

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Employers

### Q1. What is the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF)?

The FWDF is a funding stream which enables businesses to access free training for their employees to help address skills gaps. It has a key role in addressing the very significant employability and skills needs we know employers and employees will have in the coming months as we look to support Scotland's economic recovery.

There are four potential avenues depending on your business status and your individual needs:

- **UK Apprenticeship Levy Payers:**
  - A £13m fund for colleges to deliver training to UK Apprenticeship Levy paying companies in Scotland.
  - or**
  - A £2m fund for Levy paying employers to access training (from Independent Training Providers (ITPs) where this training is not available from colleges. Skills Development Scotland is managing this funding stream.
  
- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):**
  - £4m fund for colleges to deliver training to SME employers.
  - or**
  - £1m fund for The Open University in Scotland (OUiS) to deliver online training at undergraduate and postgraduate level to SME employers.

### Q2. How much can I access?

- **Levy payer**
  - £15,000 via either a local college in Scotland, in the first instance, (from £13m fund) or an ITP if specific training is unavailable at a college (from £2m fund).
  
- **SME**
  - £5,000 via either a local college in Scotland (£4m fund) or via OUiS' online platform (£1m fund).

If you are both a Levy payer **and** a SME you can access either the £15,000 or £5,000 funding but NOT both.

The funding will be accessed on a ***first come first served*** basis.

### **Q3. Where can I access more information on the FWDF?**

- **Levy payers**
  - You can access more information by contacting your local college directly. View a [list of colleges in Scotland](#).
  - Further information on [accessing training via ITPs](#).
  
- **SMEs**
  - You can access more information by contacting your local college directly. View a [list of colleges in Scotland](#).
  - Further information on [The Open University in Scotland](#).

### **Q4. How do I prove I am eligible for the FWDF?**

- **Levy payers**
  - You will need to provide a copy of an official document proving payment of Levy (e.g. EPS, P32, payroll report).
  
- **SMEs**
  - You will need to provide a signed copy of an official document proving your status as a business, such as:
    - A business bank account.
    - VAT registration.
    - PAYE registration.
    - Companies House information (latest accounts, etc.).
    - Registration for self-assessment tax return (HMRC).

### **Q5. What type of training can be accessed using the FWDF?**

- Training that has been identified with the aim of increasing productivity and/or supporting economic recovery and/or filling known skills gaps.
- Your training provider (college, OUIS or ITP) will help you identify needs through a training needs analysis.

### **Q6. What training courses are NOT supported by FWDF?**

- Training which is a statutory requirement for the individual's continuing employment, including any training which an employee is required by law to undertake in order to carry out the duties associated with his or her employment (e.g. certain health & safety training - see Q7 below).
- Lessons towards attaining a driving licence (category A or B).
- Outward bound type courses and leisure or sporting activities other than those that lead to a recognised coaching or teaching qualification.

### **Q7. Can employees attend training whilst they are furloughed?**

As at 23 February 2021 UK Government guidance indicated that *“Furloughed employees can engage in training during hours which you record your employee as being on furlough, as long as in undertaking the training the employee does not provide services to, or generate revenue for, or on behalf of their organisation or a linked or associated organisation. Furloughed employees should be encouraged to undertake training.”*

Please review the most up to date information on the UK Government’s website to confirm the conditions under which your furloughed employees can access training <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#when-furlough>

### **Q8. Does the FWDF cover training required by law?**

The FWDF does not normally support provision of industry qualifications/training where there is a statutory obligation required by law - this remains the employer’s responsibility. However, where employers can evidence additional training needs that are required to meet statutory requirements as a result of COVID-19, and where training is adjusted to meet physical distancing and hygiene guidance (for example), this training can be provided.

### **Q9. What happens if the cost of an employer’s training needs exceeds the capped amount for the FWDF?**

FWDF can be used as part-payment towards training at a higher cost.

### **Q10. What happens if an employer’s FWDF application is declined?**

The ‘training needs analysis’ undertaken between the college/training provider and employer should ensure an employer’s identified training needs reflect FWDF criteria and priorities, including priority groups outlined in the guidance. Employers should be notified by the college/training provider, in writing, if their application has been unsuccessful.

If an employer wishes to appeal a decision taken by a provider, they should make an approach to the SFC in the first instance. Approaches will be handled on a case by case basis and led by an overseeing group of SFC and Scottish Government officials.

### **Q11. What happens if an employer applies to access training but the application is unsuccessful as the fund has already been fully utilised?**

If an employer’s application is unsuccessful as a result of high demand for the FWDF the employer’s application should be held on a waiting list until funds become

available, either through an in-year redistribution or until future rounds of funding become available.

**Q12. Where can FWDF training be delivered?**

- The most appropriate and practicable arrangements for delivery of training should be discussed and agreed by the college/ITP and employer.
- The OUIS training will be delivered online through its innovative platforms.