University of Essex

Essential Training Policy

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Aim

Investing in the development of our staff community throughout every stage of employment is an intrinsic part of how we work. We outline in our People Supporting Strategy 2019-25 that helping colleagues connect their every-day decisions, judgements, behaviours and actions with the intrinsic values of the University is imperative in order to attain our mission of excellence in education and research and to develop people more widely within the world of work.

1. Policy Statement

1.1   The policy is in place to ensure transparency in the expectations the University holds for the completion of essential training.

1.2   Essential training is a fundamental part of how we work within our community. It not only provides an understanding of University values and organisational behaviours, but also signals an ongoing commitment to engage with professional development and continuous learning opportunities. These enhance skills and knowledge and enable us to remain agile and responsive to changing environments.

1.3   Our essential training also ensures that all members of staff are equipped with the knowledge of how to work in a safe way that is compliant with statutory obligations and legislation. It also ensures that we continue to cultivate inclusive environments across virtual and physical spaces where all members feel supported to fulfil their potential.

1.4   Within our community, essential training is relevant at all stages of employment, forming a key part of the induction process for new staff, and contributing towards the evolving knowledge and the life-long development of skills throughout different moments of transition.

1.5   Whatever the role or level of responsibility, staff are expected and encouraged to be proactive in their development and contribute towards the future success of the University and their own personal growth. Staff should feel supported and enabled by their manager to engage in these valuable opportunities. Staff are also encouraged to support the professional development of others, particularly sharing their expertise and providing feedback where appropriate.

2. Scope

2.1   This policy applies to employees of the University of Essex and those on all types of employment contract and to workers such as those who hold on demand agreements. It is relevant for all staff, irrespective of length of service.

3. Policy requirements

3.1   Our people-centred approach to essential training is two-fold. Our essential training package is the first step in place to support the development of our staff. To be completed within the first six months of employment and annually refreshed thereafter, the topics incorporated into the training are reflective of the fundamental principles we hold within our community. These shape the way we work at Essex, wherever we are working from.

3.2   There is also a requirement to complete annual refresher training. The aim for this training is to communicate new updates (including changes to legislation and effective ways to keep our community safe across virtual and cyber environments) and to provide additional learning opportunities based upon the outcomes from the initial essential training package.

3.3   As staff continue to learn and evolve throughout their employment, the skills and knowledge they will need to perform their role will change. Moreover, as the University continues to progress towards the commitments outlined within our 2019-25 Strategic plan, the additional skills we need as a workforce to remain inclusive and agile will also grow over time. Therefore, the second element of essential training is focussed upon encouraging and supporting individuals to develop skills they will need to confidently fulfil their responsibilities, and it is a continuing priority during employment at Essex.

4. Essential Training for all staff

4.1   "How we work at Essex" is a single programme that incorporates elements from a number of different topics that are important to our community and encompass our Essex Sprit. Completing this programme within the first three months of employment ensures that all employees are aware and capable of meeting their statutory obligations, professional standards, and legal requirements relating to: Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Health & Safety, Information Security, Safeguarding and Financial Regulations. "How we work at Essex" also provides an introduction to our strategic priorities.

4.2   Completion of this programme is part of the formal University induction process for all employees, regardless of role or responsibility. All employees should be made aware of the completion requirements on appointment and will have the opportunity to discuss these with their manager during the induction process.

4.3   Engagement and completion of this programme will be checked as part of confirming completion of induction by the reporting manager. Completion of essential training by all employees is recorded on personal HR Organiser records and termly completion reports of essential training will be sent to reporting managers. If the training is not completed, reporting managers are

expected to raise this with their direct report formally. Passing the probationary period or the Pathway to Permanency process also depends upon the completion of this programme.

4.4   As part of the essential training package, colleagues are expected to complete How We Work at Essex Annual Booster. Each year, a new booster will be developed to keep colleagues informed of key changes across the University and ensure they are compliant with legislations and regulations.

4.5   Alongside the completion of "How we work at Essex", all new employees are encouraged to attend monthly induction networking events during their first 12 months of employment. These events provide opportunities for new employees to be introduced to work activities across different sections of the university and strategic developments.

4.6   The second part of essential training at the University is centred around the continuous development of skills. This means that as individuals, teams, departments/sections and institutionally, we remain open to acknowledge the skills, information and perspectives that we need to learn about and develop, and we actively engage with opportunities to enhance these areas.

4.7   Individuals and their reporting managers remain responsible for ensuring both the completion of the initial essential training programme and the identification and subsequent engagement with ongoing training and development opportunities. This should be facilitated through regular conversations about upskilling and development. These conversations should take place during induction, during one-to-one and team meetings, through individual performance and development reviews, and at times of career transition or role change.

4.8   It is important to make time for development. Whilst it may seem counterintuitive to take time to develop when other activities may be a priority, effective development is an investment in people that will lead to more effective practices, better use of time and preparedness for future roles. Both individuals and their reporting managers should ensure that time is protected during the working day to allow for engagement and participation in training and development activities, in addition to reflection upon areas of good practice and areas for development. The time allowed should be supportive of individual needs and requirements.

4.9   Formal learning opportunities such as workshops and training sessions can be searched for through the learning event catalogue and can be booked through HR Organiser. Any queries regarding development can be directed to People & Culture (Organisational Development).

4.10   In addition to formal training and development opportunities, the University also provides workplace coaching, mentoring and networking events to allow for collaborative learning and peer support.

4.11   Externally provided development opportunities are also available subject to departmental/section funding. This could include; attendance at external training and development programmes, attendance at conferences, and studying for a qualification (for degree study, see Employee Fee Waiver Policy).

5. Essential Training for Managers

5.1   Employees with responsibility for others and resources are required to complete the essential training for managers. This is a single training programme entitled How We Manage at Essex Essential Training. This needs to be completed in addition to "How we work at Essex" within the first three months of entering a managerial role. Participants on the Future Leaders and Strategic Leaders programmes are also required to complete this programme.

6. Essential training for Supervisors

6.1   Staff in Supervisory roles will be required to complete a Confidence Tool as a part of their role-based training.

6.2   Supervisory staff that are going through Pathway to Permanency must complete Supervising Doctoral Candidates training within the first 12 months of employment.

7. Essential training for Personal Tutors

7.1   Staff in a Personal Tutor role will be required to complete a Confidence Tool as a part of their role-based training.

8. Essential Training for Student-Facing Staff

8.1   Staff in student-facing roles will need to complete Student Code of Conduct training in the categories that are relevant to them as a part of their role-based essential training.

9. Essential Training for Education and Research Staff

9.1   For new members of staff working in education or research roles (including Assistant Lecturers and Graduate Laboratory Assistants) attendance to central inductions are required. These induction programmes provide key institutional information and signposts the support available to them and their students. The induction events can be found through searching the [learning event catalogue](#).

9.2   All research staff need to complete Research Integrity training as part of their role based training.

9.3   Alongside attending these, staff should check with their departments regarding local inductions. In consultation with their reporting manager, individual training may be put in place for employees at a local level to ensure they are fully supported in their role and can carry out their responsibilities safely and to the required professional standard. For example, training may be identified for employees working in a laboratory environment or those using specific work equipment or software as part of their role. The University's [Health and Safety Policy](#) also requires employees to undertake any additional health and safety training identified through a risk assessment.

10. Essential Training for Internal and External University Committee members

10.1   External members of Council are required to complete "How we work at Essex", Automatic Bias training and any other training relevant for their role.

10.2   Internal members of Council and Senate are required to complete "How we work at Essex", Health and Safety Leadership training and any additional training relevant to their role.

10.3   Members of Council, University Steering Group, Audit and Risk Management Committee and Safeguarding Advisory Group are required to complete the HM Government Channel Awareness online training course.

11. Outline of Responsibilities

11.1 **All employees** have a duty to ensure that they:

- Successfully complete the essential training programme within six months or the timeframe agreed with their reporting manager.

- Raise any difficulties they face completing this training with their manager and agree a way forward.

- Pursue and engage with their own continuous professional and personal development so that they can play a full part in the success of the University and take responsibility for their own growth.

- Support the professional development of others, particularly sharing their expertise and providing feedback where appropriate.

- Complete the online evaluation for centrally delivered training events.

- Cancel bookings onto training events that are booked through HR Organiser if unable to attend.

11.2 **Reporting Managers** have a duty to ensure that:

- They engage with training and development opportunities.

- Successful completion of essential training within their team is monitored as part of induction and checked as part of the probation process. It will be considered during performance development and review as appropriate.

- Action is taken to address any issues arising which may prevent the training from being completed.

- All members of the team understand the University requirement to undertake continuous professional development, including the initial essential training programme and any other training considered essential to their role.

- Development needs are discussed with direct reports, support is provided in these endeavours and any activities are evaluated.

- Employees are given time during the working day to undertake essential training and development opportunities.

11.3 **Heads of Department/Section** have a duty to ensure that a suitable nominee has responsibility for:

- Discussing non-completion of essential training or repeated failure to attend booked training with individuals when notified via termly reports.

- Contacting employees who have not reached the required standard in essential training where the material is delivered online and a pass mark is identified.

- Ensuring employees who change roles complete the required essential training for the new role.

- Identifying and making arrangements for any additional training that may be required on an individual basis or as a specific requirement of the role.

Related University policies

- Equality and Diversity Policy and Strategy

- Essential Information for the Return to our Campuses

- Essential Training staff directory article

- Data Protection Policy

- Disciplinary procedure

- Health and Safety policy

- IT Acceptable Use Policy

- Peer Review of Teaching policy

- Performance Development Reviews

- Zero tolerance policy

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