Training and skills development good practice guidance

29/01/2024

See all updates

Whether it's the entire focus of your project or one element within it, we want to ensure we're funding high quality training that meets the needs and priorities of heritage, organisations and people and will make a long-term difference.

By reading this guidance, you'll learn what you will need to think about when planning skills and training. It includes advice on formal apprenticeships, other paid training placements and additional training opportunities for young people. It also covers budgeting for training, provides links to further resources and lists some useful case studies.

Training and skills and the Heritage Fund

We want to do more than just fund traineeships or training courses. Through your project, you could develop skills through structured training activity (for example, a formal apprenticeship), on-the-job or in-house training, or an external short course. As a result, staff, volunteers or young people should be able to demonstrate competence in new, specific skills, and where appropriate, will have gained an accredited qualification or will have been supported into employment in the heritage sector.

Depending on the size and scope of your project and organisation, we will expect to see your skills and training activity:

- address an identified skills shortage in your organisation or the heritage workforce in general
- increase diversity in the heritage workforce

If you are applying for a grant over £250,000 you should demonstrate how your project will:

- make a significant impact on improving skills and capabilities in UK heritage
- sustain outcomes of the training provided beyond the duration of the funding
- align and fit with audience needs, relevant skills and career pathways

In projects that are wholly or mainly focused on training, you will need to demonstrate a financial model for continuing the training provision beyond the lifetime of your project.

How to develop training capacity and activities in your project

By training we mean the process of learning the skills you need to do a particular job or activity. You will need to clearly plan and set out in your application:

- what skills or training provision will be developed
- why these skills are important
- who will be trained in the new skills and put them into practice
- how you will structure and plan effective training
- who you will partner with to ensure the training is high quality

- how you will measure success (for the individual, for heritage, for your organisation)

What skills or training will you develop?

When planning your heritage project, consider whether your existing staff, volunteers and trustees have the skills needed to deliver it. You may want to up-skill existing staff or volunteers or recruit new people. Either way, your project provides an opportunity to invest in your staff and volunteers' development and ensure they are able to deliver and benefit from the grant.

For example, if you are planning an oral history project but don't have any experience in-house, think about whether you will recruit a project officer or consultant with experience of oral history work, or enrol existing staff and volunteers on a respected oral history training course. Consider which option will best help you deliver your project and best support you to embed these new skills in your organisation for the future. You may want to:

- Think about how you will share your own skills and knowledge with a wider range of people and whether you need to create new courses and resources to do this. For example, if you were carrying out wildlife surveys, you might use digital field notes, 'how to' guides or transect equipment, and consider how these will be maintained and shared more widely during and after your project.
- create pre-employment opportunities to deliver specific heritage skills for people in your community, for example through traineeships for young people
- create formal apprenticeships to encourage new entrants to the heritage workforce and provide more job opportunities for local people (see 'apprenticeships' below).
- showcase the heritage skills being put into practice during the delivery of your project to help the public learn about heritage crafts and see conservation and crafts people in action

Why these skills are important

Depending on the scale of your project, you will need to explain why these skills are important to your project, to your community or place, or to heritage more broadly. Consider whether the focus of your project is to fill a skills gap within your organisation or you wish to work more strategically to address a wider skills shortage in heritage.

Consider how the new skills your staff or volunteers will learn during your project will have a longer-term impact on them as individuals and on the heritage workforce.

What evidence do you have to show that people do not have these skills and that the heritage industry needs them now and in the future? Are the skills at risk or particular to your area? You may want to support traditional skills that are dying out as practitioners retire.

Perhaps the skills you want to develop support heritage at risk? For example, they might be skills to conserve or maintain historic boats or churches, surveying skills to support our understanding of marine habitats, or new digital skills to support the care of fragile archives.

Many heritage bodies have policy documents or workforce strategies that set out priorities for skills development.

Who will be trained in the new skills?

Will you be training existing staff or volunteers or recruiting and training new staff, trainees or volunteers as part of your project? Explain why the approach you have chosen works best for your organisation and how these skills will be put into practice during the project and beyond.

Consider our investment principle on inclusion, access and participation in your training activities. When thinking about inclusive recruitment, our research tells us that successful project leads:

- consider the geographic location of their project and use available information on the diversity background of local communities to understand potential reach
- are realistic and set objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely) in light of their project's geographic context
- carry out a needs analysis that identifies the challenges and barriers likely to be faced by individuals or groups taking part in training, especially if they are not already well represented in the workforce
- use local partners and networks who work on the ground to expand access to under-served groups
- use marketing materials that promote widening access and consider the use of language and images to be appealing to the people you want to attract

How will you structure and plan effective training?

Depending on the size and timescale of your project you will need to consider the best way to structure and plan effective training activity. Do not underestimate the time and resources needed to commission and contract external trainers, develop new courses with external training providers or create in-house training opportunities. It takes time to develop effective partnerships with support agencies and training providers – you may need to plan around existing timetables for schools, colleges or apprenticeship providers.

Experience has shown that projects need to build in additional time when apprentices or trainees are supporting the delivery of a project, for example, construction or conservation activity. New recruits will require time to learn new skills before putting them into practice and will also require supervision and support from experienced members of staff.

Consider whether the time of year will have an impact on the training you are planning and how long the training should last. For example, will the training coincide with quiet or busy times for your organisation, could the weather impact on the training (for example, if you are outdoors or your site is prone to travel disruption), would a six-month training placement allow a trainee to see the full range of your work (for example, if horticultural or seasonally based) or will recruitment need to fit around a college timetable?

Who will you partner with?

It is important to identify training providers who can support your needs and the needs of your trainees. Providing accredited training not only gives a level of quality assurance but also supports participants to develop their CVs and move into employment or continue their professional development.

You can work with a college or training provider to deliver vocational qualifications, accredited learning or apprenticeships. To develop the training capacity of your own organisation, you may also need to build in training for staff in assessment and internal verification skills.

How will you measure success?

It is important to plan evaluation from the start of your project. You need to collect baseline data on trainees – this may be about the existing skills, knowledge or confidence of participants so that you can measure the impact of your training intervention. We will ask you to collect demographic data from individuals involved in your project too.

Use tools such as self-assessment, work diaries or portfolios to monitor how the training impacts on individuals and use completed qualifications or progression into employment to help measure success. The data you collect can be supported through case studies or films that can bring to life the impact of training on an individual and the opportunities for careers in the heritage sector.

Training interventions will also have an impact on your organisation and it is important to capture this as well. The impact could include:

- the capacity of your organisation to deliver future training
- a change in recruitment practices to support a more diverse workforce
- embedding apprenticeship opportunities into staffing structures
- sustainable partnerships with training providers
- income generation from training delivery or supporting the resilience of heritage supporting the enterprise development of your organisation

Apprenticeships

Creating apprentice roles within your project is an opportunity to provide new routes into employment in the heritage sector. Employing apprentices as part of your project can provide huge benefits to your project and organisation including:

- bringing in new talent and a fresh perspective
- ensuring you have the right people with the right skills to deliver your project and support your organisation's future
- developing your own staff's capacity to share their skills and knowledge and support succession planning
- accessing government funding to deliver apprenticeship training (eg: through co-investment or using the apprenticeship levy in England).

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a job with structured, on-the-job training provided by the employer, as well as off-the-job training delivered by a training provider. The apprentice completes a qualification (the apprenticeship or a specific vocational qualification).

Before including apprentice roles in your Heritage Fund application, you will need to identify which approved apprenticeship framework or standard they will be following, as recognised by the relevant national skills organisations. This will need to match the job role and skills required by your apprentice to do their work.

For more on apprenticeships across the UK see:

- Institute for Apprenticeships (England)
- Skills Development Scotland (Scotland)
- Business Wales (Wales)

- Skills to Success (Northern Ireland)

See below for ways to build training into your project if the skills you need are not covered by an apprenticeship framework or standard.

Employing apprentices

Apprenticeships can be part of a wider project or the main focus. We expect to see the following in place to ensure the apprentice opportunities we're funding are high quality:

- a meaningful, paid role with a job description
- training delivered to a relevant apprenticeship standard at an appropriate level, which might be Level 2, Level 3 or higher
- a suitable training provider and (in England only) an end point assessor, identified and on board
- a clear training structure, working alongside skilled people
- consideration of the opportunity to diversify the workforce using different recruitment methods and partners
- support mechanisms in place, eg: pastoral care for young people in their first role
- a clear career pathway considered and support provided to ensure progression into employment or further training.

If you are applying for a grant of more than £250,000, the detail and job descriptions can be worked up in your development phase and included in your delivery round application.

Specialist heritage placements and shared apprenticeships

If your project is unable to support the completion of a full apprenticeship (for example if your project does not cover the full range of skills required or it does not last the duration of an apprenticeship) you could work with a local training organisation to provide specialist heritage placements for apprentices based with other organisations. You would need to be clear in your application how many opportunities you plan to deliver and which partners you will work with.

The Shared Apprenticeship Scheme within construction allows apprentices to complete a full apprenticeship programme by working with a number of different employers to gain the skills they require to become qualified.

Working with your construction contractors

Involving construction partners in your training plans can support the sharing of heritage construction skills with new and established professionals. For example, as a large-scale project, Shrewsbury Flax Mill Maltings worked with their construction contractors to support wider training opportunities. They have created training opportunities with a range of partners at a variety of levels that could be adapted for smaller capital projects.

Structured training placements

Where an apprenticeship standard or framework is not available for a specific role, the creation of a paid structured training placement can support the transfer of specific heritage skills from an experienced practitioner to a new member of staff.

In line with the quality requirements for an apprentice, we would want to see the following in place to ensure meaningful and quality structured training opportunities:

- a clearly identified role with a role description
- a bursary or salary in line with either the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage depending on their age
- a personalised training plan that enables the trainee to work alongside one or more experienced heritage professionals in the workplace
- the opportunity to complete accredited or professional qualifications where these are available, or if not, a portfolio of work to create a realistic opportunity for progression and employment

For example, the Blyth's Ship Building Heritage project, delivered by Blyth Tall Ship, filled a gap in the progression route for people interested in traditional boatbuilding through developing a bespoke Level 1 vocational qualification in Engineering Operations. This was delivered across an eight-week (two days a week) course which is now offered to all their trainees and less experienced engineering volunteers. Of the original trainees, 40% have gone on to take further education courses and 30% to find work. The impact is described in their video.

Structured training positions can have a positive impact on the individual concerned and on the organisation that hosts and supports the trainee. You will need to consider the additional support that a new trainee will require from staff within your organisation, the training your staff may need and any associated costs needed to deliver a successful opportunity.

Skills development for young people over 14

Research has shown that there is still work to be done in promoting heritage careers to young people. You may already be engaging with young people through learning activities, providing work experience or volunteering opportunities in partnership with local schools or through schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Building in opportunities to develop employability skills and signposting career opportunities within the heritage sector can add value to your project and support local young people to engage with heritage in a different way.

For example, as part of Kew Gardens' Temperate House Project a Youth Explainers programme was set up to provide disadvantaged young people with the skills, confidence and qualifications to engage with Kew visitors. The young people were supported to move into further training and education in plant-science and horticulture.

The Upper Nidderdale Landscape Partnership project included a foundation programme for heritage skills, providing vocational training in traditional skills for young people in Nidderdale. A full-time study programme, it provided high quality training and specialist work placements, helping students to make a positive transition between school and employment or further education.

There are also a number of formal routes for employers wishing to provide training or work experience for young people including:

- **Foundation Apprenticeships** (Scotland): designed to help school children in years S5 and S6 (aged 16–18) gain valuable, real-work experience and access work-based learning as part of their seniors' experience, alongside Highers or Nationals. There are 12 Frameworks available that are relevant to the heritage sector including Creative and Digital Media, Engineering and Business Skills. Foundation Apprenticeships can give young people a career head start by providing industry-recognised qualifications and the experience employers are looking for.

- **Traineeships** (England): an education and training programme with work experience designed to help young people aged 16–24 become 'work ready'. Traineeships provide the essential work preparation training, English, maths and work experience needed to secure an apprenticeship or employment for young people who don't yet have the appropriate skills or experience.
- **Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate** (Wales): includes a Community Challenge which requires students to conduct an individual skills audit and plan a community activity which involves a minimum of 30 hours' volunteering. Approved community challenges include examples from CADW, National Resources Wales, National Museum Wales, National Library of Wales and the Powys War Memorial Project.
- **T Levels** (England): 2-year, technical programmes designed with employers to give young people the skills that industry needs including digital, construction, engineering, environment and creative routes. They give students aged 16–18 a technical alternative to A levels and will help them to get a skilled job. You can identify relevant T Levels on the Government's guidance pages for employers.

Budgeting for training

Training, even if delivered in house, needs to be costed appropriately. Example costs include:

- cost of trainers and training courses
- registration and assessment costs for accredited learning
- 'co-investment' costs of apprentice training and assessment costs where applicable (England only)
- train-the-trainer training or assessor or internal verifier training for staff
- recruitment costs eg: taster days for potential new recruits, travel expenses for attending interviews, new recruitment methods to appeal to a wider range of people
- salaries for apprentices or bursaries to support paid training placements where apprenticeship standards aren't available
- additional financial support to overcome barriers to joining the heritage workforce (eg: membership of professional bodies, training and travel budget for trainees, hardship fund, railcard or annual bus pass costs, completion bonus)
- equipment to support on-the-job training (eg: tools of the trade, protective equipment, IT equipment to support learning)

If you are an apprenticeship levy-paying organisation in England you cannot claim your levy contribution as part of your project. If you are employing apprentices as part of your project, however, the apprenticeship training and assessment costs your organisation will pay via the digital apprenticeship service can be used as match-funding.

More information and resources

- For generic apprentice guidance, see the Government's line managers guide to supporting apprentices
- For sector based information, see Historic England's heritage apprenticeships leaflet
- For guidance on recruiting diverse talent, see Arts Council UK's Culture Change toolkit