

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. Who can access this fund FWDF?

SME's can access up to £5,000 of the FWDF fund through one route only – through local college provision or Open University in Scotland

Q2. 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 of a higher cost.

Q3. What type of training can be accessed by SMEs?

SMEs can access Training that has been identified with the aim of increasing productivity and/or supporting economic recovery and/or filling known skills gaps.

Q4. Is a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) required?

Yes, all applications must be supported by a relative training needs analysis, though this should be proportionate to the size of the business.

Q5. What evidence is required from SMEs to demonstrate eligibility?

SMEs are required to submit evidence of their status as a business with their FWDF application. This should normally take the form of a copy of one of the following:

- A business bank account.
- VAT registration.
- PAYE registration.
- Companies House info (latest accounts, etc.).
- Registration for self-assessment tax return (HMRC).

Q6. What training courses are NOT supported by the FWDF?

- Statutory training that organisations are required by law to provide, as part of running a service, or where a statutory body has instructed an organisation to provide certain training on the basis of specific legislation
- Lessons towards attaining a driving licence category A or B.

Q7. What is the difference between statutory and mandatory training and when could FWDF be used towards this training?

FWDF does not support provision of 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. In other words, it is training legally required for businesses to operate. This remains the employer's responsibility.

However, where employers can evidence that statutory requirements have been met and additional statutory training is required, over and above the minimum statutory requirements, this training can be supported by FWDF.

In terms of mandatory training required by law and associated with specific job roles, where employers are looking to provide additional training relating to skills outwith their employees' core role or relating to a new area of work, then this would be considered as up-skilling / re-skilling and could be supported by FWDF. For example, if a plumber is being upskilled into the role of a heating engineer or if an employer is up-skilling its workforce into a new area of work such as to address the transition to net zero.

A full list of FAQs is available on the [SFC website](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact our Business Engagement Manager to discuss your training requirements.

Email: Tina.Brown@uhi.ac.uk

Funding is awarded on a first come first serve basis—contact us today



Flexible Workforce Development Fund for SMEs 2022-23

The Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF) enables businesses to access training for their employees to help address skills gaps. It supports businesses in Scotland to up-skill and re-skill their employees to support inclusive economic growth in Scotland.

This fund is open to all small and medium sized enterprises (SME) in Scotland across the private, public and third sectors. SMEs can access up to a maximum of £5,000 of training delivered by local colleges and the Open University in Scotland.

The central purpose of the FWDF is to provide employers with flexible workforce development training opportunities to support up-skilling or re-skilling of employees, and to support economic recovery following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing impact of the EU exit.

We can offer you a range of training options to support your business to upskill your employees, diversity or grow. Training delivered by Orkney College UHI can range from short courses to longer provision. Employers are advised to make an application as soon as possible as access to the fund will be on a first come first served basis.





ELIGIBILITY

- The FWDF is available to all SME employers in Scotland across the private, public and third sectors.
- For the purpose of the FWDF, an SME refers to any business with less than 250 employees.
- Employers must be based or operate within Scotland.
- Employers can access up to £5,000 of training delivered by colleges or the Open University in Scotland.
- When referring to “employees” to describe who can attend the training we are meaning any individual who provides a service or generates revenue for the employer. Therefore individuals such as volunteers or stakeholders can receive the FWDF training as long as it is being provided to enhance their skills to increase the productivity of the employer accessing the FWDF.
- The FWDF does not support provision of industry qualifications/training where there is a statutory obligation required by law, i.e. training legally required for businesses to operate. This remains the employer’s responsibility and will not be provided through FWDF. However, where employers can evidence additional training needs over and above those usually provided to meet statutory requirements, this training will be eligible for funding.
- Mandatory training associated with specific job roles where employers are looking to provide additional training relating to skills outwith their employees’ core role or relating to a new area of work (such as transition to net zero), whilst also required by law, would be considered as upskilling/reskilling and therefore could be supported by FWDF.
- Any decisions on whether an employer is eligible to access transition training through FWDF will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Employers operating on a Scotland-wide basis or across more than one college region may submit only one FWDF application, either to the college of their choice or the Open University in Scotland, and they are required to formally declare that their application is on behalf of the whole company and is their sole FWDF application.



TIMESCALES

The timeframe for the FWDF covers the academic year 2022-23, with the application window open from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023. The table below sets out the timeframe for academic year 2022-23 FWDF activity:

Training contractually agreed	Training commenced	Training delivered and completed
by 31 July 2023	by 31 August 2023	by 31 December 2023

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please contact Orkney College to discuss training available and your eligibility for funding through FWDF. Please note that a training needs analysis (see below) and further supporting information is required to support an application.

Training Needs Analysis – employers are required to identify the training they require will help make a demonstrable return on investment, therefore all applications must be supported by a relative training needs analysis (proportionate to the size of the business). Orkney College has partnered with Business Gateway Orkney, whose business advisers will support local employers with this.

Contact: business.gateway@orkney.gov.uk

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) can also provide a template for a business to use, or if a business has gone through SDS’s Skills for Growth process, this could be used as part of a training needs analysis.

Contact: fwdf@sds.co.uk