

Develop your staff: Develop your business

Flexible, affordable work-based learning for small businesses

"CBI surveys have shown that employers are not confident that there will be sufficient skilled people available to them in the future to meet their needs. By failing to harness the knowledge and expertise of universities, businesses could be missing out on the chance to get high-quality tailor-made training that will help their companies prosper in the longer term."

CBI, 30 October 2008

At Kingston University we are committed to lifelong learning. Following consultation with small and medium-sized businesses, we've developed an innovative study programme specifically designed for companies with under 250 staff – the Business Process Development foundation degree.



Key features of the Business Process Development foundation degree

- Individually tailored to address your business objectives and the needs of your employees
- Affordable – with a 50% discount off the normal fee, this high-quality pilot programme is a fraction of the cost of a commercial offering
- Suitable for adult learners who may not have formal qualifications but have a wealth of work experience
- Does not require University attendance – the course uses an innovative combination of online and work-based learning
- Cost effective and time efficient – no constraints associated with having key personnel away from the workplace
- Teaching material relevant to real-life work requirements
- Innovative, using a wide range of methods for course assessment (eg audio and video, as well as written)
- Recognition of prior achievement in the workplace
- Full, continuous support and guidance for learners
- Open to both employees and owner managers

“Research in 2007 confirms that firms that don't train are 2.5 times more likely to fail than those who do! Now is precisely the time to keep investing in the skills and talent of our people. The skills of our people are our best guarantee of future prosperity – and the best investment a business can make in challenging times.”

UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 23 October 2008

Running a small or medium-sized business, you'll know the key role your staff can play in your future. People with the right skills are hard to find and are central to a company's long-term growth. Retaining high-calibre staff gives business a crucial advantage.

Key staff can strengthen your competitiveness, wealth creation and economic performance by the enhancement of their knowledge and skills, helping you improve, create and innovate objectives that will have a positive impact on your business.

How can you develop your staffs' skills so they can contribute to the success of your business?

Work-critical projects with focused academic supervision benefits both participants and employers. The Business Process Development foundation degree uses online learning, which is a convenient and effective way to study. The course content is flexible and business focused, and the mix of

online and work-based learning allows real-life workplace problems to be built into your staff's programme. It capitalises on your company's knowledge, so your business can thrive, enhancing your competitiveness. We provide an exciting and ground-breaking online social networking environment, KubiSpace, where learners can form communities with a diverse range of professionals inside and outside the University to share knowledge, best practice and support their learning - literally a university without walls. This avoids the costs associated with having key personnel away from work for extended periods by providing a combination of online and work-based learning rather than University attendance.

About the course

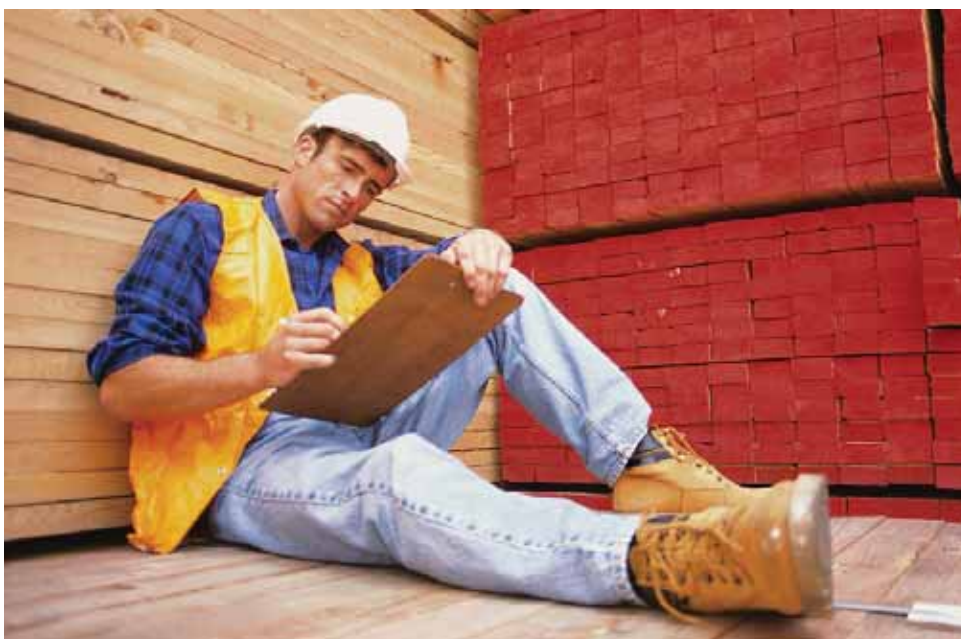
Students gain credits towards the degree for the work they are doing for your business and you benefit from the projects your employee carries out. The course is intentionally flexible in delivery, in line with your business objectives.



How long does it take?

Individual modules take around six weeks to complete. A full foundation degree can be completed in as little as two years. Depending on the choice of work-based projects, successful completion leads to an FdSc or FdA. We also offer the opportunity to top-up to an honours degree, leading to BSc(Hons) or BA(Hons) status.

Learners are fully supported throughout their structured online learning and independent work-based study by our staff, their workplace mentor, fellow learners and others in their online social and professional networking environment. This will provide them with an effective and structured means of gaining knowledge, experience, skills and responsibility within a workplace environment. They will also have access to an online study skills centre.



What will students learn?

The course is tailored to the needs of the learner and the business, so the area of study will vary from person to person creating a programme that is individually designed and entirely relevant to your work activities. Learners will develop problem-solving and analytical skills and will learn how to think creatively about solutions.

Your programme will be targeted to your specialist needs, with some structured elements, as can be seen below.



KubiSpace: our online social networking environment

Work-based projects by independent study

Nearly 70 per cent of the course can consist of independent, work-based projects. With the support of the learner's University supervisor and workplace mentor, your employee will define a work project and analyse what they will learn from it. They will then carry out the project and gain academic credit for completing it effectively.

Taught, structured online modules

Professional Development

This module will help the learner to focus on where they want to go, how they are going to get there and the skills they will require.

Topics include:

- How to be an online learner
- How to carry out their own skills audit
- A range of academic study skills
- How to enhance their studies by taking part in online vocational communities

Introduction to Information Systems

This module provides a basic understanding of how to develop and implement the underlying information systems to support the organisation's business processes.

Topics include:

- What information systems are and why they are important to organisations
- Database management
- Systems, ownership, privacy and security of information
- Social, ethical, legal and professional issues

Introduction to Work-Based Learning

Here the learner will plan and write their work-based learning agreement.

Topics include:

- Introduction to project planning
- Using the independent study toolkit
- Reflecting on practice

Reflective Portfolio

The learner will collect and record evidence throughout the course about their own learning and development.

Topics include:

- Critical reflection
- Evidence recording
- Developing a portfolio

Introduction to Small Business Development

This module focuses on managerial functions and business policy issues.

Topics include:

- Information handling, data analysis and communication skills
- Defining small business and self-employment
- Public policy and small business
- Key management functions (finance, marketing, production, employment relations)

Optional shared structured online modules

The learner may also study other, taught, more generalised online modules from other University programmes if they wish, such as finance and marketing.

To give you an idea of how this course may work for your business and your employees, an example scenario of a company, a student and her work-based learning projects by independent study is outlined below:

The company

West Organics is a manufacturer of wholefoods and nutritional supplements. It employs 150 staff. Founded in 1989, its mission is to provide high-quality foods and supplements at a competitive price. West Organics places a great deal of emphasis on developing and retaining existing staff. The company seeks sustained growth over the next 5–10 years.

The employee's role in the company

Laura Taylor has been with the company since its inception, when she joined as a school leaver. Her first role was as junior secretary and since then she has gradually taken on an increased level of responsibility as the company has grown. Laura is now the Deputy Head of Operations at the company, which means she has responsibility for many of its day-to-day business processes. Although she left school without qualifications, Laura has since undergone and successfully completed a range of training courses.

On the Business Process foundation degree, two of Laura's work-based independent projects, needed by West Organics, were a marketing website project and a telecoms review. For these, she identified, planned and carried out the following activities, which formed a significant part of her course.

Marketing website project

- To effectively conduct and report fully on needs analysis for a marketing website
- To produce a professional requirements specification for a website
- To monitor production of the website by the web team and review its development, ensuring its completion on time and to standard
- To launch the site

Telecoms review project

- To analyse current telecoms provision at West Organics
- To carry out appropriate desk research in the area effectively
- To produce a requirement specification of desired telecoms provision
- To produce an options appraisal of available providers ability to match West Organics' specifications
- To make recommendations to the MD about telecoms provision, demonstrating an understanding of the presentation of information needed in order for strategic decisions to be made effectively

These projects helped to improve activities and processes within West Organics, and enabled Laura to learn about the theory and practice of these business developments and successfully complete her foundation degree.

Cost and commitment

For May 2009 entry, we're offering a 50 per cent reduction off the cost of a full year's tuition. So, for an investment of just £1,500, you can develop your business by unlocking your staffs' potential. And we'll keep the cost at this level (plus inflation) when your employee progresses to the second year too.

Although we recommend the full course for maximum learning outcome and staff motivation, we're happy to work with you to tailor a solution that suits your requirements.

Contact us now for further information:

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