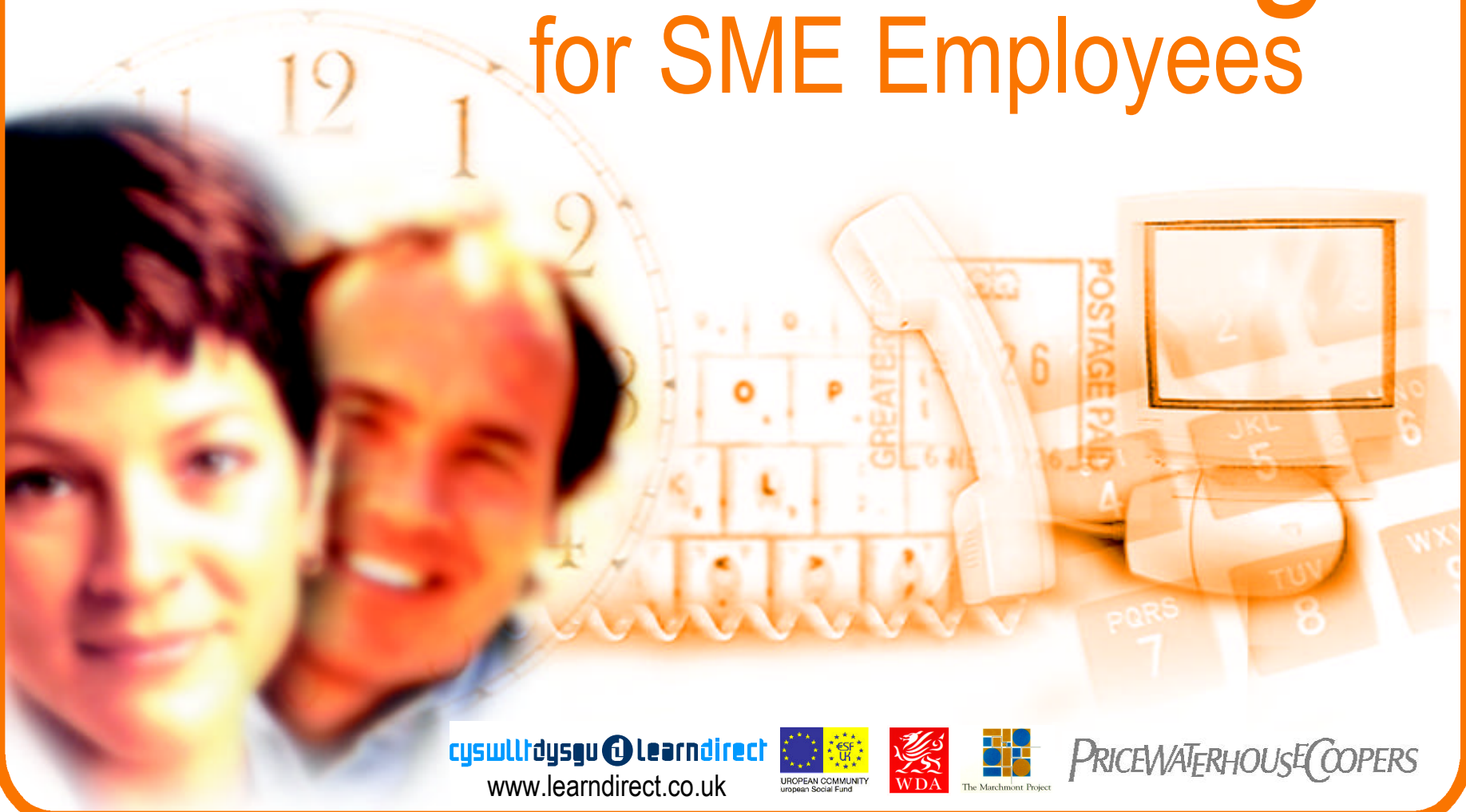


# ***THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO***

## ***flexible learning*** for SME Employees



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**PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS**

# *Ufl - Responding to the global marketplace*

As a nation, the UK faces major challenges in ensuring that industry is able to continue to compete with the best in the world. The University for Industry (Ufl) aims to address a number of these challenges.

## *Ufl's role*

Under the brand name Learndirect, Ufl is introducing a new approach to training. Using the best of on-line delivery, they will provide a growing range of highly targeted training products. Ufl will be particularly important for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) that face particular problems in ensuring that their employees have access to the skills and knowledge they need. Difficulties involved in accessing appropriate training can mean that there is little or no effective skills or management development in SMEs, thus making it difficult to improve performance and meet business objectives.

Ufl's mission is to promote employability for individuals and competitiveness for companies. Strategic objectives are to stimulate the demand for lifelong learning by businesses and individuals and to broker the provision of learning opportunities to meet skills needs.

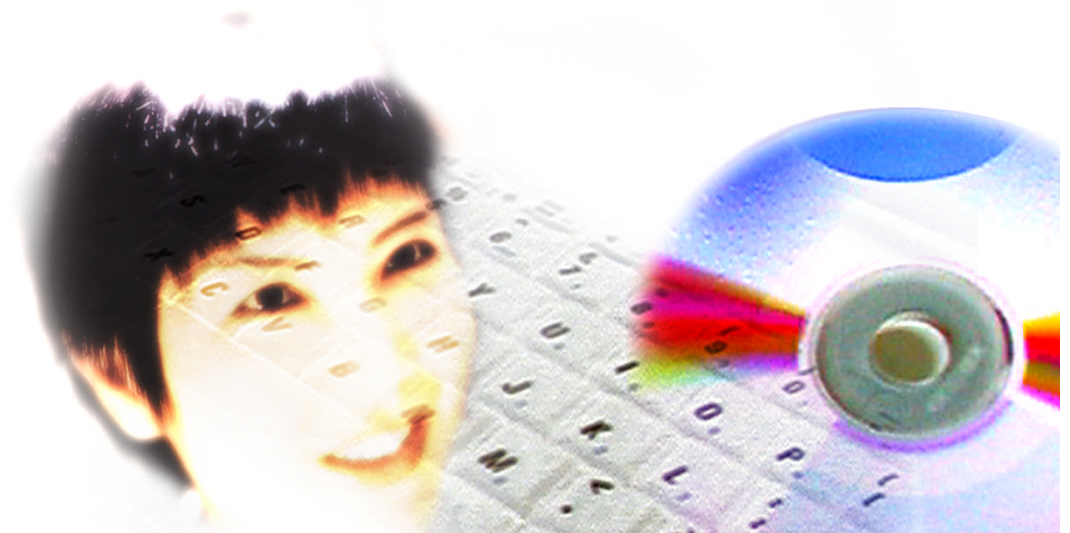
### UFI PARTICULARLY AIMS TO :

- Encourage new learners including those for whom there are currently barriers to learning, thus expanding demand for learning;
- Ensure that the skills and training needs of SMEs are met more effectively;
- Foster the use of new learning technologies including digital technologies.

## *A learner-centred approach*

Ufl aims to put the learner first with a customer approach to learning, both in the design and content of learning and its delivery. Its customers will be businesses, including the smallest companies, and individuals.

For SMEs, Ufl will allow employees, and indeed employers, easy access to learning in the workplace with complete flexibility in timing.



# *Ufl - Responding to the global marketplace*

## *Working in partnership with training providers*

Ufl's objective is to help people improve their knowledge and skills in a way that best suits their lifestyles and the needs of their businesses. However, Ufl is not a provider or educational institution in the traditional sense, and does not have its own students or lecturers. Instead, Ufl's products and services are delivered through partners in a range of areas, encompassing the education and training sectors, employers, trade unions and local, regional and national government bodies.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of the many people and organisations who have contributed to the formulation of this guide, particular acknowledgements are due to:

TSW Management  
Solutions

Norgine Ltd

Allevard Springs Ltd

Rowlands Codan Ltd

Caradon MK Electrics

Cae Mor Hotel

Training South Wales

Cardiff ITEC

Centre for Learning and  
Training at the University  
of Wales, Bangor

European Business and  
Management School,  
University of Wales,

Swansea

SWEFIC (South Wales  
Education for Industry  
Consortium)

Anchor Computer Systems  
Ltd

Gyrus Medical Ltd

Riverside Plastics Ltd

Chandler KBS

North Wales Housing  
Association

FSB

Bangor University

Llandrillo FE College

UWCN

# *Ufl - Responding to the global marketplace*

## *The purpose of this guide*

This guide has been designed for use by employees of SMEs (Small to Medium sized Enterprises) who are considering the option of starting a new training course via "flexible" (or "distance") learning. The Guide uses the term "flexible learning" to describe training undertaken away from classrooms. This type of training can include some face to face training, but more usually involves the use of books, the Internet, CD Roms, Digital television and radio, and is usually undertaken in the learners own time, out of normal working hours. The advantage of this is that courses can be structured to fit the learners' individual lifestyle and commitments.

The core purpose of this Guide is to highlight a range of important issues which may need to be considered when thinking about starting a flexible learning course.

The Guide comprises a series of closed questions, which ask for a "Yes" or "No" response. If your response to a particular question is "No", a possible action is suggested. The suggested action, if appropriate, should help the user recognise and evaluate the issues involved with Flexible Learning, which are different to those associated with classroom learning.

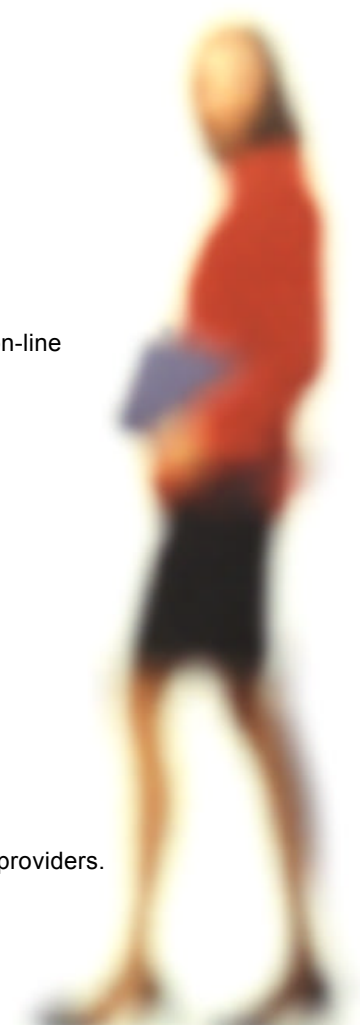
### Note:

The recommended actions may not be appropriate in all circumstances. Discretion is required to evaluate the likely effectiveness of the suggested actions. In many cases, the recommended actions include discussions with others. Users of the Guide are encouraged to consider and assess the appropriateness of these actions in their particular situation.

# *Ufl - Responding to the global marketplace*

## *Glossary of Terminology*

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Deliverers          | Those responsible for delivering, or supporting the delivery of training.  |
| 2. Flexible Learning   | Training delivered by means other than face-to-face classroom-based instruction.   |
| 3. Hardware            | Computer and accompanying information technology required to deliver/ receive flexible learning.   |
| 4. Hub                 | Organisation or consortium appointed by Ufl to manage flexible learning for a sector or geographic area.   |
| 5. Learndirect         | National learning network being developed by Ufl. Free information and advice via the helpline and allows on-line learning at Learndirect centres. |
| 6. Learning Centre     | Local centres established by Ufl hubs to support flexible learning (eg by providing access to hardware).   |
| 7. Learner             | Employees considering or already involved in training.   |
| 8. Materials           | Electronic, physical or paper-based resources used as a basis for the delivery of flexible learning.   |
| Materials Developer    | Someone who authors/ constructs/ creates design materials for flexible learning.   |
| 9. Provider            | An organisation that develops and/ or delivers training.   |
| Managers               | All senior managers and/ or department heads in organisations delivering training.   |
| 10. SME                | Small to Medium sized Enterprise.  |
| 11. Software           | Computer applications or programs.   |
| 12. Sponsor            | (See "Workplace Sponsor" below).   |
| 13. Subject specialist | Person recognised nationally for excellence in designing and/ or delivering specific subject training.   |
| 14. Ufl                | An independent body aiming to stimulate lifelong learning via the Learndirect network and existing learning providers.                             |
| 15. Ufl Champion       | Training organisation manager empowered to establish and support development of Ufl/ Flexible Delivery.  |
| 16. Workplace Sponsor  | A nominated senior staff member within an SME who has specific responsibility for assisting learners.  |





# *The SME Learners Guide to flexible learning*

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# Considering Training?

1

Are you happy with your current job?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Consider how you might further improve your job prospects. Discuss with your friends, family and, if appropriate, your manager or HR/Training manager.

2

Have you explored what is available and do you know who in your organisation to talk to?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Find out who would be the training person in your organisation and discuss what is currently available to you.

3

Do you have all the knowledge and skills needed to get on in your job?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

You may wish to talk to someone you can trust. This could be your manager, HR/Training manager, union representative, community centre or someone you know who will be able to give you good advice about the knowledge and skills you need to advance your career.

4

Have you thought about developing knowledge and skills (and your own confidence) through training?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Contact your local learning centre or training providers to find out what training is available to develop the skills you need. If appropriate, discuss with your manager or HR/Training manager.

5

Have you done any training or study in the last 10 years?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Talk to someone who has. Ask them what it was like and what suggestions they have for getting started.

# Considering Training?

6

Have you considered doing a flexible learning course? (This gives you the chance to study at times that suit you).

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Find out from your local learning centre if the course that you want is available via flexible delivery. Discuss with your manager.

7

Do you see any personal benefits from participation in training? These could be related to job or personal development.

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Consider the possible benefits that you may get from undertaking training. These benefits could include more money and improving your future job prospects. Talk about training and the benefits you expect to achieve with your family / manager / union rep. / training provider and mentor.

8

Do you understand the benefits to the business of your participation in this training course?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Discuss with your manager / union rep. / training provider.

# Getting Started

9

Is there someone in the workplace who is going to take an interest in your progress in the training course? (This person is called a workplace sponsor).

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Ask your manager who your workplace sponsor is and arrange to talk with them about your training.

10

Have you had contact with the trainer?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Ensure that you have had contact with the trainer and have discussed the course, how you are going to work together, and have identified the tools / facilities you will need (see below).



# Getting Started

11

Have you had discussions with your workplace sponsor and the trainer to agree on training objectives? (Your training objectives should be agreed before you start the course).

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

If this hasn't been done, contact your workplace sponsor and the trainer and ask for these objectives to be discussed. Make sure that the objectives are written down.

12

Are you happy to review your progress regularly and discuss this with the workplace sponsor and the trainer?  
(Regular self-assessment is an important part of flexible learning).

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Ask the trainer how self-assessments will be done and how often.

13

Do you know what information about your progress your workplace sponsor and the trainer will discuss with your employer? Do you know whether there are confidentiality guidelines for others discussing your progress?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Ask your workplace sponsor and the trainer if information about your progress will be passed on to your employer or to others in the workplace?

14

Do you have regular access to a computer to access flexible learning materials?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

If you do not have a computer at home or regular access to one at work you will need to negotiate computer access with your manager.

# Getting Started

|    |   |                                      |     |   |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|-----|---|
| 15 | Have you agreed with your manager the conditions for accessing flexible learning training in the workplace? eg. Maximum/ minimum times, Fitting in with work demands, Changing arrangements to meet work or personal demands. | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Discuss this with your manager prior to starting the course. Ask your workplace sponsor if you need help reaching agreement on computer access. Contact your union rep. for advice if there are difficulties. |
| 16 | Do you have basic IT skills including: E-mail, Typing, Internet, Electronic document management?  | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Develop these skills before starting the flexible learning course. Consider attending a basic IT skills programme, recognised by Ufi Leamdirect.  |
| 17 | Have you discussed with your family the possible impact of your training programme on them? eg., you may need to work at home, you may need a quiet place to study, you may need regular access to a computer.                | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Talk to your family; explain what you are doing and why. Explain that you may not be as available during leisure hours while you are doing the course. Ask for their help and support.                        |

# Things to Consider...

Before starting the training...

18

Do you know how many hours per week will be required by this course?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Ask the trainer.

19

Have you thought about how training is going to fit with your lifestyle?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Ask your trainer to discuss time management and study skills with you to help you organise your study time in relation to your personal life and work commitments. Discuss with your family how you may need to change your routines.

20

Do you understand that maintaining motivation may be difficult?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

You should discuss the issue of motivation with your trainer. You may be given the names and contact details of other learners in your group so that you can support each other. However, you should understand that self-motivation is really up to you.

21

Do you know what to do if you need help?

Yes  
TICK ☐

No?

Talk with your workplace sponsor and the trainer to establish what you should do if you need help. Make sure you know how to contact the trainer and the local Ufl learning centre.

# Things to Consider...

Before starting the training...

|    |   |                                      |     |  |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|-----|--|
| 22 | Have you talked with the trainer about: availability of materials/texts etc, availability of IT, contact times, contact with other learners, call centre information, e-mail addresses, e-mail response times, telephone support? | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Contact your trainer if you are not clear about any of these points.   |
| 23 | Have you seen the course materials?   | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Contact the trainer and ask to see examples of the materials.  |
| 24 | Do you understand that the role of the flexible learning trainer will be different from the role of a traditional teacher?  | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Your trainer is more like a guide than a teacher.<br>The flexible learning materials are your primary source of learning. It is mostly from these that you will gain the information and knowledge needed to develop new skills. |
| 25 | Have you discussed with your mentor the role you would like him/her to play during the training?  | Yes<br>TICK <input type="checkbox"/> | No? | Consider the role:<br>Would you like regular reviews, informal contact, etc.   |

# Useful Contacts and Telephone Numbers

## **Ufi Ltd Wales**

Technocentre  
Beignon Close  
Ocean Way  
Cardiff, CF24 5PB  
Tel: 029 2049 4540  
[www.ufi.com](http://www.ufi.com)

## **Ufi Ltd England**

Sheffield (Head) Office  
Dearing House  
1 Young Street  
Sheffield, S1 4UP  
Tel: (0114) 291 5000  
Fax: (0114) 291 5001  
[www.ufi.com](http://www.ufi.com)

## **Ufi Ltd - London Office**

5th Floor  
88 Kingsway  
Holborn  
London, WC2B 6AA  
Tel: 020 7681 6523  
Fax: 020 7681 6602  
[www.ufi.com](http://www.ufi.com)

## **Scottish University for Industry**

Europa Building  
450 Argyle Street  
Glasgow, G2 8LG  
Tel: 0141 285 6000  
Fax: 0141 285 6001