from an employed post on a temporary, usually time-limited basis to work elsewhere. This may be another post within their own organisation or elsewhere. A secondment is a rich source of learning and development and provides a great opportunity to extend and develop skills and knowledge and develop networking skills.

Research Groups

Research groups normally comprise a group of individuals interested in research in general or in one particular topic and may be set up within formal or informal structures. Members bring with them differing levels of expertise and experience in the Research Process i.e. design and methodology, analysis methods and in the area of interest.

Post incident review

This involves practitioners, individually or within teams, reviewing specific incidents, which have occurred in the work-place resulting in a mistake or near mistake. Reflection using self-evaluation and/or facilitated learning is employed to analyse the incident and examine the contributory factors. There may be outcomes with individual, team and organisational perspectives, which provide a clear description of risk factors and required action. Individuals may where appropriate use the review process to identify personal action plans and required learning or development. This is a learning event for all involved.

Audit

The overall aim of audit is to improve quality outcomes. This is achieved through a systematic process of reviewing working processes against agreed standards, implementing change where necessary and monitoring the effects of this change. Audit is a powerful learning tool in enhancing the performance of an organisation.

CATEGORY 2: SELF DIRECTED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The every day work environment should be recognised as a learning situation and should be maximised to achieve highly positive, rich and diverse learning experiences directed towards improving NIPEC's performance. Much of the learning that takes place in the work-place will be self-directed and will arise from daily work experiences where the staff member has a need or desire to learn more. The learning from these activities should ideally be recorded in the individual's learning and development portfolio and discussed with their line manager.

Possible self directed learning and development activities:

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is the process of formally reflecting in and on your work or practice, in a structured way which leads to new and better ways of working. Learning to appraise critically and knowing what steps to take to refine your work or practice, should enable the staff member to develop new levels of competence. Reflection allows individuals to capture their experience, think about it, and evaluate the outcomes resulting in new understandings, insights and actions. This can be assisted using one of the many reflective tools that have been developed. Reflection is what turns experience into meaningful learning, to make sense of the world around you and to build on what is happening.

Reflective Diary / Journal

A reflective diary or journal is a useful aid to personal reflection; it provides a structured format for documenting and reviewing individual's reflections on their practice and is valuable evidence to show that learning has occurred. It also acts as a spur to regular reflection. One of the most effective ways of learning from your work or practice is to write about it. Writing about a significant experience gives the individual greater insight into it. Simply recalling a situation from your past is not enough on its own, you need to do something with it. The whole purpose of reflection is to learn from experience and improve.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking involves careful analysis followed by making decisions and exercising judgement. It is a means of making informed decisions. Critical thinking requires practitioners to be open to alternative ways of examining their work and to be confident in their abilities to analyse their actions. To foster a critical thinking attitude a staff member needs to take a questioning approach to their work or practice and to be more active in exercising control over their working environment. It encourages staff members to think for themselves, to become more self-directed and confident in challenging the way "things are done". The ultimate goal is to ensure that NIPEC meets its corporate and business objectives.

Portfolio Development

A portfolio is a record of personal thoughts, feelings and reflections on aspects of experience and is a learning tool which enables staff members to collect evidence from a variety of sources in order to demonstrate their achievements, qualities, competencies and abilities. Portfolio development encourages both personal and professional development; it is the process of reflection and critical analysis which turns experience into meaningful learning. The portfolio belongs to the individual staff member and is therefore personal and confidential. It contains both private and public information that the individual may choose to share with others.

Journal Clubs for Work or Practice Improvement

This involves a group of professionals meeting locally on a regular basis, critiquing journal articles and research initiatives and considering their value to NIPEC corporate or business objectives. Journal clubs provide an excellent non-threatening learning forum for individuals to

increase their knowledge on a particular topic and develop critical analysis and presentational skills.

Networking

Networking is the process by which individuals take opportunities to make contacts, share interests, experiences, and exchange ideas. It enables the practitioner to tap into the enormous depth of expertise of peers and acknowledged experts. Sharing experiences is a powerful opportunity for learning which will enhance work and practice.

Learning Set

A learning set is a group of people who meet regularly to work and learn together using a structured format. It is important to set ground rules for the operation of the learning set to deal with issues such as confidentiality. The set can comprise of uni-professional or multi-professional groups. Each member of the group is facilitated and supported by other group members to solve their issues and problems. As learning sets are based on self-directed learning, the participants can decide the particular issues to be addressed. It provides a confidential forum for participants to test out and clarify new ideas, encouraging them to challenge working practices in new and creative ways.

Action Learning

This is a way of learning that involves working on issues that are real and live to a group of people in a work setting. It is about learning together to gain insights from experience and developing plans to improve practice and care. Action learning with work-based teams requires the uni-professional or multi-professional group to meet on a regular basis to discuss, debate and learn from work related issues and involves personal or group learning based on 'action'. Action learning uses reflective processes to explore issues together to help each group member reach conclusions and solutions to their work related problems or situations. The focus in action learning is about learning to think in new and creative ways to challenge and change working practices.

Problem-Solving / Working Groups

This involves consideration of a particular task or problem using problem-solving techniques that promote new ways of thinking. This can be used by an individual or group of people. Problem solving uses a structured approach, which involves; identification of the problem, defining the problem, investigating solutions, making a plan, carrying out the plan and reflecting on the process and outcomes. Problem solving is a useful tool that uses creative thinking to develop solutions to work-place problems and can be used in every day work situations.

Undertaking Voluntary Work

This involves individuals working with voluntary groups, with a view to extending their skill base and competence. Individuals will be provided with the opportunity to develop, for example, organisational skills and learning about groups of people with different needs

Involvement in Professional Forum

A wide range of professional fora meet for the purpose of sharing good practice and developing new ways of thinking and working, normally, where there is a shared vision. Involvement in these fora would provide a powerful learning opportunity for individuals to learn with and from others with a view to improving their work and practice.

CATEGORY 3: FORMAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Formal learning using structured learning activities is a long-standing mode of learning. This type of learning is usually arranged by others and an extensive range of these opportunities are provided by employers, education institutions or other external organisations. Formal learning

activities are focussed on specific aspects of knowledge and work or practice development and are designed to meet organisational, individual and professional needs and are offered part-time or full-time and over a variable time-scale. Such learning may be by direct face-to-face teaching and learning or by distance learning and may be supplemented by electronic learning (e-learning/ web based).

Increasingly formal education is being provided using flexible learning approaches that seek to improve education provision with regard to widened access, increased availability, and the promotion of individualised learning methods, so that the needs of learners and other stakeholders are met. Flexible learning may be usually associated with open and distance learning and with individualised self-directed learning activities. As with all other learning activities, reflective accounts of the learning and application to the role of the staff member should be recorded in their professional portfolio and evaluated with the relevant line manager. Some formal learning activities will be accredited or certificated.

Possible formal learning and development activities:

Courses

Courses range from short “in-house” training programmes of one to two days, short programmes provided by a variety of providers, through to university-based programmes which may comprise stand-alone modules, short courses or a more extensive programme of study leading to diplomas, degrees and higher degrees. Programmes are offered using direct teaching methods or by distance learning methods and may be supplemented by e-learning through structured programmes of learning that are delivered on-site or by distance learning. Courses have a defined structure with identified learning outcomes and content that focus on specific aspects of professional and personal development. The course may involve assessable elements.

Lectures

Lectures are a frequently used type of formal teaching and learning activity and may form part of a course of study, conference, study day or be delivered within the work-place by a visiting expert. This is a method used by the lecturer/expert to provide information to a large group of people; sometimes up to several hundred. The content must be up to date and relevant to the audience and at an appropriate level to be challenging but not too complex. Lectures are more effective when complemented with additional material such as handouts.

Workshop/Seminars

A workshop or seminar is a meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or topic. The workshop helps the participants to share information and best practice and agree outcomes. Workshops and seminars are commonly used methods that assist organisations and departments with specific developments and work-related issues.

Study Groups

Study groups are used in both formal and workplace settings and involve a group of people studying and learning together. The purpose of this activity is to put participants at the centre of the learning process by sharing knowledge and experiences with each other. Participants will be challenged to be tolerant of others' viewpoints by developing interactive and collaborative skills. This activity also promotes team-building, leadership and problem-solving skills.

Electronic Learning (E-learning)

The increasing numbers of students accessing higher education and ongoing developments in Information technology (IT) are generating the integration of computer-based learning into formal teaching programmes. This has enabled the development of the “virtual university”,

where the learning does not take place in a central university (or other education institution) building, and provides access to courses for a wide range of participants, some of whom work and live some distance from the university. E-learning uses computer based information technology through the use of the internet to provide formal learning experiences for the students and also allows students to 'talk' to each other and their lecturers using tools like 'chat rooms'. As a result a new kind of educational experience is emerging, which uses a mix of these new technologies together with conventional teaching methods to support learning at home, in the work-place, in remote class-rooms and in campus class-rooms.

Role Play

Role play is a learning activity where the participants take on designated roles within a practice or work based scenario. This is a valuable learning tool which helps individuals develop insights into real life situations and understand why people react and behave as they do. When participating in role play, it is important that a full briefing is provided beforehand to all participants so they understand the role they are to play. Learning occurs from the direct experience as well as from observation of others. The final part of the process includes the debriefing of participants. This includes analysing and identifying what has been learned and considering how this can be applied to practice in real life situations in the future.

Conferences

This is a formal meeting which typically takes place over one or two days and involves organisations and individuals with a shared interest. They are a useful forum to present new ideas and practices and to meet with others from the same field of interest. They are particularly useful in bringing together specialist practitioners and groups and are a platform for showcasing the latest developments and trends in practice.

Study Days

This learning activity involves single or half study days to provide work-related information and skill-based training updates to staff. Topics selected for training purposes should be relevant to enhance performance within the individual's job profile. Opportunities should be provided to discuss what has been learned to enable application of this learning to the practice setting.

Literature Search

A literature search involves a systematic review of available literature of a particular topic area and may be used by staff members in the work-place or as part of an education programme to ensure that the most up to date information and evidence is used. Staff members in the work-place may for example undertake a literature review when they meet a situation or challenge that is unfamiliar to them or they wish to find out more about a particular subject. The literature review may use electronic sources such as the wide range of databases provided by the NIPEC library system or on the internet or more conventional paper sources. This is a useful self-directed learning tool that can be used at any time.

Table 1: NIPEC Internal Learning Activities Resource

Learning in and through the Workplace	Self-Directed Learning	Formal Learning
Role Modelling	Reflective Practice	Courses
Mentor	Reflective Diary/Journal	Lectures
Professional Supervision	Critical Thinking	Workshops/Seminars
Induction Programme	Portfolio Development	Study Groups
Appraisal	Journal Clubs for Work or Practice Improvement	Electronic Learning (E-learning)
360 degree feedback	Networking	Role Play
Coaching	Learning Set	Conferences
Buddying	Action Learning	Study Days
Shadowing	Problem Solving/Working Groups	Literature Search
Visits	Undertaking Voluntary Work	
Secondment Opportunities	Involvement in Professional Forum	
Research Groups		
Post incident review		
Audit		

Learning and Development Procedure

1. Introduction

NIPEC wishes to encourage staff to undertake learning and development which is linked to its overall Mission and Values, and is directly related to the achievement of its objectives and through performance management appraisals, is relevant to individuals present or immediately foreseeable work responsibilities.

NIPEC is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity in learning and development regardless of religious belief, political opinion, gender or marital status, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, disability, domestic responsibility or Trade Union membership.

2. Procedure

A key element of NIPEC's learning and development strategy is the annual objective setting and personal development planning process for each member of staff. The in-house process covers the following areas:

- Line manager and individual staff member set and agree individual objectives based on the organisation's current year's Business Plan
- The line manager and the individual staff member discuss and agree the individual's learning and development needs for the year ahead;
- A range of learning and development activities will be considered;
- Based on the individuals own learning style and level of competence an appropriate learning activity will be agreed;
- The personal development plan is reviewed on an ongoing basis and the learning and development activities undertaken are evaluated by the line manager and the staff member and recorded.

This Procedure has, therefore, been drawn up to address the following aspects:

- a) NIPEC management will provide the necessary support, within resources, to staff who wish to embark on further learning and development opportunities.
- b) NIPEC management will in discussions with staff members identify learning and development needs in order for the staff member to meet their personal objectives. A variety of learning and development activities may be appropriate. This may include attendance at seminars/workshops or programmes of study. Where appropriate, support will be given to staff in respect of finance, time off and mentoring.
- c) Staff will also have a responsibility to identify, on an ongoing basis learning and development needs which will enhance effectiveness and improve performance.
- d) In cases where staff elect to undertake learning and development outside this process an application for support may be made which will be considered against the following criteria:

- i. Relevance to NIPEC's Aims, Vision and Values
- ii. Relevance to management standards which have been identified as appropriate to NIPEC
- iii. Relevance to the individual's present or immediately foreseeable work responsibilities
- iv. Previous training support given
- v. Ability of the individual to undertake and complete the course of training or study
- vi. The overall cost
- vii. The length of the course of training or study
- viii. The exigencies of the service.

The overall guiding principle governing the provision of support will be the exigencies of the service at time of application.

It may be that some or all of the three areas of support; finance, time off and mentoring may be made available, but this decision is entirely one for NIPEC management to make. The granting of financial support will not automatically give staff access to time off or mentoring support in any one year. The extent to which the three supports are available in a "package" or separately is entirely a matter for NIPEC management and will be reassessed each year in line with available resources.

3. Courses/Programmes considered relevant for support

In general, NIPEC will provide support to applications which meet the criteria described at (d) [i to viii] above. It must be noted however, that each application for support to undertake a learning and development activity must be judged on its merit. NIPEC recognises the changing situation in respect of learning and development methods used and courses/programmes offered and will constantly review the relevance and appropriateness of available post entry learning and development.

4. Application Procedure

- a) If a member of staff wishes to pursue a course of programme which requires the support of NIPEC then they should complete the Study Support Application Form (Appendix 3) having discussed the course content with their Line Manager.
- b) The Line Manager must complete the Application Form, indicating whether or not he/she supports the application and forward it together with relevant course or programme literature to the Chief Executive with whom the final decision rests.
- c) In reaching a decision the Chief Executive will consider the criteria at paragraph 2(d) above, taking into consideration financial assistance, mentoring support and time off. The study must be relevant to the individual's Personal Development Plan.
- d) Written confirmation of the outcome of all applications will be provided as soon as possible after the application has been considered.

NB. Requests for leave and/or expenses should be made at least 8 weeks prior to commencement of each academic year. Continued approval will also depend on standards of attendance and performance. Fees will not be paid in retrospect to any member of staff who has not been given approval by the Chief Executive.

5. General Provisions

- a) Following NIPEC's approval for the approved course of study expenses will be reimbursed via the HRPTS system with receipts being shown to the line manager.

The normal rate of reimbursement is 75% of expenses incurred for:

- Course fees
- Examination fees
- Text books up to a maximum of £30.00 per subject.

NB. Every effort should be made to borrow books from libraries or purchase second-hand from other students.

- b) If a member of staff leaves NIPEC or for some other reason fails to complete an approved course of study, they will normally be requested to refund either part or all of the costs of the course of study.
- c) Should the reason for non-completion of a course be related to pregnancy or a disability it is not envisaged that there will be a request to repay course fees etc.
- d) It will not be possible for NIPEC to fund the costs of the production of any Dissertation/Thesis for any Masters or higher degree.
- e) There will be no additional payments for subsistence or travel.
- f) In the event that an officer requests or expresses an interest in premature retirement, or is made redundant during the academic year NIPEC will not seek reimbursement of the financial assistance granted.

6. Time Off/Special Leave

- a) Day release shall not normally be granted where evening classes are available.
- b) Where day release is granted, time off should not exceed the equivalent of one whole working day per week during the period of the course of instruction.
- c) Paid leave may be given to attend summer school related to for example: Open University courses conditional upon the course of study being work related.
- d) Where leave is granted as block release it should not exceed 65 days in any leave year.
- e) Officers will be granted a half-day's leave on the day of the examination whether the time is outside working hours or not.
- f) A day's leave will also be granted per examination for study purposes.

All requests for full-time courses of study and secondments should be forwarded to the Chief Executive by the requesting officer's Line Manager.

All approved time off for courses of study and exams should be recorded via the HRPTS system.

7. Resits

In the event of a member of staff needing to resit an examination, a half-day's leave on the day of the examination will be granted. There will be no reimbursement for the exam fees and no study leave for resits.

8. Evaluation Questionnaire

All staff attending courses or programmes funded by NIPEC must complete an evaluation questionnaire (Appendix C) and forward it to the Head of Corporate Services. This will provide information regarding the quality of the training and perceived value to the organisation.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Application of the Policy will be monitored to ensure adherence to the principle of Equality of Opportunity.

An annual summary and analysis of the total number of applications received will be carried out by the HR Directorate with feedback to NIPEC prior to September of each year. This analysis will assist NIPEC with the drafting of its financial revenue estimates and business objectives for the next financial year

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSED TRAINING

Course/Qualification to be attained: _____

College/University etc.: _____

Nature of Study (Please tick):

Day-release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half-day release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Class	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Length of Course (state years/months) _____

Year of study being applied for: _____

Cost/Fees:

	Course Fees	Exam Fees	Other Fees (Please State)
Year 1			
Year 2			
Year 3			
Year 4			

What assistance are you seeking?

Day-release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial Assistance Only	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half-day release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modular release	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Class	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Have you previously received financial assistance from NIPEC to attain academic qualifications? (If so please list below).

Course Title	Date of Attendance	Qualification Obtained	Method of Study

5. **TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANTS SEEKING APPROVAL FOR 2nd OR SUBSEQUENT YEARS OF COURSE:**

Have you previously applied for Financial Assistance? Yes/No

Have you received Financial Assistance for all previous years of study? Yes/No

If No, please state reasons for Financial Assistance being withheld

Have you successfully completed all exams required for continuation of course Yes/No

If no, please state dates of re-sits, or action required for continuation of course:

Have NIPEC been notified of results of exams successfully completed? Yes/No

If no, please state reasons:

6. Please state your reasons for undertaking this course and its relevance to NIPEC's Mission and Business Objectives. Please also indicate the relevance to your present and/or future work and the expected benefits this training will bring to yourself and NIPEC.

7. **ACCEPTANCE**

I hereby agree to accept the provisions as laid down in the Training and Development Policy and in consideration of the Financial Assistance granted to me in accordance with the policy. I agree that if I decide to discontinue my studies during the Academic year that I shall refund to NIPEC part or all the Financial Assistance awarded to me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

8. **TO BE COMPLETED BY LINE MANAGER**

I do/do not support this application for the following reasons:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please forward to Chief Executive with relevant course literature.

9. **TO BE COMPLETED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

I do/do not approve this application for the following reasons:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please forward a copy to the BSO's Human Resources Department for filing within the staff member's personal file.

DEVELOPMENT / TRAINING EVENT EVALUATION RECORD



Name:		
Job Title:		
Brief details of development opportunity / training event attended:		
Venue:		
Organiser:		
Dates:	Times:	Fee / costs:

Your reflections on your learning opportunity / training event

1.	What did you hope to learn / achieve from the opportunity / event?	
2.	Was this achieved?	Yes/No
	If no, why do think this was not achieved?	
3.	Do you feel the opportunity / event was appropriate to your learning needs?	Yes/No
	If no, please explain why not	

4.	How will you apply the learning from this opportunity / event to your current role and responsibilities?	
5.	Do you feel further learning is required to meet your original objectives?	Yes/No
	If yes, what do you feel this should be?	
6.	Please identify which parts of the opportunity / event you found particularly useful?	
7.	Please identify parts of the opportunity / event you found less useful? (please say why)	
	If this was an in-house opportunity/event, what aspects do feel could be improved?	
8.	Would you recommend the opportunity / event for other staff?	Yes/No
	Please identify who and why:	

Your Line Manager's reflections

9.	Was this opportunity / event of benefit to the:	
	a) individual	Yes/No
	Please say how:	
	b) organisation	Yes/No
	Please say how:	
10.	Please use the following space to add any further evaluation you may wish to make.	

Please return this completed form to your line manager, who will arrange for your training records to be updated if relevant, and place a copy with your Personal Development Plan for discussion at your appraisal or development review meeting.

You are also advised to keep a copy in your portfolio.