

## United Learning – Apprenticeship Provider

### Continuous Professional Development policy

#### Background

United Learning’s vision is to provide excellent education so that young people are able to make a success of their lives. To help deliver this vision, United Learning aims to attract, retain, develop and reward outstanding support staff.

United Learning places great emphasis on being a values-led organisation with an ethos established to bring hope and aspiration to the communities we serve in our schools. Our values act as a yardstick for how we behave, interact with each other and deliver our mission. These values are: Ambition, Confidence, Determination, Creativity, Respect and Enthusiasm and underpin our Framework for Excellence.

#### Vision & Commitment

United Learning’s Framework for Excellence sets out our organisational commitment to getting the best from everyone, developing leadership in every role and investing in continuous improvement. Professional development is a crucial ingredient in achieving that.

United Learning strongly believes that our employees, across all areas of the organisation, are key to achieving the best outcomes for our pupils and apprentices. Our staff, whether they work in central office or in schools, are the driving force behind achieving positive outcomes for our learners. We strive to embed a culture of continuous professional development throughout our organisation and understand that in order to achieve our aspiration of becoming an outstanding provider of apprenticeships and staff development, we need to ensure that we constantly strive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at all levels within our organisation.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and procedures of how the CPD process is managed within the United Learning apprenticeship provider and how our policy supports staff to continuously improve their professional performance and therefore deliver outstanding outcomes for apprentices. CPD activity undertaken by the provider’s staff is aligned to United Learning’s wider vision and expectations for professional development which are set out in our Professional Development Handbooks available on the UnitedHub [here](#) and in their annual objectives.

United Learning recognises that, as an employer, it has an obligation to support the development goals of staff, however, staff must proactively engage with and take responsibility for their own professional development. For the purposes of this policy, CPD is defined as any activity which improves a staff member’s ability to do their job or provide an improved service to apprentices or employers. It is our aim to develop a culture of reflective practice and continuous learning to ensure that all staff are able to perform at the highest levels.

#### Induction

All staff must provide evidence of relevant qualifications and training upon commencing employment with United Learning. All staff must complete mandatory CPD training as part of their induction to cover safeguarding, health & safety and Prevent. It is the responsibility of individual line managers to ensure that the relevant CPD required during the induction process is completed in line with current

policies. Where it is identified that a qualification is a requirement of a particular job role, this will be specified in the relevant job description. Should staff not already have this qualification, usually by exception, a plan will be put in place to secure achievement at the earliest opportunity.

### **Professional Development Planning**

All staff will have an annual CPD review with their line manager as part of the PDR process. This will be captured in a summary document and feed into standard Training Needs Analysis (TNA), including teaching and training knowledge and skills, as well as sector knowledge and skills covering the sectors and occupations that the apprenticeship provider's customers operate in. The PDR document and TNA will be recorded and placed on the staff member's personnel file and reviewed at least every six months, including at a formal Mid-Year Review point. The planning process will include any CPD identified as necessary for the employee to effectively carry out their role as well as any aspirational opportunities requested by the employee.

Part of the planning process will include setting specific targets around CPD which could include maintaining occupational knowledge, skills and professional competence in sector specialist areas or acquiring new knowledge and skills to improve teaching and training performance. Where a CPD requirement is identified, any associated cost must be approved in writing by the line manager. CPD requirements may also be identified as part of the annual self-assessment process and incorporated into individual plans as determined by the line manager. The CPD plan for all delivery staff will be linked to reviews of teaching and learning, and file sampling as set out in the Quality Improvement Plan and observations of teaching. Any specific areas of concern identified by individuals carrying out observations or file sampling will be shared with line managers.

Where individuals are subject to a performance improvement plan, CPD will form an explicit part of this plan. This will be recorded and tracked using our Capability Procedure paperwork. Where United Learning uses associates or partners to deliver any part of its activity or service under the direction of United Learning staff, it is a contractual requirement that associates undertake the mandatory CPD required of all United Learning staff. This will be reviewed in the same way as it is for directly employed staff, and form part of their one-to-one reviews.

### **Monitoring Professional Development**

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that CPD is logged and recorded in line with this policy.

All records of completed PDR processes using the TNA template should be provided to the Professional Development Manager/Head of Provider to be stored centrally in the relevant personnel file. All mandatory CPD (including safeguarding health and safety, PREVENT and equality and diversity) will be monitored annually, with deadlines included in objectives and as part of CPD planning.

The Professional Development Manager will carry out the monitoring and raise reminders ahead of annual refreshers aligned to the CPD Calendar and copied to both the individual and their line manager. Feedback on any CPD sessions attended by staff should always be recorded within the CPD file so that value for money can be assessed and impact on the staff member and their role can be measured. Only CPD relevant to an individual's job role or specifically required by the organisation will be within the scope of this policy or eligible for funding by United Learning.

Where significant new CPD requirements are identified, the Professional Development team may be invited to attend Provider Improvement Group meetings, operational meetings or the Apprenticeships Governance Board to ensure the development requirements of individual staff members are fed into operational management and strategic planning discussions.

## Performance & Development Review (PDR) process

This Performance and Development review process applies to all staff working in Central Office, London or field/home based roles on a United Learning contract.

The PDR process for staff involved in the operation of the apprenticeship provider runs alongside quality assurance activities undertaken as part of the Quality Assurance Policy. For course directors, this includes:

- Review of the apprentice's learning journey;
- Review of the quality of assessment;
- Employer and apprentice feedback via focus groups and surveys;
- Peer reviews;
- Pass rate/retention and progression data;
- And on-programme observations of teaching and learning to review the appropriateness of the learning resources being delivered and a review of teaching methods used to ensure they meets the participants' needs.

Any development needs identified from the above evidence will feed into each course director's development objectives.

Overall, the evidence gathered from the process above will feed in to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the Apprenticeship Provider.

The focus of Performance and Development Review should be to:

- a) Discuss, explore and put in place mechanisms to support and improve employee performance.
- b) Inform staff of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), with reference to the Professional Development Handbooks.
- c) Enable a meaningful conversation about career aspirations and support, which can be fed into the Central Office's talent management process.
- d) Link individual objectives and performance to the department strategic plan.
- e) Identify and address any early performance concerns prior to formal capability proceedings.

This policy aims to enable and encourage meaningful and open discussion regarding an individual's growth, development and CPD. Although the outcome from the Performance and Development Review will be relevant to any review of the individual's pay, the pay decision process will be kept separate from this process.

The review process may be taken into account for the purposes of managing performance, training and professional development, promotion, capability and disciplinary procedures.

## Developing sector-specific skills

Certain roles, especially those directly involved in the operation of the apprenticeship provider, may require CPD commitment over and above that identified through the mechanisms outlined in this policy and stipulated by third parties. Where this applies, it will be specified in the relevant job description and included in discussions carried out as part of staff one to one meetings.

Specialist support will be sourced where required. In order to help identify the best resources available, United Learning will ensure that staff are aware of sector requirements and have access to suitable CPD opportunities. These include:

- Subscription to gov.uk alerts and ESFA Update which is cascaded to relevant staff, including information on academies and independent schools to inform our work in schools
- Attendance at ESFA webinars and sector specific workshops run by supporting organisations e.g. AELP, Strategic Development Network
- Use of Ofsted inspectors to inform quality CPD requirements
- Attendance at Ofsted briefings and workshops
- Attendance at conferences and events run by EPAOs and Exam boards
- Attendance at other conferences
- Use of external sector experts such as ex ESFA staff, ESFA Account Manager, leaders at other training providers

It is the responsibility of the individual staff member to ensure that they meet any relevant CPD requirements, but United Learning will support the staff member in meeting these requirements by providing any time off or additional resource required. Any such support must be requested in writing to their line manager before any time off can be taken. From time to time it may be necessary for staff to be asked to develop sector competence in a new area and staff will be expected to take reasonable steps to achieve this.

Owner:	Suzanne Howard – Director of Professional Development
Date of last review:	August 2023 – no changes
Date of next review:	August 2024