

Time to Train

Response Form

We welcome views and comments from everyone with an interest in how time to train is taken forward; employers, individuals and representative bodies are all invited to send us your comments.

You can respond electronically via the online or offline response facility on the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills' consultation website: <http://www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/>

Alternatively, your responses may be sent by email or post to one of the following:-

By email to: timetotrain.consultation@dius.gsi.gov.uk

By post to: Time to Train Consultation, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, Ground Floor A, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2GJ.

The deadline for responses is Wednesday 10 September 2008.

We expect to publish a summary of responses in due course. Individual respondents will not be identified in this but please note the Freedom of Information statement below.

Please email any enquiries to timetotrain.consultation@dius.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the boxes below can be extended to accommodate your views.

Section 1: Your details

Name

Email address

Position in organisation

Organisation (if applicable)

Address

Please tick one box which best describes you as a respondent?

Employer	
Employer organisation / representative body	
Trade Union	
Individual	
Other – please specify	Education Charity and Employer

Section 2: Questions for Employers or Employer organisations only (if Trade Union, Individual or Other, please skip to Section 3)

How many employees do you have?

Less than 20	
21 – 49	X
50 – 249	
250 – 999	
1000 – 4999	
5000 or more	

Have you achieved, or are you working towards Investors in People status?

Yes	X
No	

Have you made the Skills Pledge?

Yes	X
No	

Section 3: General Questions

1. Were you aware that existing legislation gives certain employees with caring responsibilities the right to request flexible working arrangements?

Yes	X
No	

Please explain or comment on your answer in the box below

We have been campaigning for time off to train for some time, so were aware of existing flexible working rights as a possible model.

2. Could a request for time to train help skills development in your organisation?

Yes	X
No	

Please give reasons for your answer in the box below

Statutory rights based on an assumption that employees should have the right to time off for training, which put the onus on the employer to justify a refusal rather than the employee to justify being allowed the time, should be helpful in all organisations in putting skills development centre stage.

3. Do you think the right to request time to train should cover:

Any training that the individual and the employer agree	X
Only training that is nationally recognised and accredited	

Please explain or comment on your answer in the box below

As a lifelong learning charity we have seen the benefits of not only accredited learning, but also informal and bitesize learning. Often these types of learning will then progress to learning for a qualification, but many learners are not ready to begin with such learning. As part of one of our own campaigns, National Learning at Work Day, one region recently achieved 23% progression straight into accredited learning from a one-day taster – but many of these learners would not have signed up for accredited training without the confidence and appropriate expectations they gained from the taster.

4. For which of the following reasons do you think an employer should be able to reject a request for time to train? (Please tick all of the reasons you think should be included)

Relevance of training to business productivity and performance	
Suitable training is not available	
Burden of additional costs	
Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand	
Inability to reorganise work among existing staff	
Inability to recruit additional staff	
Detrimental impact on quality	
Detrimental impact on the performance	
Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work	
Planned structural changes	
None of the above	

Please explain or comment on your answers to this question in the box below

We are very concerned that such a lot of Departmental time & energy appears to be being spent on producing an all-encompassing list of reasons why employers may say no, rather than on making the business case to employers why it is in their own interests to say yes! Under some circumstances any of the above might be pressing reasons for refusal, particularly in SMEs and in an economic downturn, so we would therefore hesitate to specify any that might not be justifiable reasons. However, we would like to see the employer's right to say no accompanied by an automatic assumption that the employee's case will be reconsidered after an appropriate (short) time period to assess if there has been any change in the material circumstances affecting the decision.

5. Are there any other reasons you think employers should be able to cite in rejecting a request for time to train?

Yes	
No	X

Please give details in the box below

We would, however, support provision to allow employers to link time off for training

with an expectation that the employee will continue in employment for a specified period (perhaps 6 months) after the end of the training. While we recognize that the current proposals are not about employers making a financial contribution in cash, they are making a contribution in kind to an employee's training by allowing time off, and this should be recognized. We work with many employers who still believe that employees who improve their training and qualifications are more likely to leave, and such assumptions about continued service (even if they cannot be enforced in practice) might go some way to reassuring them. At the same time, we would like to see the statistics that in fact employees are more loyal and more likely to stay with an employer if they receive training given much greater prominence, to encourage the sort of mindshift amongst employers that is going to be necessary to make this legislation work in practice.

6. Are there any circumstances in which an employer should be able to withdraw their support for an individual's time to train where they had previously granted a request?

Yes	X
No	

Please give details in the box below

As above – if the employee gives notice of their intention to leave it might be justifiable for the employer to withdraw support, or if there are concerns about the employee's attendance at the specified training despite time off having been given.

7. Do you think any employers should be exempted from the right to request time to train?

Yes	
No	X

8. If you answered yes to question 7, which employers do you think should be exempt?

Employers with fewer than 25 employees	
Employers with fewer than 250 employees	
Another reason	

Please specify in the box below

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9. If you are an employee and had a formal right to request time to train, would you be more likely approach your employer about your training needs than you are now?

Yes	
No	X

Please give reasons for your answer in the box below

As an organisation working in the field and committed to this agenda, we already have a learning culture, and give our 30 staff 5 paid Learning Days for personal development in addition to work-related training. The right to request time to train for us formalises the existing system. We have recently run policy briefings on the proposed right with a cross-section of public and private sector managers and employers, most of whom said the same. The value of the proposed legislation will be in 'normalising' training in those organisations that do not have a learning culture and do not see the value of learning for individuals or the company. The proposals also give Government a golden

opportunity to publicise widely the business case for learning and skill improvement to such organisations, using appropriate employer champions from a range of sectors and differing types and sizes of organisation.

10. If you are an employer and a statutory right to request time to train was introduced would this change your behaviour in terms of giving your staff time off to train?

Yes	
No	X

Please give reasons for your answer in the box below

As above.

All respondents

Please use the box below for any other comments you wish to make about the proposed right to request time to train

We welcome the proposed right and would wish to encourage Government to implement it as quickly as possible, along with clear and widely disseminated information for employers on the benefits to business of training staff, following on from the LSC's current In Our Hands media promotion campaign.

Freedom of Information

The information you provide in your response will be subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations, which allow public access to information held by the Department.

This does not necessarily mean that your response can be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies.

You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided, but you should note that this will not necessarily exclude the public right of access.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply.

All UK national public consultations are required to conform to the following standards:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.

3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Further information on the Code of Practice can be accessed through the Cabinet Office Website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance/content/introduction/index.asp>