

# Case Study 4

## Coaching Session for Learners undertaking a Level 5 programme in Water Production

### Background

The Level 5 (Foundation Degree) programme in Water Production forms part of a portfolio of qualifications being undertaken with the client the target audience for the qualification were junior to middle managers and staff identified for development by the client.

In total over 120 learners were enrolled on the programme which comprised of two qualifications; an Award in Understanding Water Production and a Certificate in Management of Water Production, both of which were of Level 5 standard.

The Certificate was designed for managers who had operational responsibility for water production, whilst the Award was designed for a wider audience who require an understanding of water production in their job role, an example would be a project engineer.

The learners undertook ten days of teaching during which they were provided with all the material needed to complete their qualification. Teaching groups were 10 -12 and comprised of a mix of learners undertaking the Award and the Certificate. All the Certificate learners had to complete the Award first before moving onto the Certificate assignments.

Once the taught material had been delivered the learners were allocated an Assessor and provided with log on details for the online management system (OneFile) where all communication and monitoring would be carried out.

However, during the period in which the learners were undertaking their qualifications there were extreme weather related challenges for the client over an extended period which resulted in work on the qualifications taking a backseat.

Once the operational challenges had reduced it was agreed with the client that it would be necessary to reenergise the programme as little progress had been made for 6 - 8 months, this resulted in the design and delivery of coaching sessions for learners who required support.



## Objectives

The primary focus for the coaching sessions was to provide guidance and support to learners in completing their assignments, they were not intended to re-run the taught material.

In addition to providing help in completing their assignments the coaching sessions were designed to:

- Reminder of qualification structure
- Guidance on completion of assignments
- Tutor supported time to work on assignments
- Re-engage learners with programme
- Address any issues raised by Learners
- Confirm target dates for completion of qualifications

## Structure

The coaching sessions were run over a day with the morning being devoted to all learners; Award and Certificate learners, whilst the afternoon was for Certificate learners.

The note below was emailed to all learners before each session setting out the objective of the session;

*This half day assessment clinic/workshop will operate in a very flexible manner, to accommodate the different needs of everybody attending. You will have an opportunity to talk informally with an assessor and your other work colleagues and practical steps you need to take to complete and submit your outstanding assignments for successful completion of this unit. There will also be an opportunity to talk through and resolve and specific questions on the types of evidence proving occupational competence that will be acceptable to your assessor.*

Most learners will find it beneficial to stay for the full afternoon, however some learners may find attendance for just an hour or so provides sufficient guidance. As an illustration of how the workshop will run on the day, expect the following:

- Update briefing and clarification of requirements of each assignment and the types of evidence that will be acceptable to prove occupational competence
- Question and answer session to address issues arising
- Working in pairs/small groups to review and identify potential evidence of occupational assessment for each assignment. Assessor will circulate to provide support and advice. Each learner to develop a clear plan of action to complete the outstanding assignments
- Short plenary session to capture key learning and confirm actions and target dates for completion

Each session had 10 -12 learners as this was felt to be the optimum number from a cost/benefit perspective, providing enough individual time for learners and making best use of tutor time. The sessions were carried out in various locations in the client's area to minimise travel time for learners.

## Delivery

Below is an example of an agenda, as can be seen approximately half the time allocated was for presentations and half for practical work.

Time	Topic	Activity
1300	Introduction and overview of workshop	Presentation/discussion
1315	Outline of what is required to complete Certificate qualification	Presentation
1330	Guidance on completing assignments	Presentation
1345	Question and answer session	Discussion
1400	Assignment work with support from assessor	Practical work
1530	Review of key learning points	Practical
1545	Confirm actions and target dates for completion	Plenary session - discussion
1600	End	

The sessions were delivered by two tutors, this ensured there was enough tutor support during the practical section. In the first section Learners were reminded of how much time they were expected to spend completing the qualification, this was part of the original taught material, but it provided useful to remind them that for a Learner doing the Certificate a nominal 130 hours was expected.

The next session provided learners with guidance on completing assignments, they were shown examples of what a satisfactory written assignment would look like, what evidence they could use and how to make best use of their time.

For the practical section learners worked on their individual assignments with the two tutors circulating around the groups providing guidance on how to structure assignments and what evidence could be used, learners were also encouraged to share knowledge among themselves.

The last section addressed any final questions from the learners and importantly confirmed actions and target dates for completion of assignments.

## Follow up actions

On completion of the coaching sessions a series of telephone catch up calls were arranged, these were in addition to the normal contact by Assessors, a proforma questionnaire was drafted in conjunction with the client to check on progress as well as confirm the situation regarding the target dates. A report was then produced for the client on the status of the programme overall as well as on individuals. This report was in addition to the suite of reports that were available on the online management system (OneFile) used to monitor the programme.

This provided the evidence for the client for discussions by learners with their line managers on the programme. Having the support of line management for delivery of a programme requiring this level of work away from the classroom is vital.

## Conclusion

The use of coaching sessions for this type of programme is extremely useful, learners have busy jobs that require their attention meaning completion of a qualification must take second place in their full diaries.

Completing assignments is usually carried out individually with support from assessor by phone or email, for some learners this is enough, especially those with recent academic experience. However there are other who need more face to face time to guide them through their qualification, these learners usually already have the knowledge and experience required to achieve their qualification but just need guidance on how to pull together an assignment.

The session needs to be flexible with the tutors being sensitive to the needs of each learner in the group, every group will be different, as much time as possible should be allowed for 1:1 discussion with learners.

Having coaching sessions, a number of months after delivery of taught material reengages learners with a programme, addresses any issues learners are having with their assignments as well as providing guidance on successfully completing their assignments.



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