

Department of Education, Sport and Culture

Vocational Training Assistance Scheme Guidance Document

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1. Purpose of this Document

This document summarises the policy for providing financial assistance by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC) through its Vocational Training Assistance Scheme (VTAS). This guidance is to assist potential applicants in understanding the criteria used to evaluate applications.

It is important to emphasise that this document provides general guidance only. The scheme is discretionary therefore the decision whether to provide financial assistance for a specific application will be judged on its merits and is at DESC's discretion.

Please note: Applications must be submitted prior to the commencement of training. Retrospective applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.

2. Introduction

The principal objective of DESC through the VTAS is the continued upskilling of the workforce, growth and diversification of the Isle of Man economy and creating appropriate employment opportunities for all. This is consistent with Government's overall economic strategy. To achieve this objective DESC seeks to:

- **Stimulate growth in specific sectors** by supporting growth in existing local businesses and attracting new businesses. This fits with Governments' Economic Strategy by supporting the development of a high value, well remunerated, workforce which encourages increased economic activity.
- **Stimulate improved overall economic performance by:-**
 - Helping individuals improve their skills and productivity
 - Helping businesses to improve their effectiveness and efficiency
 - Maintaining an economic environment that supports the needs of employers and existing or potential employees

3. Eligibility

The scheme is open to:

- Individuals working in the private or third sector who are either defined as Isle of Man Workers, or who are in possession of a valid work permit, in accordance with current Control of Employment legislation.
- Businesses, companies, sole traders or other organisations operating within the private or third sectors, who: (a) maintain a registered office and (b) provide direct employment within the Isle of Man.

4. Financial Assistance

In accordance with Government Policy the principal purpose of providing financial assistance under the VTAS is to develop the skills of the Island's workforce in order to stimulate wider economic benefits (revenues, jobs, profits, expenditure in the local economy) and associated fiscal benefits (direct and indirect taxes) which are far in excess of the cost of the support provided. DESC's Vocational Training Assistance Scheme is discretionary and can provide

financial assistance to both businesses and individuals wishing to undertake training which is in accordance with DESC's objectives and will:

- Improve an individual's likelihood of gaining employment
- Improve an individual's skills and effectiveness within the workplace
- Benefit an employer through increased productivity
- Benefit an employer by expanding the range of products and services offered
- Benefit an employer by increasing revenue to the company
- Provide skills for new and emerging sectors

5. Making an Application

Application forms and further information on the scheme can be found on the following web page:

<https://www.gov.im/categories/education-training-and-careers/vocational-training-assistance-scheme/>

Alternatively, contact the Vocational Training team on 682379 / 687157 or email training@gov.im

You should complete the application form as fully as possible, providing all of the requested information. Please use **either**:

- Section 1 (if you are an employer making the application) **or**
- Section 2 (for individuals)

Please note that this determines who will receive payment at the conclusion of the training.

Applications which are missing information such as Date of Birth, National Insurance Number, Course Start Date and Course Costs will be returned pending further information. Supplementary information relating to the intended training activity should also be included, together with the direct training cost. Employers who are VAT registered should show all costs excluding VAT.

The application form also provides an opportunity for the applicant to outline the anticipated benefits of completing the training. As applications are considered on individual merits, it is strongly recommended that all applicants pay careful consideration to this part of the application.

6. Determining an Application

Once an application has been received it will be formally evaluated. Additional information and/or clarification of certain points may be requested during this process. A meeting may also be requested to discuss the application in further detail.

Evaluation of the application will include consideration of the following factors:

- The anticipated benefit to the individual
- The anticipated benefit to the employer
- The anticipated benefit to the Isle of Man economy

Additionally, when considering applications made by employers, DESC will take a view on whether the proposed training activity is over and above what a reasonable employer should provide.

Funding will not ordinarily be available for individuals who are required to undertake certain aspects of training as part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in order to maintain their current accreditations or professional affiliations.

The Department will also consider the employment status of the applicant(s) in relation to the relevant Control of Employment legislation in force at the time of application.

DESC aims to process all fully completed applications within 10 working days, but if necessary the department may make further detailed enquiries and/or request additional information which will delay the decision.

All applicants will receive written notification of our decision. This will either constitute a formal offer of assistance, which requires acceptance by the applicant, or a letter of refusal which will outline our reasons for not supporting the application.

7. Scope of the Scheme

Whilst DESC will consider each application based on its individual merits, in order to assist potential applicants, this section attempts to outline certain applications which fall outside of the scope of the scheme:

Applications which **WILL NOT** attract financial assistance include those relating to:

- Training which is not provided to a recognised and/or accredited standard
- Any form of in-house training
- Induction, or basic entry level, organisation specific training
- First Aid training
- Attendance at conferences, seminars, trade shows or exhibitions
- Training provided off-island, where such training is available locally and is deemed to be of similar content, quality and available in a timely manner
- Any training where there is little perceived economic benefit

Applications which are **UNLIKELY** to attract financial assistance include, those relating to:

- Training which is below level 2 (or equivalent) on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)
- Training which is considered to be predominantly academic in its nature, or above level 5 (or equivalent) on the RQF

In addition specific skills training, up to Level 2 (or equivalent) on the RQF, in the following areas will only be supported through a formalised Apprenticeship route:

- Hair and Beauty
- Health and Fitness
- Construction Craft Skills
- Motor Vehicle Mechanics

Notwithstanding the information above, DESC reserves the right to use full discretion in cases where there is a clear, demonstrable economic benefit to providing financial support.

Further details on the RQF and levels of qualification can be found by following the link below:

<http://ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-frameworks/levels-of-qualifications/>

8. Claiming your Offer of Assistance

Once you have an offer of support from DESC, which you have subsequently accepted, you will need to complete the claim process at the culmination of your training activity. You will

be required to provide evidence of expenditure, in the form of receipts / receipted invoices and evidence of attendance and/or certification. Failure to provide satisfactory evidence of completion and/or evidence of costs may result in reduced or non-payment.

Financial assistance is offered on the condition of successful completion of the training activity. This means that where the activity is certificated, you will need to demonstrate successful completion and/or the award of the relevant certificate in order to claim the assistance.

Once you have submitted all of your supporting documentation DESC will process your claim and arrange for payment by bank transfer. DESC aims to make payments within 15 working days.

Where actual costs are less than estimated in the application, DESC will reduce the amount of assistance paid in proportion with the reduced costs.

If you do not attend or successfully complete your training activity, for whatever reason, you will not be eligible to proceed with your claim. DESC will consider requests to transfer the offer onto an identical training activity on a different date, but reserves the right to alter or withdraw the offer entirely.

All claims must be submitted within 6 months of the completion of the training activity, as outlined in the original application. Applications which are not completed within this timescale, where DESC have not been notified in writing of proposed changes, will automatically become void.

9. What level of assistance can DESC provide?

Support for successful applications will be provided on a shared cost basis. The Department's contribution towards successful applications will be 30% of the cost of the training, including course costs and exam fees.*

Individual applicants will be limited to a maximum of £1,500 in offers during any 12 month period.**

Employers will be limited to a maximum of £15,000 in offers during any 12 month period.

***For employers who are VAT registered, offers will be calculated and paid net of VAT.**

****An individual application, depending on the nature and purpose of the training course applied for, may be deemed to be directly associated with their employer's business activities. Should this be the case, and in the event that the employer has exceeded the stated company limit, it is likely that the application will be rejected.**

10. Off Island Training

Consideration will be given to applications for assistance for courses run by training providers who are based off-Island but will be limited to training that is not readily available locally. Any offer made in respect of such training will be solely limited to the cost of the training course.

11. What if I am not satisfied with the decision?

If your application was rejected, or if you received an offer of assistance which you are not prepared to accept, you may request a review of the decision.

You must request a review within 10 working days of receiving the decision, by writing to the Corporate Services Manager, Department of Education, Sport and Culture, Hamilton House, Peel Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 5EP.

Your letter should clearly set out the reasons for requesting a review and you should include any additional information which you feel will help to justify your request.

The outcome of the review is final.