Learning and Development Evaluation Strategy

1. Introduction

LSBU’s corporate plan clearly articulates the need for investment in staff development that equips staff with the skills and knowledge identified as necessary for them to achieve individual and collective objectives. Effective learning and development (L&D) is that which supports the University in achieving its strategic goals and is not an end in itself. Determining whether the cost of staff development represents an investment rather than an expense requires a systematic approach to evaluating planned learning and development initiatives.

2. Purpose and aims

The purpose of this strategy is to outline the approach that will be adopted in assessing the impact staff development has on LSBU's business and the value it adds.

The aims of this strategy are to

- Provide a framework that outlines what L&D provision delivered through the OSDT will be evaluated and how
- Identify the roles and responsibilities of staff, managers and learning and development providers in assisting with the evaluation
- Support the corporate plan, in particular, Objective 9, ‘Helping our staff perform’

3. Framework and methodology

The proposed framework combines Kirkpatrick’s (1959) 4-level model for evaluating training programmes with Brinkerhoff’s (2003) Success Case Method (SCM). The resulting approach will provide data to answer the following questions about planned learning and development interventions:

- Did the learning event meet participant expectations (Kirkpatrick level 1: reaction)
- Did the intended learning take place? (Kirkpatrick level 2: learning)
- Has the learning been applied to achieve valued results? (Kirkpatrick level 3: behaviour)
- What impact did the application of learning have on business goals? (Kirkpatrick level 4: results)
- How could the initiative be improved to maximise achievement of valued outcomes over the longer term? (SCM)

Using the L&D planning and evaluation form (see appendix 1) before any programme is developed, the OSDT will work with the programme sponsor to articulate the desired outcomes sought through L&D. Defining the expected outcomes and impact in terms of observable criteria will inform the process of data collection necessary to decide post event whether or not the expectations have been met.
A full evaluation of every intervention is neither desirable nor possible. The decision on the level of evaluation (for both group and individual interventions) needs to be made at the start of a programme, and based on considerations of:

- Cost and duration of a planned event/programme: i.e. Pilot programmes that are part of a larger-scale initiative, costly interventions (e.g. programmes of £10k or more), those expected to be repeated regularly and those of 3 or more days duration should be considered a priority for full evaluation.
- Scope and scale of the L&D activity under consideration: i.e. Programmes that are expected to be rolled out across the whole or significant parts of LSBU should be considered a priority for full evaluation.
- Explicit dependency relationship with corporate goals: i.e. Programmes that are directly related to the corporate priorities, e.g. Management and Leadership development

L&D provision through the OSDT is made in response to the development needs identified primarily through the appraisal conversations between managers and staff, and the resulting Job Plan (see www.lsbu.ac.uk/OSDT/appraisal.html for more information on appraisals).

All planned L&D events delivered through the OSDT will be evaluated both individual and group events, to determine whether the learning is being applied on the job and what valued outcomes are being achieved, through the following steps:

**Participants’ Reaction:** The OSDT will continue to use the current on-line feedback forms issued within 24 hours of participating in a learning and development event, participants will be canvassed for their feedback on the extent to which the intervention met their initial expectations.

**Participants’ Learning:** Programme content will include tasks to elicit evidence that the required learning has taken place. Where appropriate, participants will be encouraged to identify up to 3 actions they will take following the event to implement the learning; these will be emailed to their line manager in order that they can be supported back on the job and will be referenced in the 3-month evaluation survey.

**Participants’ Behaviour:** The OSDT will build on current processes in issuing evaluation forms 3- months post event. Staff participating in a development activity and their line manager will both be surveyed to get feedback on the extent to which the delegate has successfully applied the learning in their job.

**LSBU’s Performance:** Where a full evaluation is agreed, data collection will provide answers to the following:

- What has been the return on expectations?
- What is the range of valued outcomes that have accrued as a result of applying the learning, how have these contributed to improvement in the KPI measures by which LSBU assesses its performance?
- (where appropriate) What was the Return on Investment?
- How much of this can be attributed to the learning and development activity in question?
The nature and sources of data and intervals at which it is captured will be set out in the L&D Planning and evaluation form referenced above. This will be used to inform the programme design.

For programmes that are evaluated in full, data captured in the 3-month evaluation forms will be used as the starting point for the Success Case Method to identify:

- The range of valued outcomes accrued (intended and incidental)
- Key factors that inhibited/promoted achievement of valued outcomes
- Actions for continuous improvement in the provision and application of L&D interventions

4. Outcomes

- Dashboard indicators for senior managers showing the learning delivered against that required (as identified through analysis of staff job plans)
- Dashboard summaries of collated responses of participant reactions to L&D events, published on the OSDT web pages
- Dashboard summary of 3-month evaluations from participants and line managers, published on the OSDT web pages
- Impact report on programmes evaluated in full will be presented to programme sponsors and incorporated into an annual report
- Annual report of L&D activities and impact to Executive and HR Committee
- Publicising of factors found to promote application of learning in the work environment

5. Responsibilities

As is clear from this strategy, the task of evaluating L&D is something that requires the OSDT, staff learners and managers working together to achieve. It is also important to note that evaluation is not about assessing individual staff participating in learning, but rather what we collectively can learn about how we best use L&D to achieve improvements in LSBU’s business performance. Specifically:

- Line managers, with their staff members, are responsible for identifying and prioritising the learning and development that is needed in order that they can succeed in completing agreed tasks
- Individuals and line managers are responsible for agreeing the learning outcomes required from individual interventions and for providing feedback on the interventions as requested by the OSDT
- The OSDT is responsible for the provision of effective interventions that will deliver the learning and development
- In the case of corporate wide initiatives, the programme sponsor is responsible for completing the L&D planning and evaluation form (see appendix 1) with support from the OSDT
• The OSDT are responsible for providing proforma for data collection, and for reporting on the analyses of the feedback
• All staff are responsible for applying the learning gained through the process of evaluation to ensure continuous improvement in the way L&D activity is used to support the corporate plan
• L&D providers are responsible for including the means by which evaluation of learning (level 2) takes place during the intervention and in supporting the OSDT in full evaluation of designated programmes.
Appendix 1:

Planning & evaluation template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Strategic Alignment</th>
<th>Proposed Method(s)</th>
<th>Expected Results</th>
<th>Critical Success Factors</th>
<th>Timescales</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Do Review</td>
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</table>

Review Outcome

Observations