

Developing a training plan

A training plan identifies:

- ★ what an organisation wants from training
- ★ what skills the workforce has now, and needs in future
- ★ what resources the organisation has available for training
- ★ what approaches to training are appropriate
- ★ what training opportunities exist

Developing a training plan involves asking questions about the organisation's current skills and training, as well as its aims, values, culture and relationships. Consultation is important during development because the plan will need to be understood and supported by key people within the organisation.

Gathering input from workers in all sections and levels of the organisation can provide an opportunity to prepare employees for any changes that might arise from the training plan. Other organisations can also assist the development of a training plan, including: industry associations, unions, registered training organisations and human resource consultants.

Factors to consider in the development of a training plan are:

1. Training needs analysis

Range of job functions – Do employees all need similar skill sets, or are there many different types of jobs within the organisation? Do employees need to work across a range of skill areas, or do they specialise in a narrow field?

Type of training required – Do technological changes and upgrades require constant retraining, or is the focus on induction training, or regular refresher training? Does training need to meet legislative requirements?

Current situation – What are the skills of current employees and new recruits? What training is already provided to employees? What training products are used or available in the areas required by the organisation? Does existing training meet organisational needs?

2. Organisational capacity

Training delivery – Are employees available for group training? Are there regular downtimes? Can some training be done online? Can employees be made available for training and assessment off-the-job? Can training and assessment take place in the workplace?

Workforce capacity – Are workplace trainers and assessors available within the organisation – or can they be developed? Are there people within the organisation who can develop training programs or customise training products and materials? Is the organisation able to release people to perform workplace training and assessment?

Resource availability – What is the available training budget? Is any external funding available for training? Does the workplace have suitable facilities for training and assessment? Does the organisation already have training products or resources that can be used?

Administrative arrangements – Does the organisation have staff available to administer the training arrangements? If becoming an RTO is considered, can the organisation comply with the AQTF?

3. Organisational culture and values

Training content – Are there elements of the organisational culture that need to be included in a training program? Will training be used to institute organisational values? Is training needed to bring about organisational change?

Training methodologies – Should in-house training be used as a means to value and capture employee knowledge and experience? To what extent does the organisation want to be involved in the design and conduct of training for its employees? Is training intended to bring fresh ideas from outside into the organisation?

Value of training – Does the organisation aim to provide employees with career pathways, or support their ongoing development? What returns on investment does the organisation expect from training?

4. Desired outcomes from training

Purpose of training – Will training be used primarily to meet legislative requirements, or will it be used to achieve organisational goals, such as increased productivity or competitiveness, improved customer satisfaction or decreased staff turnover? Is training intended to bring about cultural change or position the organisation at the cutting edge of its field?

Industrial conditions – Is training required to help employees progress through the organisation? Do industrial awards or employment conditions include training requirements or the achievement of particular qualifications?

5. Existing relationships

Opportunities for collaboration – Do other organisations have similar training needs? Can the organisation reduce training costs by combining training programs with related organisations, or other enterprises in the region?

Links with training providers – Can the organisation build on any existing relationships with external training providers? Do local training providers offer training in any of the areas needed by the organisation?

The completed training plan brings all aspects of training within the organisation into a cohesive framework. Each training decision can then be made within the context of the organisation's needs, aims and capabilities, allowing more cost-effective and strategic choices to be made.

The training plan is also a valuable tool when discussing training options with external training providers. It will help to explain what the organisation wants from training and will enable the training provider to work out whether they can meet those needs.