



Symphony Learning
TRUST

Professional Development Policy

Adopted by Symphony Learning Trust on	January 2017
Next Review Due – Every Four Years	January 2025
Reviewed and revised to remove Teaching School references	February 2022



Principles, Values and Entitlements

1. Symphony Learning Trust (SLT) schools are “learning communities” where everyone is involved in a continuous process of improvement and enrichment. The schools are committed to fostering a positive climate for continuous learning amongst their communities. Professional Development is the means by which schools are able to motivate and develop their community and this is integral to the school improvement plans. It does so at a variety of levels – individual, team, whole school and through wider networks with an emphasis on collaborative learning.
2. Symphony Learning Trust schools engage with the principles of Life Long Learning, aimed at ensuring development opportunities are available to all employees.
3. Symphony Learning Trust supports the philosophy “*effective staff should take ownership and give a high priority to professional development*”. SLT advocates that a coherent and progressive opportunity to develop professionally and personally both improves standards and raises morale through personal and professional fulfilment and assists recruitment and retention. Professional Development will be coordinated by a nominated member of staff in each of its schools. The nominated person/Coordinator will either be a member of the Senior Leadership Team in each school or provide the Senior Leadership Team with recommendations to be included in the school improvement plan and budget.
4. The cycle for Professional Development starts with identified needs e.g. Performance Management Reviews. Development needs will feed into School Improvement Plans and link to Financial Budget plans. Trust-wide needs should be considered from both a joint training opportunity and a financial saving perspective.
5. All staff will have an entitlement to equality of access to high-quality induction and continuing support and development which addresses their needs and aspirations.
6. The central features of the Professional Development policy will comprise:
 - Sharing good practice through collaboration with other schools both within the SLT and beyond;
 - Developing good practice through joint research opportunities (JPD);
 - effective auditing and identification of need and aspiration;
 - ensuring appropriate match of provision to the individual;
 - reliable and explicit evaluation of the impact of provision;
 - effective dissemination of good and successful practice to ensure that such practice is embedded and reinforced.
7. SLT schools will use a range of types of provision and providers adopting “Best Value” principles in determining these.
8. SLT schools will allow staff to develop skills and competencies progressively allowing them to build on and reinforce skills and expertise, particularly across the key areas identified in the appropriate Standards Frameworks.
9. SLT schools will support training opportunities, where appropriate, that award professional recognition including accreditation.

10. SLT schools will discuss the financial implications of undertaking professional qualifications that incur significant cost with staff before authorising. Staff will be required to complete the attached form. See Appendix A.



Identifying Needs

1. Individual schools will have a nominated person or professional development coordinator who will be responsible for liaising with the Senior Leadership Team and Governors. This person will receive training and support as appropriate in order to fulfil the role effectively.
2. Individual schools will identify their own school's needs and those of the school community. Such needs will be identified largely through existing mechanisms such as:
 - Performance Management;
 - School Improvement Plans;
 - school, local and national priorities;
 - other internal and external monitoring and feedback evidence;
 - evidence from individual reflection and self-evaluation processes;
 - informal and formal discussions with individuals and teams;
 - Talent management
 - succession planning

The outcomes of the needs analysis will be a Professional Development Plan which forms part of the School Improvement Plan. Individuals will be encouraged to produce individual training plans as part of the Performance Management process.

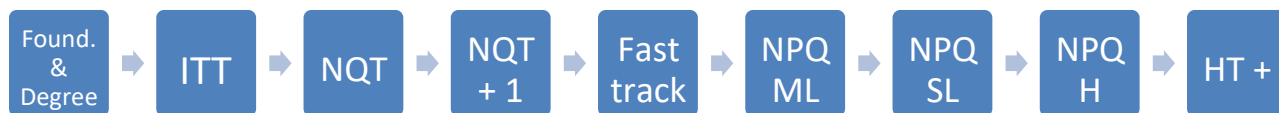
3. Schools will be responsible for reporting to the governing body the main priorities in terms of training and development, the provision, impact and the likely budgetary implications of addressing these needs. Professional development issues will also be addressed at other governing body meetings and be included as part of the Head Teacher's report to Governors.
4. Any needs analysis undertaken will be implemented with the full cooperation of staff and will be used solely for learning and development purposes. It will not be used in relation to other issues such as job evaluation, redundancy, pay, performance appraisal or disciplinary procedures.
5. Performance Management outcomes should be used to determine suitable training or development opportunities to be accessed. Where appropriate, this can be delegated to others such as the reviewee's line manager for recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team. Other requests for accessing opportunities should be addressed to the Senior Leadership Team.



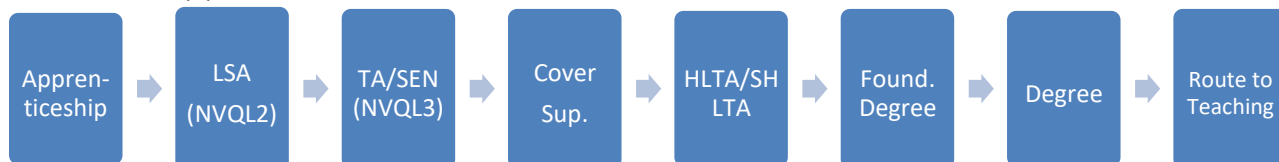
Talent Management

1. It is important for the Trust to identify potential talent and develop its staff. Head Teachers should receive training and support to grow and recruit their teams at every level. Early identification of talent is crucial to enable potential talent to be fast tracked.
2. Delivering the professional continuum for provides a pathway for development:

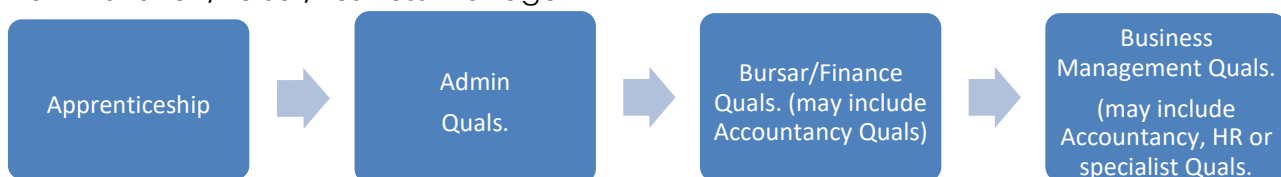
Teaching route:



Classroom Support Staff route:



Administration/Bursar/Business Manager



3. Joined up recruitment, movement of staff and succession planning across the Trust can provide opportunities to broaden staff development and provide consistency in achieving the aims and vision of the Trust.

Provision

1. Individual schools shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate opportunities are available for all groups of the school community including Governors, parents/carers and trainees.
2. Individual schools will be responsible for ensuring that:
 - a. provision is of sufficient quality;
 - b. provision is organised efficiently, e.g. bookings, venues, facilities and resources;
 - c. provision is available at convenient times and that where possible, e.g. basic skills training, this will be available within working time. The school's nominated person/professional development Coordinator will discuss with the Head Teacher and governing body requests for changes to work patterns to enable training and development opportunities to be accessed with requests considered on an individual basis and in accordance with school policies;
 - d. current opportunities, including an ethos of lifelong learning, is communicated to relevant staff and that it is made clear that they are actively encouraged to fully participate in learning procedures;
3. The Senior Leadership Team will identify the effective use of school closure/training days liaising with others as appropriate and delegating responsibility for coordinating events if necessary.

4. In ensuring that provision meets “Best Value” principles, the school will adopt the principles for effective Professional Development, ie. they will:
- meet identified individual, school or national development priorities;
 - be relevant and inspiring;
 - communicate clearly the purposes, methods, the objectives and expectations;
 - be based on good practice;
 - help raise standards of pupils' achievements;
 - respect cultural diversity;
 - be provided by those with the necessary experience, expertise and skills;
 - be planned systematically and follow the agreed programme except when dealing with emerging issues;
 - be based, where appropriate, on relevant standards;
 - be based on current research and inspection evidence and have a valid, theoretical underpinning;
 - make effective use of resources, particularly ICT;
 - be provided in accommodation which is fit for purpose with appropriate equipment;
 - provide value for money;
 - provide effective monitoring and evaluation systems including seeking out and acting on user feedback to inform the quality of provision.
5. Schools will support a wide portfolio of induction and development approaches identified according to “Best Value” principles and which reflect the learning effectiveness of the participants. These include:
- in-school training using the expertise available within the school (e.g. collaborative teaching, planning and assessment, work with a teacher learning community, classroom observation, existing expertise, peer evaluation, collaborative enquiry and problem-solving, modelling);
 - coaching and mentoring and engaging in a learning conversation;
 - job enrichment/enlargement e.g. a higher level of responsibility; front lining, working in someone else's job, job sharing, acting roles, job rotation, shadowing, leading meetings;
 - producing documentation or resources (eg. curriculum development, teaching materials, assessment package, IT resources);
 - accessing an external consultant/adviser or relevant expert if required;
 - collecting and collating pupil feedback, data and outcomes;
 - attendance at a lecture, course or conference;
 - school visits to observe or participate in good and successful practice;
 - secondments, exchanges and placements (e.g. within a regional or national organisation, an exchange or placement, with another

teacher, school, higher education, industry, international exchange, involvement with governing body);

- postgraduate professional development and other qualifications from higher educational institutions and other forms of professional recognition and qualifications such as NVQs, Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Foundation Degrees, Masters Level qualifications;
- research opportunities;
- distance learning (e.g. relevant resources such as educational journals and publications, online qualifications and training, YouTube);
- practical experience (e.g. national test or exam marking experience, opportunities to present a paper, contribute to a training programme, coordinating or supporting a learning forum or network, involvement in local and national networks, involvement with a subject or specialist association);
- external partnerships (e.g. with a colleague, group, subject, phase, activity or school-based; team meetings and activities such as joint planning, observation or standardisation, special project working group).

6. All those engaged with learning and development will be encouraged to:

- reflect on their development using appropriate mechanisms such as Performance Management systems
- seek professional recognition, if appropriate, for the work undertaken.



Evaluating Impact and Disseminating Good and Successful Practice

1. Schools will be responsible for devising a system that allows impact to be measured. It will identify clearly what methods are used, how, who is involved and when. This shall be communicated to all staff.
2. Following professional or other development, the participant will discuss with their line manager or nominated professional development person whether there are opportunities to disseminate to other staff if appropriate. Relevant feedback about the provision and the ideas should be provided. Where it is agreed that there would be benefit from a wider circulation or follow up, the Senior Leadership Team or a nominated person will be responsible for organising how that will be disseminated, eg. circulating relevant resources, a session at staff or subject meeting, introducing a teaching or learning strategy, inclusion on the school website.
3. The Senior Leadership Team will review annually whether any aspects of professional development provision, eg. service level agreements or subscriptions do not represent value for money.
4. Schools will devise success criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development undertaken against "value for money". These success criteria may include:
 - participant evaluation and feedback;
 - sustainable student outcomes including attainment, engagement and enthusiasm;

- sustainable staff skills, knowledge and understanding;
 - sustainable staff confidence and motivation;
 - organisational change and climate;
 - recruitment and retention;
 - career progression and promotability; □ shorter and longer-term benefits.
5. Schools will report to their Local governing body and the Trustees at least annually on the benefits of the opportunities undertaken and future needs.

APPENDIX A

Form of Undertaking for Financial Assistance and/ or Paid Release for Formal Qualification Courses.

(For completion by the employee and Head Teacher)

Signing a 'Form of Undertaking for Financial Assistance or Paid Release' will constitute a variation to your contract of employment for the entire period of time in which you undertake the learning activity. For the avoidance of doubt, the variation to your contract of employment will remain in full force and effect regardless of whether you enter new or alternative terms and conditions of employment with Symphony Learning Trust after the commencement of your learning activity.

In signing the Form of Undertaking you are agreeing to abide by the conditions stipulated by Symphony Learning Trust relating to the granting of financial assistance and/or paid release by the Trust to pursue the learning activity specified on the Form.

Formal approval must be obtained through the agreed procedures before enrolment on the learning activity. Approval to continue on a learning activity may be withheld if your previous study or attendance record is unsatisfactory. The Form of Undertaking must be:

- signed by yourself, the Student/Employee
- certified by your Head Teacher (or Executive Head/CEO/Chair of Trustees if learning activity relates to Head Teacher/Executive Head or CEO)
- forwarded to the to the School Business Manager for retention on your personnel file.

Employee – Personal Information

Full name (please print)	
School	
Job Title	
Grade	

Learning Activity Information

Title (in full)		
Name of Provider/Educational Institution		
Type of Qualification (Please tick)	Award Certificate Diploma Degree	Vocational Qualification Professional Qualification Other
Stage /Year (e.g. Foundation, Intermediate, Year 1, Year 2 etc.) if applicable		
Total Duration of the Learning Activity (ie No of years)		
Type and Method of Study	Full time	Part Day/part evening

(Please tick)	Modular	Evening only
	Day Release	Correspondence
	Part Day	
Total amount of paid release required for the year		

Learning Activity and Personal Objectives

Please detail below your reasons for wishing to undertake this learning activity, including the anticipated outcomes that will benefit you, your School's Improvement Plan, other strategic objectives and the Trust as a whole. If you are applying for a continuation of funding please provide details of your progress on the learning activity to date.

Please detail below how you will share and disseminate your learning across your team and service:-

Please detail below how you will evaluate the impact of the learning, i.e. how will you know that the learning has been successful?

Funding Costs

Examination/Assessing Fees	
Professional Fees	
Learning activity Fees	
Registration Fees	
Exemption Fees	
Travel Expenses	
Subsistence	

Previous Funding Received

Please provide details of any qualification for which you have previously been funded by the school or Trust. Please include the qualification title, any relevant attendance dates and the result obtained:-

--

Agreement

Please read the following carefully

In consideration of **Name of School/** Symphony Learning Trust granting me financial assistance and/or day release to undertake the above learning activity, I agree that I will refund to the School/Trust the total sum of financial assistance granted to me, or an appropriate proportion of that sum as stipulated by the School, if, at any time during the period of the learning activity or the 2 years immediately following its completion, I:

- voluntarily leave the employment of the School or Trust;
- do not undertake the examination(s)/other assessment(s) within a reasonable time;
- am adjudged not to have made satisfactory progress or attendance on the learning activity; or
- discontinue the learning activity for any reason without prior approval.

I also understand that the above repayment arrangements may apply if I am dismissed from the Trust's employment for conduct or performance related matters.

Where Symphony Learning Trust/**Name of School** seeks a proportionate refund the following is considered:

Period of time following leave of service or withdrawal from learning activity/ unsatisfactory progress on learning activity	Funding agreed by both parties to be repaid (some learning activities may be exempt from charges as agreed by the Head Teacher/SLT)
Up to 12 months	90%
Between 12 months and 18 months	50%
Between 18 months and 2 years	25%
2 years or more	0%

I will refund to the school/ Trust the total sum of **XXX** financial assistance granted to me, or an appropriate proportion of that sum as stipulated by the school or Trust.

As stated above, the variation to your contract of employment that results by signing this Form of Undertaking will remain in full force and effect regardless of whether you enter new or alternative terms and conditions of employment with Symphony Learning Trust after the commencement of your learning activity. You are therefore agreeing to refund monies (should they become payable as above) regardless of what job role you are contracted to do at the school or Trust at the point the money becomes due.

EMPLOYEE:

I have read and agree to the provisions set out in this Form of Undertaking for Financial Assistance and Paid Release, the Summary of Financial Assistance and Paid Release and the Professional Development Policy. I agree that any monies owing to the School/Trust will be repaid by me immediately or deducted from my salary/wages or any other amounts due to me from the School/Trust.

Employee's name (please print in capitals)	
Employee's signature	
Date	

HEAD TEACHER/EXECUTIVE HEAD/CEO:

I certify that the proposed learning activity leads to a qualification which is appropriate to the work of the School/Trust and that the employee is suitable to undertake the learning activity specified. The employee is not currently undertaking another qualification course subject to a Form of Undertaking.

Advice must be sought from the CFO of Symphony Learning Trust before approving this request if the employee has not yet completed their probation period.

- 1. This proposed learning activity is exempt from recharges**
- 2. This proposed learning activity is not exempt from recharges
(IMPORTANT: please delete as applicable)**

Head teacher's Name (please print in capitals)	
Head teacher's signature	
Date	
Copy passed to School Business Manager for Personal File	