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## 5B. Identify Training/Learning Events

A wide range of methods for learning, training and development exist, Training sources can be internal to the company or accessed from an external entity. Training can range from short term, to long term, from on-line to in-person, and from low cost to high cost. Development programmes for senior or specialist staff could encompass techniques such as coaching and mentoring or secondment, often undertaken in conjunction with more formal or off-the-job learning or educational arrangements

The choice of learning methods for each need identified will depend on several factors including:

- ✦ the nature and degree of priority of the learning needs
- ✦ type of occupation, level of seniority and qualifications/educational background of learners
- ✦ organisational culture
- ✦ evaluation of the effectiveness of previous learning and training interventions
- ✦ costs and budgets available
- ✦ time required to complete training
- ✦ learner preference – each individual may prefer learning in different ways, some prefer classroom learning over real-life practicing. Learner preference's over learning ways and styles and their individual characteristics need to be taken into account when selecting, developing and delivering learning methods
- ✦ learners' availability

Learning involves a lot of resources such as capital, human and physical assets, etc. Effective management of learning & development (L&D) is essential in order to bring out the full value of L&D activities.

### 5B.1 In-house vs external

Internal courses provide an opportunity to focus on company-specific issues, which may increase the possibility of learning transfer. External courses involving interaction with people from other companies, meanwhile, may help individuals perceive situations from a fresh perspective and develop skills in a different knowledge-sharing context and network with counterparts in other companies.

Below are some commonly used training/learning methods:

#### a. In-house on-the job training:

Basic or general on-the-job training, typically learning through observing and/or being assisted by a colleague with more experience of performing a task, is usually:

- ✦ delivered on a one-to-one basis at the trainee's place of work
- ✦ allocated time to take place, including potential periods when there is little or no useful output of products or services
- ✦ a specified, planned and structured activity

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b. In-house development programmes

This category covers a very diverse range of learning interventions that are longer-term, broader and/or of a higher level than basic on-the-job training. Development programmes could encompass techniques such as coaching and mentoring or secondment, often undertaken in conjunction with more formal or off-the-job learning or educational arrangements. Such development opportunities are more likely to be available for senior or specialist staff including those in professional, management or leadership roles – and are sometimes limited to those high-performing or high-potential staff identified as ‘talent’.

i. In-house coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are development techniques based on the use of one-to-one discussions to enhance an individual’s skills, knowledge or work performance – often for the current job, but also to support career transitions.

While some companies hire external coaches, particularly when coaching those in very senior management or leadership positions, line managers are often expected to operate internally in a coaching capacity in the workplace.

Mentoring tends to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague (rather than line managers or external coaches) uses his or her greater knowledge and understanding of the work or workplace to support the development of a more junior or inexperienced member of staff.

ii. In-house job rotation, secondment and shadowing

The learning associated with the experience of secondment, the temporary loan of an employee to another department or role (or, sometimes, to an external organisation), is widely recognised as valuable for both employee development and organisational development. Job rotation and shadowing are similarly useful forms of development, particularly in supporting employees in developing the skills and competencies required for moves to new or higher-level roles.

c. External courses and classroom training

Formal courses away from the workplace have advantages in certain circumstances, for example they offer:

- ❖ protected time for learning
- ❖ the chance for participants to share ideas with each other and learn from shared experience in a structured setting
- ❖ the opportunity to practise skills in a risk-free environment
- ❖ the capacity for a course instructor to give feedback immediately and in a non-threatening way
- ❖ the ability to signal what matters to the organisation – compulsory courses, in health and safety for example, send out a strong signal that this knowledge is important

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## SCS-based programme (Qualifications Framework - Specification of Competency Standards)

With an increasing need to align more closely with the needs of industry, in-house training is getting more and more outcomes-based so that learners going through the training are equipped with requisite competencies to effectively perform their job.

The units of competency (UoCs) in the SCS can assist development of in-house training as the competency requirements are indeed outcome requirements for the task. These learning outcomes are based on standards set by industry, and assessment is designed to ensure individual learner has achieved all learning outcomes in a learning module or programme.

Even though competency standards are not descriptions of the learning process itself or of any particular method for training and assessment, competency standards do provide a well-established and validated description of actual work outcomes in various industries, and the detail in each UoC is a ready-made source of useful information for in-house trainers to cluster relevant UoCs together to form a single module. Once the formative aspects of the training have been established, the in-house trainers can use his/her educational expertise to plan the appropriate learning and assessment approaches for the training content.

A training module or programme with its contents developed on the basis of the SCS is known as SCS-based programme which follows an outcomes-based approach in the design, implementation, assessment and evaluation of the programme. The emphasis in SCS-based programmes is on “performing” rather than just “knowing”.

## SCS-based Training Packages

With the objective of promoting SCS-based programmes, the Government has injected funding for the production of SCS-based Training Packages for those industries having their respective sets of SCS completed, so as to facilitate the education and training market to make use of the completed sets of SCS in curriculum design and in enriching the contents and relevancy of training.

As the name suggests, a SCS-based Training Package is an integrated set of teaching and learning materials and assessment guidelines in respect of one or a small number of UoCs centered on a job function or sub-function drawn from the SCS of an industry. It is usually made up of basic components such as learning & teaching guide, assessment guidelines and support materials that provide for choice for providers in the design of competency-based training and assessment to meet the needs of industry and learners.

In particular, the learning and teaching guide in each Training Package will clearly set out the learning topics, activities & methods, and assessment context and activities that are in alignment with the learning outcomes, context, facilities and supports in relation to the job function or sub-function concerned.

Training Packages encourage the development and delivery of flexible training or learning programme which suits individual and industry requirements; it also encourages learning and assessment in a work-related environment leading to verifiable workplace outcomes.

With Training Packages, assessment and training may be conducted at the workplace, off-the-job, at a training provider, during regular work, or through work experience, work placement, work simulation or any combination of these.

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When making the decision to use in-house or external training/learning resources, employers should consider the following questions:

- ✦ is the capability available in-house?
- ✦ do they have the capacity to deliver the training/facilitate the learning?
- ✦ how does the cost of external training/learning opportunities weigh against the benefits ?
- ✦ is there budget for the training/learning?

Learning methods must be carefully designed, implemented and reviewed if they are to fulfil their objective of providing the workforce with the skills and competencies required to support business strategy. Setting clear learning objectives and assessing the effectiveness of existing learning interventions is important when determining programs of learning.